



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Healing the Past and Moving On – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Dr. Carolyn Koons

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**Roger Marsh:** Hello everyone. This is Roger Marsh and happy new year. Thanks for listening to our first Family Talk broadcast in the year 2020. I hope you're relaxing today and enjoying time with your loved ones. We are so grateful that you've joined us as we start another year here at the James Dobson Family Institute. Now, this ministry would not exist without your help, so please know how thankful we are for your financial support and for your prayers as well. As you set your sights on your giving for 2020, we ask that you keep us in mind. Visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) to learn how you can partner with us for another year of broadcasts that will encourage your family and families all over the world. All last month we brought you some of our best of broadcasts from 2019. Due to some pauses in our schedule, we're going to continue now with two more popular programs from last year. Today and tomorrow you'll hear a powerful presentation from Dr. Carolyn Koons. So sit back, relax and enjoy this classic edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Announcer:** Today on Family Talk.

**James Dobson:** Hello everyone, you're listening to Family Talk, a ministry of James Dobson Family Institute. I'm your host, Dr. James Dobson, and we appreciate you joining us today. We're always thankful that our listening audience is out there and tuned in, because that's what makes it all worthwhile. I want you to hear from a longtime friend today, one who was on my program, on Focus on the Family many years ago and on many occasions.

**James Dobson:** She is Dr. Carolyn Koons, a very popular speaker who has authored four books including single adult passages and beyond betrayal and others. Dr Koons is the president of Life Bridge Ministries International and she's the executive director of a missionary outreach organization based in Ensonata, Mexico. She is also a retired faculty member from Azusa Pacific University after 50 years of service. Now, Dr. Koons had a tough childhood, and unfortunately many people did, and that's why it makes it so important to go back and address those who have somehow overcome the challenges of a difficult childhood. Dr. Carolyn Koons is

one of those people. She spoke sometime ago on Romans chapter five which says, "Glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance. Perseverance, character, and character, hope." And we do have a hope in Jesus and it's truly the only thing we can cling to when we experience hardship and pain in life. That's what Carolyn is going to talk about today. Let's listen to this moving story right now on Family Talk.

Carolyn Koons: I have done a lot of speaking. I have never ever spoken on what I'm going to speak on this morning. Never. I don't even tell people about me. So I'm going to be really honest with you, I'm kind of nervous about it. Just a little nervous about it. I know I need to deal with my past, I know I need to look at my past, I know we need to look at our past, but we always have to keep moving forward. And so because of that, and maybe I've even maybe overreacted, but because I always want to keep moving on, I try very seldom to bring the past with me. Well, so that you call up and say, "Whoa, wait, wait, wait. What I want you to do, Carolyn, is talk about your past." And what it caused me to do was to have to relive a bit of my past. And that was a little difficult too, I have to admit, a little difficult.

Carolyn Koons: I was born and raised in Tacoma, Washington. I moved to Montana and I ended up in the first grade here in California. Okay, so I'm basically a California girl. I mean, you can tell I'm a California girl, right? It's written all over as they say. And I remember when I was just a young girl, I was very much the old tomboy. I'm sure none of you could tell that, or none of you were that, but I was the tomboy. I was the little rowdy on the street. I was the kid that was always in the athletics, always in the principal's office, always talking too much, always in trouble. Those of you that are school teachers probably look at kids like me and say, "Oh, if I could just cram something down their mouth." And I remember one time when I was in the third grade, on our street, we played a lot of football in the streets and we had a lot of fun and I was well known playing football, and so I was out playing football with the guys. It was all the guys and Carolyn. I was a good center, and I remember I had gone into my room after one of the football games. My mother had moved a chest, one of these chest to put clothing in, in my bedroom and I was rummaging through it and I discovered something down in the chest that really startled me.

Carolyn Koons: And I ran out. I ran over and I got Warren, my buddy, and I brought him over to the house and I reached down in the chest, and I had shut the door in the bedroom, and I said, "Warren, you've got to see what I found in the bedroom." And I reached down into the chest and I pulled out a loaded 38 caliber gun, in my bedroom. And we were looking at this gun, it was loaded. It had the bullets in it and everything. And I remember looking at that gun and we were looking at this thing and what is this gun? I didn't even know we had a gun in the house. And just then my mother bust into the room and she saw a little Warren and I with this gun and she grabbed that gun out of my hand and she pointed it at my face and she said, "One of these days, your dad is going to kill you. I have hid this gun, so he won't kill you. He hates your guts. One of these days, he's going to kill you." And she just stood there holding this gun at my face. And I

remember looking at this gun and remember her saying, "He's going to kill you. He hates your guts."

