



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: When Loving Him is Hurting You

Guest(s): Dr. David Hawkins

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Brad Mazzocco: Greetings, this is Brad.

Dave: And this is Dave.

Brad Mazzocco: And we work in the office of the president-

Dave: At the James Dobson Family Institute. And though we're used to working behind desks, rather than in front of mics,

Brad Mazzocco: Today, we would love to wish you and your family the warmest of Christmas greetings.

Roger Marsh: Hi this Roger Marsh for Family Talk. Do you remember Dr. Dobson's touching interview with Rebekah Gregory?

Rebekah Gregory: The hardest part of that day was not the physical, though. It was the emotional. It was everything that not only I saw, but my son saw as well.

Roger Marsh: Or what about the powerful interview with Dennis Prager?

Dennis Prager: Nice people can do damage. Nice is not the same as wise. Lack of wisdom creates evil, not lack of niceness.

Roger Marsh: There were so many great Family Talk moments this year. It may be hard to pick your favorite, but don't worry, we've done it for you. We've selected eighteen of the most popular broadcasts of the past year, and present them to you together on six audio CDs, in the 2019, Family Talk Best of Broadcast Collection! These entertaining and informative programs are sure to bless you and become a cherished part of your family resource library. This compelling CD-set is our thank you for a suggested gift of any amount in support of Family Talk. Learn more at drjamesdobson.org, or by calling 877-732-6825. Thank you, and God bless you.

Throughout the entire month of December, we're highlighting our most listened to broadcasts from the past year. Now, before we hear one of the popular shows, I want to share some news with you. A gracious donor of our ministry has gifted us with a generous matching grant for this Christmas season. This effectively doubles every donation we receive, until we've reached our goal. Learn how you can be a part of this match by going to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Or, you can call for more information, at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Now let's continue with this popular broadcast, one of our best of broadcast from 2019, on this edition of Family Talk.

Announcer: Today, on Family Talk:

Dr. Dobson: I want to begin by thanking you for your prayers for this ministry. I can feel them, I know about them, we hear about them. And also, for your support as we continue to fight for the family.

Today we're going to be talking about the devastating pain some experience through emotional abuse. In a moment, you're going to hear a recording of a conversation between my colleague Dr. Tim Clinton and his guest, Dr. David Hawkins. Dr. Hawkins is a clinical psychologist with an emphasis on emotional abuse and narcissistic problems in marriage. He holds three masters' degrees and a PhD. He has personally seen thousands of marriages restored through counseling since he began working in this field in 1976.

As we get started with our program today, Dr. Hawkins explains just what emotional abuse and narcissism look like, and how couples can find healing and restoration from these issues. Here is that discussion on this edition of Family Talk, a production of the James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. Clinton: Dr. Hawkins, thank you for joining us.

Dr. Hawkins: Well, Dr. Clinton, thank you for having me.

Dr. Clinton: Hey, we're going to talk about a tough topic today.

Dr. Hawkins: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: But before we go there, Dave, I've spent a lot of my life trying to teach young leaders, young people that the most important issue in life is this issue of relationships. Your relationship with God, and we know this, the most important decision you'll make apart from your relationship with God is who you're going to choose to spend the rest of your life with.

Dr. Hawkins: That's right.

Dr. Clinton: Because it matters David. Getting it right is everything. And there's nothing more beautiful in all the world than to be in a relationship with someone who is

supposed to love you and they actually what? Love you. And nothing more difficult in all the world than to be in a relationship with someone who is supposed to love and they don't love you. Today, we're going to talk about a special work of yours, a brand new piece. I mean, it's exploding. The book's entitled *When Loving Him Is Hurting You: Help and Hope for Women Dealing with Narcissism and Emotional Abuse*. David, you've spent a lot of time working with these kinds of individuals in these kinds of marriages. Let's take a step in that direction. We're not going to beat up on men today. That's not what this is about David, right? We're not here to beat up on men at all.

Dr. Hawkins: Absolutely not, Dr. Clinton.

Dr. Clinton: Our prayer is that God continues to raise up men to take their rightful place in the home and church and community, and we stand boldly for men. But we do recognize there are some situations, especially when it comes to this issue of narcissism and emotional abuse, where we've got to deal with this and take it head on. Your opening line piece on your book is this, "You fell in love with him, but over time you've come to realize he's in love with himself, and you're trapped. It's all about his needs, his problems, his plans and they seem to take precedence over yours." Everybody just turned the radio dial up. David, tell us about why you got interested in this.

