



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Moms Raising Sons to be Men- Part 2

Guest(s): Rhonda Stoppe

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of The James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, hello, and welcome to Family Talk, the listener supported broadcast division of The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. Now before we get to our program today, want to share with you that right now is a great time to give to The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute and to The Ministry of Family Talk. Thanks to some special friends of our ministry, we currently have a matching grant in place of \$300,000. This means that right now any gifts from listeners will be matched and your tax deductible donation to our ministry will be doubled. So if you give \$100, that becomes \$200. \$200 becomes \$400. \$500 becomes \$1000. You can do the math. That's twice as many parents encouraged and twice as many families provided for with the resources that they need.

Now it's easy to make a tax-deductible donation to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Call us at 877-732-6825, and a member of our staff will be happy to help you out there. That's 877-732-6825, or of course, you can make a donation online at drjamesdobson.org. Now today on Family Talk, we're bringing you the conclusion of a classic two part conversation between Dr. Dobson and author and speaker, Rhonda Stoppe. Rhonda is the founder of No Regrets Woman, a ministry dedicated to helping women live life with no regrets. She's the author of several books including, *If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy*, and *Other Myths Wives Believe*. Also, *Moms Raising Sons to be Men*. And Dr. Dobson and Rhonda will be finishing their discussion about that book on today's program.

Roger Marsh: Yesterday, Rhonda pointed out that mothers of boys have a special calling to shape future men of God. Today, she'll be sharing about some of the challenges that she faced as a mom of boys, and God's faithfulness through it all.

Dr. James Dobson: Rhonda, I said at the end of the program last time that I wanted to start this program with the empty nest, and what it was like to have your children gone. Of course, you had a daughter, your youngest child is a daughter, so she was there for you. But what happened when the house was quiet?

Rhonda Stoppe: I became the weird dog lady. I started raising Golden Retriever puppies.

Dr. James Dobson: Was it hard for you? Did you have a difficulty letting go?

Rhonda Stoppe: When I had moved back to California and Steve had taken the job as a senior pastor almost 18 years ago, up to that point, we had done youth ministry. And my kids went with us to camps and everything that we did. And all of a sudden, I found myself speaking at women's events and leaving Kayla, my youngest, with this person, or that person, or whoever, and she was having fun. But there was an older person who spoke truth into my life and mentored me and guided me to realize what we have to realize as moms is our kids are not an imposition on our ministry. They are our ministry. So it's easy when we're doing things for God to forget that this priority ministry, and it's only for a season, has to be our priority.

And so, while Kayla was in her senior year of high school, I just kind of pulled back and I stopped doing a lot of speaking engagements. I wasn't writing yet. And I just devoted that season to Kayla, and I'm so glad that I did. And my children are all just, they love the Lord, and we have great relationships with our kids and our grandkids.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you cry when she left?

Rhonda Stoppe: Oh, wept, just wept. She wept. I wept. We both peeled ourselves off of each other, and yeah, it was very hard. And at that season of my life, I knew there was something else that God wanted me to do. And that's where I was just able to literally just sit in His presence and just seek His face and say, "I don't know what you can do with this season of my life, but I don't want to miss it. I want all that you have for me and I want to seek your face. I want to press into my relationship with you." One of the things I started doing is memorizing scripture. I grew up in the church, went to Christian schools, memorized a lot of scripture. But I had kind of excused as I got older that I wasn't ... I was too old to memorize scripture anymore. It's just my brain.

I can memorize a worship song if it's to music or whatever. And God just really convicted me of that. The Word says, "If you hide his word in your heart, you'll not sin against Him." But I knew I wasn't prepared, and I needed to just be in the Word, be on my knees, and be just saturating my mind with truth. And so that's what I did with that season. And out of that came *Moms Raising Sons to be Men* was my first book that was published through Harvest House Publishers. And there's been a number of them since and more.

Dr. James Dobson: As I think our listeners know, we have two children. They're both grown, of course. And Danae was the first to graduate and leave and go off to college. And so far, that ache inside hadn't hit us because she was nearby. And a daughter is always closer to the family, and will stay in touch with you. And she came home many weekends and so on. But we knew Ryan was a free spirit, and when he

graduated, we knew that it would never be the same. So when he left, I grieved in a way that I didn't with my daughter.