Carolyn Koons: That made an impression. And it began to put a few things together in my mind. It wasn't until much later I found out that the problem was that I was born during World War II when my father was off at the war. I was not his child, so when he came back from the war, there I was. And so I was illegitimate and I was something that reminded him of something he hated. You don't have any certain control over maybe where you were born or what you experienced. And it began to put together some things, because I remember as we had moved to California, we had had a panel truck and we were pulling a big trailer, and on that move I remember ... See, I have two older brothers. One is seven years older than I am and one is two years older than I am. And on that move, I remember the panel truck, my parents sat in the front, and we had all these beds and mattresses all the way almost up to the top of the back of the panel truck, and right before the front seat, we had our piano with a wooden piano bench.

Carolyn Koons: Now, for three and a half days, my brothers were told that they could stay up on top of the mattress, and for three and a half days I was told I had to sit and sleep on that hard wooden piano bench and I couldn't understand why I had to sit on that hardwood piano bench. And that was another impression as a child that I remembered. And I remember one time my older brother would crawl down and sit between my folks and they would have a good time, and then Gary, my other brother would sit down and he would have a good time, and when I'd say, "Could I sit in the front seat?", my dad would say, "No, you sit on that piano bench." And I remember I could not get off of that piano bench. I slept on that piano bench, couldn't get off. At one time my older brother had gotten up with my parents and my other brother, who had crawled way back in the back behind the mattresses, no one was looking. And I remember getting up on the mattresses and I stretched my arms out and I was on about four mattresses, and I reached over to this side of the panel truck and I reached to this side of the panel truck and I said, "Wait a minute, there's room for all three of us up here.

Carolyn Koons: Why can't I sit up here? And I didn't understand. I didn't understand why I was not allowed to be a part, and I quickly got back down, but you know what stands out in my mind? A mattress. Now, I know why I get uneasy. I know, because it was traumatic back there. And so when we talk about Christmas time get close or something comes up that I know it's going affect me, Christmas, birthdays, I know I begin to feel uneasy again. I have to say, "Okay Carolyn, you are dealing with something in your past you are working through." Now I remember on one of our birthdays, for some reason my folks decided to have birthday presents for a couple of years, and so my older brother for his birthday wanted a brand new Schwinn bicycle. Clifford was a great guy. He's the one that's seven years older. Well, Gary's birthday was next. He's two years older and he wanted one of the brand new three speed bicycles. And so boy my folks went out and they bought him the ultimate brand new three speed bicycle. Well, my birthday was up next

and I remember hounding and hounding my folks for a bicycle. I wanted a bicycle too.

Carolyn Koons: And so I begged, "Could I have a bicycle just like Gary's or just like Clifford's? I want a bicycle too." My birthday came along and I remember so vividly my father driving up with our pickup truck and pulled up into the backyard. He had been to the dump yard and he pulled out a rusted old blue bicycle that the wheels were bent and the bars were so rusted you couldn't even see it, and I remember him very vividly throwing it out on the ground and he said, "Don't ever ask for anything from me again as long as you live." But you know what? That didn't register at that moment. I looked at my bicycle. It was my bicycle. They had given me something, and I remembered taking a bicycle and taking it in the garage, and I remember stripping it down and sanding it and trying to get the rust off and cleaning it with gas and painting the blue all over again, and I remember fixing up my bicycle. And I remember getting on my bicycle and driving out of the garage. I mean, it was a lumbering truck, but it was my bicycle and I drove it out and I drove it out to the street and down the block, and I was so proud because I actually had something for my birthday.

Carolyn Koons: And I remember driving it back into the driveway, Clifford's brand new Schwinn bike was sitting there and Gary's brand new three speed was sitting there and I pulled up my bicycle with theirs, and everyone was in the house and I could hear him in there talking and laughing. And I looked at the bikes and I said ... And my brothers had told me, "Don't you touch my bike." But you know what little sisters are like, right? I remember I couldn't resist getting on Clifford's new Schwinn, and I did. And zip, out the driveway, I went down the street, I went back, I came, and my goodness, this bicycle is really neat. And I pulled it up and I parked it in front of where I'd gotten it and I got on Gary's new three speed and I mean, three speed with gears, the whole bit was like driving on a cloud. I got in, I went down the street faster than I've ever been and I came back and the reality ... I stood there and I looked at those three bicycles, in the fourth grade, and the reality struck, I was different and I was going to be treated different.

Carolyn Koons: I had to sleep on the piano bench, I got the broken down bicycle, and I don't know what made me do it, but I remember standing there looking at these bicycles and listening to the laughter in the house and knowing that I really didn't even have a choice of going in a house and participating. And I said to myself, "These people are ... Sure they're my parents, but I'm going to have to make it on my own." I had decided in the fourth grade I was on my own, and I functioned like I was on my own. I mean, I was basically one of the young people that was sort of out of control. As I said, I was always in the principal's office. I was popular. I was just enough zaniness to me, but just enough honoringness to me that the teachers didn't know whether to hug me or throw me out of the room. But there was just enough of that and I remember getting in so much trouble and I just wanted so desperately to do what was right, but I knew I was on my own, to the point that I really got in a lot of trouble.