Dr. Hawkins: My goodness. Dr. Clinton, I have counseled thousands and thousands of couples now over the past, well, 30, 40 years of my practice. But over the past 10 to 12 years, especially, so many couples have come to me, and they have what is called covert emotional abuse and narcissism. Now it's called covert because it's subtle. We all know about domestic violence, we know about hitting, kicking, screaming yelling, blocking that ... We know about that stuff. We're finally up to speed on that, but we're not up to speed on the covert, subtle aspects of relationships that go awry, Dr. Clinton. Such as complaining, constant complaining, nagging, criticizing, power and control issues. And men, back to ... We're not beating up on men. Men aren't trying to be this way.

We often sit back and think, they're just trying to control me, they're trying to ... They're not, they're not. And yet I fall prey at times to being too powerful at times, too much involved in my own self-importance, and so men do that. And when they become overly preoccupied with their self-importance, they often have degrees, they often have accomplishment, they often have financial prosperity. They've done a lot of things and then taken up with all of that, this self-importance. Now what happens gradually Dr. Clinton, is their importance grows and then you can imagine what happens then in the relationship, her importance diminishes and she starts to feel invisible. And therein begins this incredibly tragic problem, that I am I'm glad that I'm part of a solution to help unpack it.

Dr. Clinton: I know Paul in Romans chapter seven talked about the things he would do he didn't, and the things he wouldn't do, that's what he did. And he said daily he had to reckon and yield his life to Christ. I know in our marriage early on Julie I

had a hard time David, we almost didn't make it. And we've told our story ... As a matter of fact, I remember what it was like to sit alone in an apartment with everything in a storage place, and to have my wife who I loved but couldn't get along with, 2000 miles away from me. I remember calling out there and her daddy answering the phone, not a good day.

Dr. Hawkins: Not a good day.

Dr. Clinton: Not a good day, and he said, "Tim, I don't think you guys are gonna make it."

Dr. Hawkins: Oh my.

Dr. Clinton: And you know what? God began to do something. But David, I know in life there are times when I don't mean to, but I choose for myself over Julie. And if I don't pick up on it too quick she'll remind me and let me know.

Dr. Hawkins: Good for her, by the way.

Dr. Clinton: And we make adjustments, you know that? And she would tell you the same thing. That there are times ... There's this natural propensity to often choose yourself above your spouse, you know that? Place your wants needs above hers or above his. But David, where does this start to become problematic? I mean it's all problematic, but we're talking about a word "narcissism" here for a moment. I want you to define it and take us into the weeds here in a good way, where are we going?

Dr. Hawkins: Sure. Well you know the weeds ... Unfortunately, there's a lot of information and misinformation out there. The media out there says, "Oh my goodness, if you are narcissistic there is no hope for you." And I tell you, I've worked with thousands of men, and I'm happy to say, "No, that's not generally the case." If, if, big IF, capital I, capital F here. IF an intervention will take place in this marriage with this couple, and if the man will avail himself and the woman, and the woman. Some women are gasping out there that I'm ... "Wait a minute now." That also goes against the grain because it's ... The man is the narcissist, the woman is ... Well, sometimes the lines blur. Anyway, so if an intervention takes place, then what I see is that narcissism is actually on a spectrum, Dr. Clinton, it's on the spectrum.

And that has really gained some footing out there. We get that. That clinicians are seeing, yeah, it's really not either you are or you aren't. It's not that; there is a gradation. And all of us by the way, are on that gradation somewhere. There's a little bit of narcissism in everyone, and obviously it becomes pathological when there's an excessive amount of grandiosity, entitlement, self-importance, admiration. I'm working with thousands, over the years, of men who fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. And if an intervention takes place, they are amenable to treatment. Again, this goes against, completely against

what you'll read about out there, which talks about malignant narcissism and so on.

Dr. Clinton: We're not talking about leadership or headship, Godly servanthood here. We're talking about somebody, it's the old Toby Keith song, "I want to talk about me, I want to talk about me, me, me, me." It's the me factor-

Dr. Hawkins: It is.

Dr. Clinton: ... to the nth degree.

Dr. Hawkins: It is the me factor.

Dr. Clinton: Where you don't exist, you don't have any input. I'm telling you what we're doing.