I mean, I came home having taken him to the airport, and I sat on the floor where his crib had been. And for three days, I grieved, I really did. And then finally, I adjusted to it. But in that era when Ryan was in the last days at home, Shirley came to me and she said, "I know who you are. You've done the things that you've done. You've written the books. You speak. You're known. I'm not sure who I am because I've poured my life into these kids. What am I to do now?" She was asking the same question that you apparently asked.

Rhonda Stoppe: And I think we have to come back to Titus 2.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Rhonda Stoppe: And I get to be fortunate enough, God opened doors, actually pushed me through, dragged me through doors, if the truth be known. Honestly, when Harvest House asked me to write my second book, I cried. But I knew that God was opening that door. And Steve said, "You've got to get alone with God, and you've got to decide what he has for you."

Dr. James Dobson: My answer to Shirley was, "I don't know what the future holds for you. But I believe God has something significant for you. Let's watch and see what he does." And of course, He led her right into the National Day of Prayer as the leader of that organization, which she handled that responsibility for 25 years.

Rhonda Stoppe: Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: And she was right on the verge of it and didn't know it. But I believe God will answer that prayer when you say, "Here am I. I'm available."

Rhonda Stoppe: And I believe if moms would realize that motherhood is a ministry, and what I see in our culture is they find out they're pregnant. They find out so early now, and it's all posted all over social media. And immediately, they're shopping for maternity clothes. And how are you going to decorate the nursery? And all of these things, and it's all fun, but they're not realizing that when God put that baby in you, He called you to a ministry. John MacArthur says, "Moms are the architects of the next generation." And I think if we would just step back and know that, God, there's nothing in me that I could ever do what I know you're calling me to do in the life of this child. But if God called you to a mission field tomorrow, how would you prepare?

You wouldn't just buy the clothes for the culture and go have ... You would memorize the Word. You would be ready in season and out, always ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within you. You would let God do through you effectively what He's called you to do for the season that you're there. Motherhood is that season.

Dr. James Dobson: You play the role of the Titus 2 woman in your church.

Rhonda Stoppe: Yes, and we have a lot of Titus 2 women in our church, which is great. And no matter where you find yourself, there's a younger woman under you that needs that. All of that to say, there's seasons, and my ministry of motherhood didn't end, but it certainly changed after they moved out.

Dr. James Dobson: While we're talking about your book, *Moms Raising Boys to be Men*, how did your life change after that point?

Rhonda Stoppe: When we moved to Austin, Texas, Steve and I ended up there, and we planted a church in Lakeway. And our home went from zero to 200 teenagers in one summer. And they met in our house.

Dr. James Dobson: 200 teenagers in your church.

Rhonda Stoppe: And they were coming to Jesus. In our house. It was trashed, but these kids were coming to Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: In one year, that developed?

Rhonda Stoppe: In one summer.

Dr. James Dobson: One summer.

Rhonda Stoppe: Our house exploded. Steve made 10,000 hot dogs in one year to feed those kids. In youth ministry, if you feed them, they will come. And you can feed them hot dogs. They are not picky. And these kids were coming to Christ. They're in the Bible Belt. And their lives were changing. While that was going on, my little boy, Brandon, was six years old. He had a severe seizure that lasted 28 minutes. And Steve was in California at the time. I called 911. They took him by helicopter. Long story, they did an EEG on him at the hospital, and they came back and they said he had severe seizure activity in his brain.

But here's an interesting little side note for moms. When they did the EEG, they did a sleep study on him at one point, and he went to sleep. And I leaned over and I kissed him on his temple while he was sleeping, six years old. And the tech called me over with her marker and she circled it. And she wrote, "Mom's kiss." And she said, "He knows you just kissed him." I'm going to cry. I cry every time I say that. He knows you just kissed him.

Dr. James Dobson: How did he know that? How did she know he knew that?

Rhonda Stoppe: His brain registered on the EEG. She circled.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, you're kidding me.

Rhonda Stoppe: And said, "Mom's kiss." Isn't that neat?

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, my goodness. That's wonderful.

Rhonda Stoppe: It's so crazy. I'm crying. He's 30 years old now. I'm crying. But I tell you what, when my kids were in junior high, I went in their rooms at night and I was kissing on ... "Mommy loves you so much," I brainwashed them while they were sleeping.

Dr. James Dobson: That's what you were talking about last time. There's a time to stop kissing. Right?

