



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Experiencing a Fulfilled Marriage – Part 1

Guest(s): Patricia Ashley

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, along with a relationship with the Lord, a strong marriage is the foundation of a strong family, but how do you find hope if your marriage is on the rocks, maybe a little lifeless or even on life support? How do you and your spouse reach a deeper connection in a struggling relationship? Well, I can assure you that there is hope and that hope is found in the Lord. On today's classic edition of Family Talk, we're going to hear a timeless presentation given by a well-known author and speaker named Patricia Ashley. She's the author of the book entitled *Marriage is a Blessing* and it's filled with wisdom for how to live out of marriage God's way.

Patricia and her husband, Vernon were married for 48 years before he went home to be with the Lord. They raised three grown children together and today you're going to hear her talking about the unhappy years early in their marriage and how God mended what was broken between them in their relationship so they could experience a fulfilled marriage instead. Now what you're about to hear was originally recorded many years ago at a God's Women conference. Let's listen in now to Patricia Ashley on today's edition of Family Talk.

Patricia Ashley: When I got saved, I didn't know that God was going to save my marriage. I thought he was just going to save me. At the point where I was saved I was sick of my relationship and my husband was equally as sick of his relationship with me. Do you understand me? We mutually say that to people. We were literally at the end, our marriage was dead waiting to be buried. And some of you all are going to relate to what I'm saying if you'll be honest, when I say it was dead, I mean that I didn't love my husband, I didn't hate him. I wasn't glad to see him come. I wasn't glad to see him go. It didn't make a difference what time he came in or if he came in at all, that's dead, huh? No feeling He didn't make me happy. He didn't make me sad. He didn't even make me mad anymore.

That's where our relationship was. It was dead. And so you know what that does to a marriage. And along with about five years of being unsaved in the military with no one to be accountable to, we were literally at the end, burnt out and we

just had one thing in common. We both dearly loved our two children and that was what God used to hold us together. How many of you know what I'm talking about? All right. That was our only reason. But after a while, that wasn't reason enough. And so I accepted Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior, and as a result, I began to read my Word, not knowing what God was going to do with that. And my husband, he accepted Jesus in our dining room and he began to read his Word. And our lives were so isolated. We were so divorced emotionally, spiritually and physically that he would read his Bible in one room and I would read my Bible in another room. And as far as I was concerned, he had his Jesus and I had mine.

You understand what I'm saying? Now were we at the end, I mean even after getting saved, after so much hurt, after so much disappointment, after so much disillusionment, you understand, just dead and I don't even want to feel good by you no more because see the feel good then I got to feel bad again. My emotions must surface and let's just leave them alone. And that's where my marriage was. And as we grew in the Lord and as we began to read the word not even trying to be friends with each other again, not even trying to develop a relationship, we just started reading the word and loving the Lord and allowing ourselves to learn who Jesus was. God allowed a situation to happen in one of our friends' lives and we had to pray together. And when I found myself with my husband at the foot of our bed on our knees praying, we prayed and as we began to cry out and pray together to the same God, little did we know that when we raised up our heads and we looked at each other, God had quickened our dead marriage.

Do y'all hear what I'm saying? He had quickened it and he had made it alive. The God that we serve, he specializes in resurrecting that which is dead. Come on now, some of us rigor mortis has set up in our marriages. And I mean when we look at our marriage from the perspective of what God has designed for marriage, we've gone so far from what God intend for the marriage to be and we need God to resurrect it. We need God to make it alive again. And with that will come healing. But it's only at the feet of Jesus. That's the safest place to get it, at the feet of Jesus in His presence. Because as I grew in the Lord and began to read the word and just focus on the Lord, I had no expectations of my husband, only of the Lord, and God began to fill me with His love and with that love, God started healing me. Do you understand me, what I'm saying? And as a result of that, because we just both started growing in our relationship, God knitted our hearts back together.

And now the love that we experience, it's different. Do you all hear what I'm saying? The commitment is different. And what we began to do is we began to go to the word after we realized we liked each other again. That's where we started at. I just like you. Let's not deal with all this other stuff and let's not try to get romantic. Or I just like you again, I respect you again. Come on now, you know how you can do that? You lose respect for them, they lose respect for you. They become bitter and indifferent and cold, and you become angry and hard and cold yourself. You know what I'm saying? Hallelujah. So, God began to work.

And what we began to do was we began to invest time. When we saw that God had invested in our marriage, we made a commitment to invest into it.

