



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Raising Boys: Routine Panic – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. James Dobson

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: The relationship between fathers and sons is a very special one. Despite the importance of moms, really no one can replace a boy's need to have dad in his life. And when that bond is broken or non-existent, a child can develop a deep emotional wound. On today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk will be addressing the necessity of fathers through a classic presentation from Dr. Dobson's "Bringing up Boys" series. His timeless message focuses on the lessons and characteristics a boy can learn only from his father. Dr. Dobson drills down on this core principle while also sharing humorous stories from his young adulthood as well. Now, these words were recorded some time ago, but the wisdom remains very practical for every parent listening even today. Here now is an excerpt from Dr. Dobson's "Bringing Up Boys" series on this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we have been talking about bringing up boys, the subject from my book, been talking about how they are unique, how they think, how to raise them properly, and how to make the most of their masculinity, how to help boys know that they are men or can become men. And it's a very important subject and one that I really enjoy talking about. I loved writing this book, but it's also a fun topic to deal with.

Now, what I want to do today is talk about the adolescent experience and how it relates, especially to their fathers. We'll start there and then go on from that point to talk about the relationship with their mothers.

When I was 17 years of age, my father bought a new car. It's a big deal in our family. It was a big deal in our little town. Bought a 1953 Ford. It was beautiful. It was blue-green. I loved that car and my dad allowed me to drive it one day, which was a mistake. I was 17-years-old, haven't been driving very long, and it was lunchtime, and I asked him if I could take it to go get something to eat, and he said yes. So I took off and I went to eat. And when I was coming back, I noticed that my fellow students were on the street. It was lunchtime, and so there were a lot of kids out there, and this gave me a great opportunity to show

off. And I just thought it would be also a great opportunity for me to test a theory about physics that I had always wanted to investigate.

See, I had seen a guy named Joey Chitwood at the state fair. Joey was the Evel Knievel of that day, and he was flying through the air with his cars, and that seemed like a pretty neat thing to me. And I figured that I might get that car off the ground, too, if I did it right. And in our little town, there were two big bumps at the corners to accommodate the flash floods that came through town. And I thought if I hit those fast enough, I would fly over them. It made sense. Joey did it, why couldn't I do it? And so I backed up about three blocks, and I mean, these things were about three feet deep. They were big bumps on both sides.

And so I got going about 60 miles-an-hour and I hit that first bump. And I'm telling you, my head went into the headboard and the whole car convulsed. I mean, the front and the back hit the bottom, and then I careened into the second bump and kaboom. It hit again. I mean, it shocked me. I had no idea that was going to happen. The whole car shuttered and my Texas friends were awestruck. That was about the neatest thing they ever saw. They said, "Look at that. He got air under his tires." Well, I really didn't get a lot of air under my tires, but I sure shook up that car and shook myself up pretty good. And I went on home and left the car in the driveway and didn't say anything, obviously. Didn't tell my dad about this.

About, oh, I suppose two weeks later, my dad came to me and he said, Bo, which is what he called me when he was pretty serious. He says, "Bo, I just took the car in, had it checked, had it serviced, and all four shocks are blown." He said, "These things are shredded." And he says, "It's a new car and shocks usually wear out a little bit at a time. They're all gone. They're just absolutely shredded. Do you have any idea how this might've happened?" The only thing that saved me was that for a split second, I couldn't remember having done that. I mean, he would've killed me. He would've absolutely killed me. So I said no. And he accepted that. And then about two weeks later, I got in the car and I was driving off.

I went a short distance and the steering post broke off and the steering wheel had no relationship to the wheels at all. And I went into a curb and bounced over the curb. If I'd have been going faster, I could have killed somebody, namely me. And that was strange, a new car, why would that happen? And it was several months before I let myself remember that I not only blew those four shocks, but I probably cracked the steering post on that new Ford and who knows how else I messed up my dad's car on that occasion.