Dr. Hawkins: This power and control that you're talking about, it's subtle. It begins gradually, and so we often have these very accomplished men, these very charismatic men. Yes, leaders.

Dr. Clinton: Control freak stuff here, is that what we're talking about?

Dr. Hawkins: They become control freaks. It's gradual. It happens ... The average age of a person coming to me is 45, 50, 55, 60. Okay, I get very few 20 year-olds that are coming to me saying, "Hey ...", or the woman saying, "Look, my husband is this." Gradually over time, Dr. Clinton. You can just imagine this, the self-importance. The accomplishments are happening, and so he has reason to feel pretty good about himself. He's accomplished a lot, he's a powerful man in the workplace. He's a powerful man in church. He's a powerful man. You know that, that Scripture says, "Do not think more highly of yourself, then you ought to think." That just becomes insidious. And then, again, his ego grows, her self diminishes, and now you've got a real pathology in the relationship.

Dr. Clinton: You mentioned earlier a little bit of a continuum-

Dr. Hawkins: Yes.

Dr. Clinton: ... that people were talking about. Maybe some traits, and I guess to an extent we all have a little self in here.

Dr. Hawkins: Yes.

Dr. Clinton: But narcissistic personality disorder is a classification in and of itself.

Dr. Hawkins: Correct.

Dr. Clinton: That would be in what the mental health field would call the DSM.

Dr. Hawkins: Yes.

Dr. Clinton: And so, the Diagnostic Statistical Manual.

Dr. Hawkins: Yes.

Dr. Clinton: What are the unique features of that classification? Where someone would check the box, or boxes and say, "You, you really are in this category." What is that?

Dr. Hawkins: They have to seek admiration, and seek the admiration of others. They have a sense of entitlement, they have a sense of grandiosity. They believe they are better than others, and they really have that firm and rigid belief about that. They lack an ability to really empathize. This is a key one. In fact, I want to land on this one, Dr. Clinton. They lack the ability to empathize with others. Now, just pausing there for a moment. That's a bedrock of a relationship, the ability to sit with another person and to really get what they're feeling and thinking. If your mate lacks empathy, that is one of the foundational keys of whether you're going to be diagnosed with NPD. Now, what's interesting, I'm going to veer off of that Dr. Clinton just a little bit, is when you have a conflictual relationship, it's probably lacking in empathy anyway, so the issue becomes convoluted. Is this person, is this man really an NPD, or have they been involved in an adversarial relationship for a long, long, long time, and it's very, very hard to dissect it, to piece it apart and find out, "Okay, does he meet the criteria of NPD? Or, does he partially meet that criteria?"

Is he on that spectrum? And is there a conflictual adversarial relationship that mitigates against empathy?

Dr. Clinton: I'm imagining her in this relationship for a moment. Obviously doesn't probably feel much emotional connection.

Dr. Hawkins: No.

Dr. Clinton: Doesn't feel love.

Dr. Hawkins: None.

Dr. Clinton: Doesn't feel like she has a place. Probably is controlled in pretty much every area. Connect the dot, in your book, *When Loving Him Is Hurting You*, you connect NPD Narcissistic Personality Disorder with emotional abuse. I know it's a little bit controversial, but help us go there for a minute. What does that look like?

Dr. Hawkins: If a man is on that spectrum, anywhere on the spectrum, by the way, then he's going to use defenses to self-protect. He's a wounded little boy. My current theory, it's a theory, but I've seen it play out many times. Is that narcissism is

really self-protection, so I use defenses. I use denial, rationalization, minimization, justification, sanitization, blame shifting, gaslighting. All of those terms that many of our listeners are familiar with, it's all an effort to protect myself. I'm really okay. You know that denial, that stands for, Don't Even Notice I Am Lying to myself. D-E-N-I-A-L. So, I protect myself, so you, so the wife has a criticism; come on, in every relationship, there's going to be criticism. And this wounded little boy is saying, "I can't stand it. I have an ego that I've got to protect. And so I'm going to use denial, rationalization, minimization. I'm going to use all of those." And Dr. Clinton, the incredible damage that is done when a woman comes to a man and says, "Look, I've got a problem I need to bring to you. I have a concern."