Carolyn Koons: I mean, breaking into churches, I got caught by the fire department. I had snuck under a church similar to this and was starting fires underneath the foundation. I mean, young people just do dumb things, and I was a dumb young person looking for something. I was really searching. I wanted someone to tell me I was okay and I didn't find anyone to tell me that I was okay. The next impression that I remember was into the fifth grade. I would do pretty good in my academic classes, but my behavior was very poor. We had E's, S's and N's. E's means excellent. S's means satisfactory and N's mean, needs to improve. I had three E's, 6 N's, and 23 needs to improves, and I just wanted someone to take notice. And I remember we had a student teacher in the class, Mr. Franklin. The major's teacher, Mr. Johnson, taught the fifth grade class and Mr. Franklin was the student teacher. Well, he was sort of a great guy. Everyone liked Mr. Franklin. They thought he was a great person, and I thought he was pretty neat too.

Carolyn Koons: Well, here Carolyn was out doing all the athletic events and I was typically busting up the PE class and getting everyone to break the rules and cheating across the line and everything and Mr. Franklin pulled me out of the game to just get me away so the PE class could continue and I remember so vividly he walked me over and he sat down, he said, "Carolyn, I want to have a talk with you." He says, "Today's my last day at school. It's my last day," and he says, "I've been watching you for the last six weeks." He said, "I want to tell you something. I want to be really honest with you." He said, "A lot of people think you're bad." He said, "But I've been watching you, Carolyn." He says, "I have come to a conclusion about you. I think that you are really deep down inside a very good person." And I remember in the fifth grade it was the first time anyone ever told me I was good. No one had ever told ... I was ecstatic. I sat there, it was like bells were ringing in my head.

Carolyn Koons: This great student teacher said, "Carolyn, you are good. You are good." I said to myself, "He's right. I'm good. I'm going to be good. No more stealing, no more fires." I had gotten into a little habit, because my dad didn't give me that bicycle. You know what I figured out? I figured I could steal one a week, and I had a little system going that I was stealing one bicycle a week for several years. And I would steal a bicycle a week and I would return it the next week at the other end of campus and walk off that week and I had this system going. Every week, I'd come home with a new bicycle. My folks said, "Where'd you get the bicycle?" "Oh, it's Dave's. He said I could borrow his bike." I'd ride it for a week, return it. I mean, I had all these fun little things. And if I couldn't get the money, I'd figured out how to steal money. If I couldn't get attention, I knew how to start fires or bust into school buildings. All of a sudden this person said, in the fifth grade, "Carolyn, you're a good person." I was out to be the valid good person, because finally I found somebody who believed in me.

Carolyn Koons: I walked into that classroom after recess, no more was I going to break up another PE game. I was going to help get the PE games going good. I was going to be the model student. I was going to change all those needs to improve to excellent. I found somebody who believed in me. I remember walking in a class and then it dawned on me as we sat in the classroom, I noticed that my two

buddies, Ken and Ken, I avoid names of Ken these days, but Ken and Ken were my two buddies ... Anyone in here named Ken? My two buddies and I were the ones that were stealing the bikes. And it dawned on me that we had this little thing going that it was right after recess, the PE class, that you would move the bike from one end of campus to the other, and I looked around when we were kind of getting done after recess and Ken and Ken were outside and moving the bikes, which we had prearranged which bikes we would move.

Carolyn Koons:

And I remember, "Oh no, I'm good now. I'm going to go stop Ken and Ken from taking these bikes." And I remember running out and going around, while the class was getting settled in, and I went out there and I told ... There they were. Boy, they had the bikes and they were literally starting to move them, and this sounds like a big car theft ring doesn't it? I mean, it really doesn't sound good. I should've made a movie on it. No, anyway. And I remember so gallant, I was good. I was good. It was ringing in my heart. I was good. I said, "All right you guys, put those bikes back. We're not going to take bikes anymore." And they said, "Come on Carolyn, what are you talking ..." I said, "Put the bikes back. We're not taking bikes anymore." "All right." So just then they start to move the bicycles back in and I was absolutely startled when I felt these two big hands grab me and pull me back. They pulled me back so hard I fell over one of the bicycles and I looked back and there's the master teacher, Mr. Johnson looking at me and he started screaming at me and cussing at me.