Rhonda Stoppe: That's right. But as Brandon's seizure activity developed, he had to be heavily medicated. And while he was on medication, they put him on special ed at school, modified his work. Every time he would grow, he'd have a severe seizure. So while this youth ministry was exploding, my child was not well. A year later after he was diagnosed, our oldest daughter, Meredith, was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. And interesting story, that one was harder, I think just because it was catapulting on the other one. And I remember I needed to be encouraged. I knew the Word was what I needed. But I was so thrown by it.

And I was at a woman's Bible study at a church. And I went in their library and I just scanned to look for a book to encourage me. And I couldn't find anything, and then I saw your name. I saw Dr. Dobson. I knew I could trust that your counsel was going to be Biblical. And I picked it up, and it was an audio book, which is what I needed because I was super busy at the time. So I put it on every morning when I was putting my makeup on. I would listen to your voice, *When God Doesn't Make Sense, or Dare to Discipline*, which you taught me so much and you didn't even know me. When we have these resources that can go places we don't even know where God's going to take them, that I can mentor women that I may never meet. I get emails from women all the time that tell me what God's teaching them through the pages, and that just blesses me.

So as Brandon was having seizures, one night he had a really severe seizure. And it was after a number of years of having epilepsy. And I remember when he was first diagnosed, I would sleep on my bed at night, and he would sleep on the floor next to me on a pallet, and I would lay on my stomach and hold his hand at night because he was so afraid that he was going to have seizures. And that became our life. And here, we're serving the Lord. Kids are coming to Christ. And my son had this one severe seizure one night. And I went up in my room and I told God, "I quit. I'm done. Are you kidding? We were sharing the gospel. These kids are coming to Christ, and You can't heal my son. I am out of here."

And see, in Psalm 119, it says, "Your word, I've hid in my heart that I might not sin against you." And we know that. But when it's in there, the spirit has something to draw from when you're ready to walk away. And in the still

quietness of my heart, I heard, "In everything, give thanks, for this is the will of God and Christ Jesus concerning you." And I knew that wasn't my thought. And I just said, "God, I have no idea how to be thankful, but I will say thank you with my lips, and I will trust you with my boy." And I got up, and I just continued on. And I just chose to say thank you. And as the time went by, I was coaching cheerleading in Texas at the time, high school cheerleading, which is quite intense. And sports are quite intense. And we always had assumed that Brandon would grow up and be an athlete. He was very athletic before he started taking all this medication. But after that, he didn't want to do any of that.

Dr. James Dobson: He was medicated.

Rhonda Stoppe: Yes, highly medicated. And as we were having this church in our home, we met at a school on Sundays, but everything else was at our house. So praise band practice was in our dining room. And we found that Brandon started learning all of the instruments of all the different people. And Brandon became a musician. And what we saw was I would've raised an arrogant little athlete. That would've been my goal. My goal was to hear the crowd glory as my son hit one out of the park, hear the crowd glory in my son's accomplishments. But God had to get mama out of the way. And He said, "You know what, I'm taking your son and I am going to raise him up to bring the crowd to glory in my son's accomplishments through worship." I don't know how many times I've told that story, it still makes me cry.

Because God said, "I know the plans I have for him to prosper, not to harm him, to give him a hope and a future." But what do we do as moms when we want to believe if God were good, He would not let this happen to my kid? And yet, God knew exactly what he was doing with my son. And He raised him up. Brandon grew up. He studied music. He got to tour with some really great worship bands. And now he's leading worship at a church called The Grove Community in Riverside, California.

Dr. James Dobson: God had a completely different plan.

Rhonda Stoppe: Yes. And I would've ruined this kid.

Dr. James Dobson: You have to allow them to take them on the journey the Lord has planned for them.

Rhonda Stoppe: It's true. And then there's more to that story because years later, my daughter, Meredith, is in high school at the time, and she's watching all of this. Your kids are watching. There's a section in *Moms Raising Sons* that talks about your trial may not be all about you. Your kids need to see that what you say you believe is true about God, you really believe it. And sometimes the trials that come our way, God is using to prepare our own children for their battle. I talk about David. When David told Saul, "I'm not going to wear your armor. I'm going to fight Goliath. God gave me victory over a lion and a bear, I know He'll give me

victory over this giant." He fought a lion and a bear because God knew the giant he was going to have to face. But we moms want to rescue or get mad at God for sending, not allowing, sending a bear to prep our kid for the giant.