Oh no, you have that same problem. No, I didn't do it. No, I wasn't there. I've got an explanation, I've got a rationalization. And so now we have crazy making. And indeed now she feels crazy, and now she's diminished, and now his importance rises, her importance lowers, and now the rift between them grows and grows and grows, and now she becomes more and more invisible, and she develops ... We haven't talked about this yet, but narcissistic victim syndrome, with physiological and emotional symptoms, and now we've got even a greater problem.

Dr. Clinton: Boy, I want to talk about that. You're listening to Family Talk. A program of the James Dobson Family Institute, I'm your host today Dr. Tim Clinton. Our special in studio guest at the AACC, the American Association of Christian Counselors, Mega National Conference in Dallas, Texas. Dr. David Hawkins' brand new book out, fascinating subject talking about narcissism and emotional abuse. Hey, *When Loving Him is Hurting You*. Again, today hear us. No intention of beating up men. I just love what it's like to see a man and woman in love. Matter of fact Solomon said, there are a lot of crazy things in this world, and some things he didn't understand. One of those was a man and woman falling in love. And it's a beautiful place. But we're talking about when that love stuff gets sideways.

And when you're in a relationship with someone who has lost you, they don't see you. This classification you've just talked about, of being that person who is subject to this. Tell us a little bit about that.

Dr. Hawkins: A woman who is treated so unfairly, consistently, chronically, the power is over her, she's powered over. You've heard that term, "powering over her." She is talked down. She's talked out of what she thinks and feels, so she becomes frightened, she becomes insecure. A healthy relationship, Dr. Clinton, is such a beautiful thing, like you talk about. It's the ability to really sit with our mate, and our mate to sit with us, and come let us reason together. Let's talk this through. That's health. In this relationship, we don't have that. She can't approach him because she's going to say something critical, and remember, he can't stand that.

Dr. Clinton: Fascinating because it's almost like, and I've heard women describe this. They feel like they're walking on eggshells-

Dr. Hawkins: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: ... around him all the time.

Dr. Hawkins: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: It's like they're threatened or terrified, even almost.

Dr. Hawkins: Another notion that I've come up with is that he can't sit with healthy shame. You and I have regrets. We look back, I look back on my life, and I try to be able to sit with feeling badly about what I've done. I've hurt my wife. I recently hurt my wife, and I needed to go to her, and I needed to say, I was sorry. She was so gentle. Christy is her name, and she was so gentle and kind. She said, "Don't worry about it." I said, "No, I am going to worry about it. I don't like it. I treated you in a harsh way. I was wrong." That's hard for me to do. Men need to have that capacity to sit with healthy shame, godly sorrow, and be repentant. But many men who are on this spectrum are so well defended, and so then she can't go to him with a concern.

Dr. Clinton: And she'll get to a place where she'll start believing that maybe she does need to love him more. Maybe she needs to keep everything in order better, et cetera. That she somehow is failing this whole relationship-

Dr. Hawkins: Thank you.

Dr. Clinton: ... and she's starting to believe that, and getting lost in that. And it's the insanity here and the chaos that perpetuates why ... Everybody's looking and thinking, you need to straighten him out.

Dr. Hawkins: Because he's flipping it back on her.

Dr. Clinton: You need to do something. You better draw ... put boundaries in place. But she can't even see her way through that moment.

Dr. Hawkins: You've got it. I have actually two symptoms that women bring to me again, and again, and again. One is voiceless-ness. They're voiceless. They're rendered voiceless. They just literally can't come to him with a concern, because it's just too threatening for him. And the other is exhaustion, which I'm writing more and more about. There's this physical exhaustion. They're trying to say, "Look, I'm unhappy. I don't want the sun, moon and the stars. I want to be loved. I want to be cared for."

Dr. Clinton: All I've ever wanted is for someone to love me.

Dr. Hawkins: Just love me-

Dr. Clinton: Just love me.

Dr. Hawkins: ... just care for me. And make it safe for me to come to you with a concern.

Dr. Clinton: Years ago, I read a piece that Dr. Dobson had released. They had reviewed some research on women who were in high conflict relationships, and how they would begin to suffer in a lot of different ways, including physically. More susceptible to things like the cold, the flu, all kinds of things. Are you finding that David?

Dr. Hawkins: Oh Dr. Clinton, so, quick plug for my next book. It's called *In Sickness and In Health*, not out yet. And the physical impact of emotional abuse on women. I am telling you Dr. Clinton, every woman that comes to me, this is every day by the way, every day. I didn't use to ask the question of how are you doing physically? I'm a psychologist, so I would say, "How are you doing emotionally?" But my two sons are physicians, and I've been talking with them, and they actually co-wrote this, my next book with me.