Carolyn Koons:

He picked me up, he told Ken and Ken to get back into the room. He walked me into the front of the classroom. He threw me against the wall and he said to the whole class, he said, "See that girl?" He said, "That girl is the girl that is stealing your bicycles. See that girl? That girl is no good. I don't want anybody in this room to ever talk to that girl again." And I remember standing there against the wall and if you know how you've ever felt when you just wanted to pass out and everything turns black and you almost get tunnel vision, and I stood there and this guy was calling me bad and it cut into me, because I thought for a moment I was good and I looked back in the back row and there was the student teacher, Mr. Franklin in the back row. His head was slightly tilted and he had tears running down his face, because he thought I had disappointed him. No one believed that I had tried to go out to do good. They all believed I was bad. So I was. For the next several years, I was bad. I mean, I was bad.

Carolyn Koons:

At a very ... We moved to Oregon about that time, sixth grade. Moved to Oregon, logging community, nothing to do. I was bad. I'd show him. Junior high school, I would lock Vodka in the lockers and drink my way through junior high. End of the sixth grade. I would go out to dances til four o'clock in the morning. Sixth grade. My parents said, "Do anything you want Carolyn, we don't care." And I knew it and I did it. Wouldn't go to school for weeks. I didn't go to school. I got some of my buddies and we'd go deer hunting, except if we couldn't find any deer, we'd bust into cabins, steal half the stuff out of these people's cabins, take it over to another cabin and sit there all afternoon with shotguns and blow it away. I had nothing to live for. I had nothing. Nobody believed in me, nobody cared, and I guess I didn't care either. And I was out to have a good time and I

decided I was going to have a good time. Well, when we moved to Oregon, I'm being really honest with you, we moved to Oregon and we moved to into a ... We owned a motel up there. After a couple of years, my parents separated. It was at that time, it was my responsibility, in the eighth grade, to run the motel, while my mother slept in the first unit with the men.

Carolyn Koons:

And then she would take off for days on end, camping trips. And here I was in the eighth grade running a motel. I was horrified. I was terrified. We lived about a mile out in the woods, on the highway. I was ... I have a little bit of a phobia. I laugh at myself. I'm a little bit of afraid of being alone in the woods at night. Now tell me, everyone please raise your hand so I'm not ... Anyone else afraid of being alone in the woods at night? I'm the only one. Thank you women, because I remember having to walk from town after parties all the way out to that motel for a mile out on that scary black road, and I can remember that impression of that trip affects my behavior today and I have to say, "Okay Carolyn, I know why you feel this way, because da, da, da, da." And then I knew what my mother was doing, I decided that I'd just try and get drunk and live as wild as I could.

Carolyn Koons:

I remember, I guess it was all right that I knew what she was doing, but when my best gal friend and a couple of her buddies came up to me one day and say, "Carolyn, do you know your mother's the town prostitute?" That just blew me out. And I decided then they didn't even know what bad behavior was, and it got so bad that I was actually wanted by the police in Oregon for just stupid, dumb things. And you know what it was? I was just like you. I wanted someone to believe in me. I wanted someone who cared and I wanted somebody who loved me. And I acted my behavior out in the only way I knew how. How do you act your behavior out?

Roger Marsh:

I'm Roger Marsh and you have been listening to Dr. Carolyn Koons, sharing her heartbreaking testimony. Despite her witty humor, you can still hear the deep emotional pain that she's had to work through. I hope you'll come back tomorrow to hear the wonderful and redeeming conclusion to her story. In the meantime, be sure to visit [dr.jamesdobson.org](http://dr.jamesdobson.org) to learn more about Dr. Koon's ministry and her many popular books. That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and then click onto the broadcast icon at the top of the page. Finally, I urge you to listen to Dr. Dobson every day using Amazon Alexa. This smart device allows you to catch our daily interviews and presentations anytime of the day. Simply enable the Family Talk skill on your account and then say, "Alexa, play today's broadcast of Family Talk." Go to [drjamesdobson.org/Alexa](http://drjamesdobson.org/Alexa) to discover how to access Family Talk on your Amazon Alexa. Thanks for tuning in today and thanks also for your continued support of Dr. Dobson in this ministry. Generous gifts from listeners like you allow us to bring you great broadcasts like this one each and every day. Visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) to learn how you can partner with us. I'm Roger Marsh, reminding you to tune in again tomorrow for the conclusion of Dr. Carolyn Koons riveting testimony. That's coming up right here next time on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

James Dobson: This is James Dobson. Again, as we close today's program, I just want to thank so many of you out there who make this broadcast possible with your contributions. And I want to tell you how much your generosity is appreciated.

Tim Clinton: Hi, this is Dr. Tim Clinton. Thanks for listening to Family Talk. If you're hurting, you've got troubles in your life, going through deep waters, we'd like to talk with you. You can call us toll free right now, (877) 732-6825. That number again, toll free, (877) 732-6825. Or reach us from our website at [drjamesdobson.ORG](http://drjamesdobson.ORG). We're here to help you.