Dr. James Dobson:

You said that you read *When God Doesn't Make Sense*, you know I talked in there about the betrayal barrier, the point at which you say, "God, let me get this straight. You spun the whole universe into orbit with just a word, and you won't heal my son. You won't make it possible for him to live a normal life and go on and be an athlete like we know him to be?" And yet, you had to surrender to the Lord like we all do in moments like that because everybody sooner or later hits the betrayal barrier. It's different in every case, but we all come to that point where we say, "Lord, I don't think you're paying attention here. I don't think you love me. I don't think you love my child." And that's the devil talking to you because he can discourage you in an afternoon of conversation like that.

Sure. And in the number of years that Steve and I have been in ministry, we have watched people walk away because if God loved my kid or loved me, he wouldn't let this happen. And if they're truly His, they'll come back. But at what cost? What did it teach your kid? So the final part of that story is move down the calendar say 10 years later, I'm not sure exactly the number of years, my oldest daughter, Meredith, her second child was born. And we go running, we were in Southern California, we go running into the hospital. And our son-in-law, Jake, stops us. And he says, "Hold on. Something's wrong with Ivy." And Ivy was born with some facial cranial deformities. She has something called Goldenhar syndrome. We didn't know what it was at the time.

It was unexpected. And I walked in, and they had taken Ivy to examine her over here. And my daughter is sitting in the bed after just having ... She'd barely saw Ivy before they swept her away. And Meredith just kept saying, "I want to see my baby. I want to hold my baby." After we kind of reeled from what just happened, and I remember Psalm 119, as I'd been memorizing it. "My soul is covered in dust, revive me according to your word. I declared my ways, and you answered me. Teach me your ways." That was just washing over my mind as the doctors just kept coming in saying, "This is something we're going to have to deal with. And this is something we're going to have to deal with."

So, after a season of getting adjusted to... she had to have some surgeries, she's had four major surgeries in her little lifetime. And she's a delight of our family. But after Meredith was home from the hospital, Meredith said these words to me. She said, "Mom, this isn't our trial. This is Ivy's trial. And God has invited us to prepare Ivy to walk through this trial." Really? Time out. What if I had walked away from the Lord when my son was having seizures? What would my teenage daughter have seen her mother do because God didn't heal my son? And how might that have influenced Meredith, who God was preparing to be Ivy's mom a decade later. So your trial's not always about you. Your kids are watching to see. And a lot of times, those trials are the very thing that shine the brightest are trust and our love for our Lord.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Rhonda, these are fascinating concepts. And we could go on talking about this book, *Moms Raising Sons to Be Men*, through the rest of the week, I suppose. But we've got five minutes left. And I'm going to read the books that you've written. You've really got some creative work that you have done. And I look forward to seeing what the Lord's going to give you to write in the future. But here are the books, *Moms Raising Sons to Be Men*. We've been talking about that. *Real Life Romance*. The third one is *If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy, and Other Myths Wives Believe*. That was written in 2015. *I Sleep with a Pastor*, that's not quite as sexual as it implies. That means your job is to minister to the minister.

Rhonda Stoppe: Minister to the minister. Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: The last one is *A Christian Woman's Guide to Great Sex in Marriage*. And that one is 2017.

Rhonda Stoppe: Yes. And it's an eBook companion that goes with my book *If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy, and Other Myths Wives Believe*.

Dr. James Dobson: I see.

Rhonda Stoppe: One of the myths that has covered in there is all he wants is sex when you long for romance. And it's interesting because one of the things that women don't realize is that women just think that intimacy for their husbands is just a physical longing. And what they don't realize is that men, most of them struggle with inadequacy and loneliness. And when their wife sees that ministering to them in the marriage bed actually does give them a sense of wellbeing and it's not just some physical thing that they want. God created them to want to connect with you that way, in the same way God created most women, when the husband walks in the door, and talk to me, and you want to interact with them.

And if we were ignored for two weeks, we would feel rejected and alone. And in the same way that you crave to connect that way, the majority of men crave to connect in the marriage bed. Now there is a whole, we don't have to time to talk about it, which we should've in *Moms Raising Sons to Be Men* because young men are addicted to pornography at a young age, and it's going into their marriages. And I tell a story of Chuck and Angie in *Real Life Romance*, how this junior high boy started using pornography as a way to, in his mind, keep himself sexually pure until he got married. Now that works in a junior high brain. It makes sense. But they don't realize the door that they've opened that they are going to have to spend the rest of their life battling that, so that's one.