Now, by the time I figured out that I had done it, the statute of limitations had run on the crime and I didn't see any reason to bring it up again. And my dad never asked me again. And he went to his grave not knowing that I had destroyed his new car. So dad, if you're up there, I am really sorry and I won't ever do it again, and you can have my allowance for the next 20 years. But it was the only time I ever got air under my tires. Boys have an ability to frustrate

the very souls of their dads. And yet, and yet never has it been more clear than it is right now that fathers, and if not fathers, a father substitute, are absolutely critical to the health and well-being and the development of boys. Yes, they frustrate us. They lose our cameras, they drop our binoculars, they mess up our work benches, and they frustrate us in a lot of ways, but they are critically important.

Now, in the 1950s, it was believed that poverty caused juvenile delinquency, gang behavior, young violence and other things. It was thought that that came from poverty. That is now discredited, that's no longer believed. It's now realized that the primary problem with juvenile delinquency, and I used to serve on a commission on juvenile delinquency at the request of President Reagan, so I've spent a lot of time studying this. It is now known that juvenile delinquency and all of the violence and gang behavior and everything else is caused primarily by the absence of fathers. And in this culture today, that is the case. That's what's happening.

Now, why are fathers so important? The reason is because of male role modeling obviously. A woman cannot teach a boy what it means to be a man. A man has to do that job, one who is committed to that lad, to that boy. He needs to teach him character. He needs to teach him how to work. He needs to teach him how to live an honest life, to be a man of his own word and needs to teach himself discipline. Those things are best taught by a man in a relationship with his son.

There are four things that a father needs to teach his son about the future responsibility he will hold as an adult, particularly if he is in a family situation. All four of these are controversial. All four of them are under attack. There's been great consternation over these four principles, these four understandings, and yet all four of them are linked to Scripture. You can find every one of them in Scripture. And the first is that a boy needs to understand that he is to be the provider for his family. Now, that does not mean that his wife may not work. She may make more than he, but the primary responsibility for the provision of his family, for the material needs that his family has rests with the male, the father, the husband in the relationship.

And this again, is controversial and young people don't know this, many young people don't. But it is very common today for a guy to drive over and pick up a girl. He may not call before he chooses to come over. He may honk the horn and she comes out and they go out to eat or go to a show or whatever they're going to do, and he expects her to pay for it. That's not the way it's supposed to work. And you need to teach your sons that that's not the way they're supposed to work. The guy is supposed to care for and provide for the girl and later his wife.

The second is the matter of protection. Now, here we get into another very archaic notion. But let me tell you the way I was raised, when I was with a girl on a date and we were walking down the street, I was taught that I was to walk on the street side near the cars. Why, because it was symbolic of my

responsibility to take care of her. You need to tell your kids that, you need to tell your boys that, that this is a responsibility that they're going to have. The Scripture refers to our caring about our wives, husbands loving their wives to the point of death if necessary, the responsibility is to care for her. And when you go back to provision or to provide for, the Apostle Paul said that if a man won't provide for his family, he's worse than an unbeliever. He's worse than an infidel. This is an important principle. You need to teach this to your kids, and fathers are in the best position to do this.

The third is a matter of leadership. Boy, you talk about a controversial issue here, but a man is responsible to lead his family. I'm not talking about being dictatorial, I'm not talking about ruling with an iron fist. I'm talking about servant leadership. This is what a man is supposed to do, to care for and lead his family.

The fourth is to be a spiritual mentor to the family. This is the man's responsibility. I can't tell you how many women have come up to me with a question about family life and said, the most frustrating thing in our family is my husband will not accept spiritual leadership at home. And yet, that is a role that he is supposed to accept. You can begin to teach your kids about that ultimate role and how they are to function within a family, and really, as I said before, only a man can teach a boy how to do that.