At the risk of hyperbole here, every woman that is coming to me, every woman, when I ask the question, "How are you doing physically?" They have physiological symptoms, and they are out there in the medical community, and in our clinical, emotional, psychological community, seeking answers, by the way, not getting them, not getting them. They're going out there saying, "I don't feel good. I feel bad." And so understandably, doctors asked the ..., "Well what do you mean you don't feel good?" "Well, hard to describe. I'm not sleeping well, I'm not eating well. I just, I feel brain fog. I can't ..." "What do you mean brain fog?" "I can't think straight. I'm exhausted ..."

So now we've got an exhausted woman, and physiologically depleted, and emotionally depleted, going to a man saying, "Will you please listen to me?" And he feels threatened and says essentially, "No, I can't."

Dr. Clinton: Yeah, "Be quiet."

Dr. Hawkins: Exactly what happens.

Dr. Clinton: "I'm telling you: you need help. You're the sick one, not me." David, we're fighting the clock here. What's she going to do?

Dr. Hawkins: Well-

Dr. Clinton: Is there hope.

Dr. Hawkins: There absolutely is hope. I'm excited about the hope. The hope lies in intervention, Dr. Clinton. Intervention means that some step has to be taken, and she has to find resources, and there are resources out there. We have ... Thanks to you, we have more and more clinicians rising up that know about emotional abuse and narcissism. So she finds someone who will listen to her, hear her story, validate her, not give her the scriptural clichés, "Just love him

more. Just read more scripture, just pray ..." No clichés, please. They're helping her have a voice, not a strident voice, not an angry voice. Just a clear, firm voice. Where to get the physiological help. Physicians who know about these kinds of symptomatology. Then the intervention needs to take place. And with an intervention, and here's where I go against the counterculture just a little bit. Yes, an intervention with men ... Men want to be good, healthy, strong, men, who love their ... We do. We want to be ... When I think about, "What do I want to be as a godly man?"

Men will be led in that direction. But we have to be challenged to do that. Intervention must take place, and you and I, and AACC and Dr. Dobson, we're all going to be part of that. And that's exciting.

Dr. Clinton: Believing for a better day.

Dr. Hawkins: Yes.

Dr. Clinton: She's done a lot of that. And if she's depressed, I often teach counselors, there might be times when she might need personal work first.

Dr. Hawkins: Oh, absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: We got to get her healthy, to a place where we can do marital work.

Dr. Hawkins: Yes.

Dr. Clinton: That might be a part of the journey here. Getting to a place where, and we now talk about in marriage work, taking couples so you can accept influence from each other. So, I see you. I love you. And my ability to be present and just to have my reach go toward you is what this is all about.

Dr. Hawkins: Love it.

Dr. Clinton: And to have emotional connectivity going like Solomon said, "This is my beloved and my friend."

Dr. Hawkins: I love it.

Dr. Clinton: That's our prayer for you today, you all. We wanted to introduce this subject because we know it's a challenge in some marriages. There's a danger for everybody to come back and say, "That's the problem." Well it may be, and that's where this kind of work could help bring clarity, and then ultimately help and hope. Our prayer for you again today is that God would be in your life, and that he would bring into your way everything necessary to lead you to a place where you love and you are loved well. Thank you for joining us, that was powerful. And we're going to do this again, I promise you.

Dr. Hawkins: Perfect.

Dr. Clinton: Yeah. And thanks for your heart, your message-

Dr. Hawkins: Thank you.

Dr. Clinton: ... and for joining us in prayer for those who listen-

Dr. Hawkins: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: ... and joining us here on Family Time.

Dr. Hawkins: Amen.

Roger Marsh: A great reminder to prioritize God in your relationship and seek his face when you experience hardship. I'm Roger Marsh, and you've been listening to a conversation featuring Dr. Tim Clinton and Dr. David Hawkins here on Family Talk. Learn more about Dr. Hawkins on today's broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. Once you're there, you can read more about Marriage Recovery Center or how to order any of his popular books. You'll find all that and more when you go to drjamesdobson.org, and click on the broadcast button at the top of the page.

Well that's all the time we have for this broadcast. Be sure to join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, I'm Roger Marsh, thanks for listening.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson, Family Institute.