And the key for *If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy* is this, we have read and heard so many *Cinderella* happily ever after stories. And we believe that it's Prince Charming's duty to make us happy. So when he doesn't, then we look for another prince and another prince. Or we resent him that he's not measuring up

to our expectations, which the majority of marriage issues comes in unmet expectations. Right?

But when we realize that God created us to long to find our worth and our value in who loves us. But it is not in how well our kids measure up to our expectations, or in how well our husband loves us, God created us to find our worth in our relationship with our creator. He created us to long for intimacy with Him. And when we realize our value, and if you're listening today, and you do not know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, maybe you're a good church goer. In the back of every one of my books, I have "How to Have a Relationship with Jesus" because we can talk all day long about having better relationships with people, but if you've never entered into a genuine covenant with Christ, which means repenting of your sins and turning from it, and following Christ for the rest of your life. Not just adding Jesus onto your life to do good things and be a good person.

But when we find our worth and our happiness in who loves us by our relationship with our creator, then what spills out of us is our love for others. Jesus called us, Mark 12, the produce of life is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, as your whole being, and then love our neighbor as ourself. But I can't love my neighbor selflessly unless I'm loving God properly. And then God's love will spill over into my marriage relationship, into my parenting, into my relationships with other people.

Dr. James Dobson: Rhonda, have you been successful? Have you found ways to teach women and men that they have a very different perspective on sex? If I could figure out how to get that across, that would solve a lot of marital problems. Wouldn't it?

Rhonda Stoppe: Wouldn't it?

Dr. James Dobson: Because they see it totally different. I mean, it's very difficult for a man to understand the role romance plays. I mean, all a guy has to do is see his wife on the way to bed and that'll do it. The fact that they haven't spoken together through the evening, he hasn't helped with the dishes, or there has not been any romantic component, doesn't matter to him. But it matters a lot to her.

Rhonda Stoppe: Well, and the Bible calls husbands to live with their lives according to knowledge. But wives, we've got to be honest, we don't even know who we are every 28 days. If we're not willing to coach this man to say, "This is what speaks love to me," because women will be like, "Well, he should know. If he doesn't know, I'm not going to tell him." Well, if you don't tell him, no one's going to tell him.

And what spoke romance when you were young, brought you flowers at the end of the day before you had kids. You were just so happy, and he's going to get lucky that night because he thought about you during the day. When he comes home and you've got a couple kids hanging on you, and you're trying to help this

one with homework and get dinner going. And he brings in some Gerber daisies and slaps them on the counter, he sits down to get out of your way and watch TV until you're all done with all that craziness. You're thinking, "I'm going to sit him upside the head with those Gerber daisies." What would really speak romance is make all this craziness go away.

I've had my mama hat on all day long. My sexy mama hat, it's somewhere under the bed, but it's got dust bunnies. And I've got to go find it. How about you romance me by feeding ... I don't care if you feed these kids cereal. I don't care if they get a bath before they go to bed. You make this go away and I'll meet you in the bedroom after I've had a bubble bath or time in the show just to pull myself out of mom world and put myself in your world.

Dr. James Dobson: That doesn't seem so difficult to understand. We sit here and talk about it.

Rhonda Stoppe: It's real life.

Dr. James Dobson: But it's a major barrier between men and woman.

Rhonda Stoppe: Yeah. But that's where the coaching comes in. Shanti Feldman, I quoted her in *If My Husband* several times because I love her book, *For Women Only*. And she said one of the quotes men anonymously said, something to the effect that a certain number or percentage of men said they would rather go trim the hedges in freezing rain than be intimate with a wife who is doing it just out of duty. It's like they want you to want them.

Dr. James Dobson: Rhonda, it's been wonderful having you as our guest. Thanks for being with us.

Rhonda Stoppe: Thank you. It was my pleasure.

Roger Marsh: Well, that was the conclusion of a two-part conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and author Rhonda Stoppe on the topic of Rhonda's book called *Raising Sons to be Men*. And you're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. If you missed any of this conversation, remember you can listen to parts one and two on our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. And while you're there, be sure to also request a CD copy of the entire interview as well, either to keep or to share. Go to drjamesdobson.org/broadcast to reserve your copy. And be sure to join us again tomorrow 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.