There is a very, very important point here that I hope I can get across, and it is called detachment and differentiation. In other words, a boy detaches from his mother and then begins to accept the role model that he sees in the father. The father really needs to entice the boy away from the feminine characteristics in the mother and begin to teach him to identify with the masculine model. Now folks, listen to me. It is now believed that homosexuality is very typically rooted in the failure to accomplish that differentiation. And when you see individuals who are very, very feminine and you go back and you look at the early child development characteristics, you will see a failure to make that change.

I've been very blessed from the early days with a memory of my childhood. And would you believe that I recall that change taking place? Now, I couldn't have used these words and I didn't understand it, but I knew that I was pulling back from my mother and toward my father between two and three years of age. And I was born Caesarian section, 1936. And my mother was not able to have any more children because in those days, they thought you could die if you have more than one child by Caesarian section. So I was an only child and I was the whole world to my mother. She didn't even want children before I was born. And once I was born, I became the centerpiece of her life. And at two to three years of age, I became aware that she was smothering me a little bit too much. Can you believe that? I recall that.

And one day she had her arms around me and she was kissing me. And I said to her, "I think that's silly." And my mother was a very bright lady and she got it. She instantly said, "So do I." And she backed off. But what was happening was

that I was moving away from my mother and toward my dad, and then my dad and I bonded in a very different way. That's why fathers need to be there. When they're not there, when they're rejecting, when they're harsh, when they're completely absent, when they work too hard, when they're not part of the scene it is very typical during that time for boys to get confused about that role. And some of them almost consciously choose to stay within the safety of that feminine relationship instead of doing the hard work of changing and moving in the direction of a masculine role model.

Many men today do not know what it means to be a man. They don't know what masculinity is all about. And the reason they don't is they've never been taught and they've never seen it. And in our culture in particular, everything masculine is under attack, and there is this assault on masculinity. Many fathers feel that they should not be very physical with their boys because maybe that's the source of homosexuality. And it's not, you need to be physical. Put your arms around them. Tell them that you love them. Tell them you're proud of them. Call them your son. "You are my son." There aren't very many people, only three of you or two or one who can say that, hug them. Fathers, you are in a very critical role during that period between 18 months and five years. It will be important later. It'll be important in the adolescent years as we talked about just a minute ago. But especially in that four-year window, you really do need to be on the scene.

Roger Marsh:

Well, what a critical lesson for every father who's listening to understand how important it is to spend quality time with your kids, especially your sons. I'm Roger Marsh, and you've been listening to a classic presentation here on Family Talk. Now, before we get to the remainder of today's program, I want to let you know about a useful resource that is available to help encourage parents and provide some guidance through the challenges of raising their sons.

The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has developed a new free 10-day email series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book called "Bringing Up Boys." It's designed to equip you to wisely lead your sons to become godly men. Now to sign up to receive this free email series, click the link at the bottom of the broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now as we rejoin today's broadcast, you're going to hear Dr. Dobson's classic Q&A session with an audience that was in studio when this was originally recorded. Now, let's return to this timeless edition of Family Talk.

Laura:

I just wanted to thank you because as a woman who is dating right now, and I'm looking for my possible mate, it hurts to know that you have to plan how much money you're going to take with you on a date. And many times on dates, you don't know if you're going to be protected, and that always hurts. A lot of times they refer, well, if I'm going to pay for this, then later on in the night, and then it's just cut to the chase in the beginning and then you go home.

Dr. James Dobson:

Okay, you get stuck once. How about twice?

Laura: Oh, with the same person?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Would you go out with that person again?

Laura: That's the last date.

Dr. James Dobson: That's it. Do you agree that you ought to object to that? Do you object to it?

Laura: I think that if I knew better how to, I probably would. But-

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. So you just go along with it.

Laura: My nature is to just go along and then not go out with him again.

Dr. James Dobson: How about those that don't call in advance, but just sort of expect you to be ready?

Laura: That's not going to happen. My mom told me once, she will never let me go out with a guy that honks in the driveway. "You won't walk out the door, Laura, if he honks."

Dr. James Dobson: Let's hear it for her mother. Take the microphone. Respond to this.

Speaker 5: Oh, I would say the same thing. I heard some stuff when I was growing up. Boys should call by Monday, at least Tuesday if you're going to go out by Friday. And I think that's really been lost. And I think sort of a preciousness of being taken care of and being appreciated for who you are and just being valued. I think that's being lost a lot.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me ask the guys who are here. Give them the microphone. Okay. How would you feel about a girl calling you and asking for a date?

Speaker 6: I don't think I would like it very much. I think it kind of robs... Like if a girl called me and was interested in asking me out, I think it would rob me of my just internal desire to be the one who instigates the relationship.

Dr. James Dobson: Does that happen?

Speaker 6: You mean a girl calling me to go out? Heck yeah, I'm joking.

It has happened before, but it was mostly with friends. It was never with someone that I wasn't comfortable enough to say, yeah, we'll go get ice cream or something like that. But I'd like also to comment on just, I don't think all the hope is lost. I have an incredible family. My father was one who wasn't just a spiritual leader. I am in a male-dominated household and me and my brothers and my dad would just sit around and just grunt. That's just being a man.

Dr. James Dobson: That's sure impressive.

Speaker 6: We would do this, but at the same time, I would walk in on my parents on their knees by their bed, praying for their kids. And my father was one who I could watch him cry. And he was one that stepped out and not only was interested in me developing as a male, but he disciplined me to follow Jesus Christ. And my dad is the most incredible man that I've ever met.

Dr. James Dobson: I'd like to meet your dad.

Speaker 6: Yeah, you really need to just to see the kind of the unity and the bond. But it's encouraging for me to see that, man, not all the hope is lost.

Dr. James Dobson: Absolutely.

Speaker 6: We're raising up men, godly men in this nation. I'm excited about the next generation.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you're a very fortunate young man, I can tell you that. Let me ask you this. Were you taught to open a door for a woman?

Speaker 6: Absolutely. When you were talking about walking on the curb, and then if you're walking a lady down the stairs to walk a step in front of her in case she stumbles and falls, you're there to catch, to open doors to the car, to open the door for the car, then walk around to open doors to the restaurant, pull the chairs-

Dr. James Dobson: There are a lot of women who'd like to find you men.

Speaker 6: Well, I got in serious trouble if I didn't just growing up.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me ask the others of you. This is wonderful stuff. Tell me, in a formal situation, we're not talking about McDonald's now. In a formal situation, would you help your date with her chair?

Speaker 7: Yeah. I think that would be a good way of showing a respect and a consideration for the date. I don't know, I probably forget a lot of times because either we're sitting in a booth-

Dr. James Dobson: Well, don't you ever forget it again.

Roger Marsh: Well, that was our own Dr. James Dobson here on Family Talk and his interaction with a studio audience from today's classic program discussing fatherhood, its impact on children, and the expectations of men while dating. If you'd like to share today's program with a loved one or a friend, simply visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Once you're there, you'll also see a link for the *Bringing up Boys* book, written by Dr. James Dobson. This helpful classic guide is meant to equip moms and dads to raise their sons to become

God-led men. Discover how to encourage a boy's masculine development and what it means to raise him on biblical principles.

Now, we'll be happy to send you a copy of the book, *Bringing Up Boys* by Dr. James Dobson as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of our ministry today. So to give a gift online, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

In order to reach the next generation, the JDFI has been hard at work remastering Dr. Dobson's biblically-based transforming truths into 60-second audio messages. Each Dr. Dobson Minute will provide young families with practical insights that will strengthen marriages and help build better parenting skills. Now, to check them out and to listen to a sample today, simply go to drdobsonminute.org. That's drdobsonminute.org.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for making family talk a part of your day. Be sure to join us again tomorrow to hear the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's classic presentation about raising boys right here on Family Talk.

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

Roger Marsh: Hey everyone, Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at drjamesdobson.org for helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.