Do you understand what I'm saying? And then we went to the word and we began to look at what the word of God had to say about marriage. Because you see what we found out is all the way back over in Genesis, that marriage itself originated in the heart of God. It was in the wisdom of God. It wasn't because somewhere in time, man found woman, woman found man, man liked woman, woman liked man. Man had idea, let's be together. It wasn't in the heart or the mind of man. God didn't just create man and woman and let them discover each other. He made them for each other. In the beginning, man, God said, "It's not good for man to be alone or woman to be alone. It's not good." So in the mind of God, he, and what we must know as women of God is that everything that God has created and said was good.

Now, those of you that are Bible students, think with me, everything that God has created and said that was good, man by the workings of hell has perverted, everything. It's not good for man to be alone. God gave him a wife. And how many women are being abused by the very men that are supposed to be nurturing and protecting them? How many men are rejecting the women? He said it's good that we bear children. How many abortions are being performed every day in this country alone? Everything that God said was good and that was a gift, not just good, but was a gift.

God gave us physical intimacy, what the world calls sex. He said it's a gift. And look how perverted it is. It's so perverted that it's a bad word to say publicly. Everything that's good in our marriages in the heart of God was good in his sight. The word says in Proverbs 18:22, it says that "Whosoever..." And this is what God says, "Whosoever..." Meaning your husband, "Findeth a wife." Meaning you. "He has found a good thing." Hey, "And have obtained favor of the Lord." So now ladies, I want you to go back home and tell your husband precious, call him precious.

Speak faith. Sweetheart, you have found a good thing in me. And because you have me, I don't care what you act like, but just because you have me, you have favor in God's sight. Hallelujah. Now that's what the words say. You must say what the words say. How many of you believe in saying what the words say? That's what you got to say. Now you might not think he's worth it. Come on now. Sometimes we don't. We don't think they deserve us as being good things. And some of us have been so beaten down and so criticized and so unappreciated. I know what I'm talking about, that we don't feel like that's the heart of God. But God says, be healed today and get the mind of God. Think the thoughts of God. Know that regardless to how your husband just don't know. And you have to tell him, I don't care what he's acting like.

Tell him you found favor with God because you found me. Now, what does that do to you? It puts you in a position where you've got to be a good thing, meaning that his heart must be able to safely trust in you, that you'll do him no

harm, meaning that you are going to be sensitive to him and if you are going to adapt your lifestyle to what his needs are. Oh, say what? That's what the Bible says, if we just get the mind of God, I know we got to get healed and we got to get a new attitude. But if we just say what the Bible says, the Bible says that when God looked at man, He saw that he needed a helper. And so we as females were created to be helpers. Come on now. Now I know in this new age movement where the God is within us, if we can believe it, we can achieve it.

And you have to make sacrifices. So honey, sacrifice your marriage, sacrifice your children, and you have to achieve some of your goals in life, honey, because when you sacrifice yourself and give your whole life to this man and to your children, they will all up and leave you one day. That's the kind of foolish counsel that we get from the world and sometimes from sisters in the church. And so it's necessary for us when we've been hurt, when we've been mistreated, when we've been misunderstood, unappreciated, all of that is real. We must take that to the very feet of Jesus and let Him heal us. And we must allow God to strengthen us and to give us His attitude and to give us His wisdom as to how we are to handle the different situations in our lives.

And the one thing I learned early when I started asking God to show me, He showed me, he said, "Number one, this man, you are not going to stand as a couple in my face to be judged for your works. You're not going to stand as a couple. You're going to stand as an individual and give an account so now you can make a decision to unconditionally obey me as it relates to your responsibilities as a woman and as a wife." And God really brought me to a point. He said, "It's not an issue of your submitting to him. It's an issue of your submitting to me." He said, "Because when you can submit to me, I can change his heart."

Come on now. He said, "Now certainly if I could clamp the mouths of the lions..." He said, "If I could do that..." And He said, "If I could open up the Red Sea and let the children of Israel cross on dry land, who is this little man? Who is he? Come on now." Now ladies, look, I don't want to paint an ugly picture of my husband. He is so precious, but he is little. He's a little man, but he's a man, man. Do you all hear what I'm saying? And being in the military, he's a military man and they believe in order and structure. And I told him God gave me to him to balance his life out.

Hallelujah. But listen, when God dealt with me, I watched God change his heart and God began to soften him up. And do you know when God began to show me me? And that's what we need to do. We need to talk to ourselves. We need to say, self, shut up. Self, sit down, listen. When God began to open up the word and he began to show me me, because I started trusting him, Abraham trusted God and Sarah trusted God and she obeyed Abraham. How many of you all know the story that woman ended up in a heathen king's bedroom. Do y'all know what I'm talking about? Following Abraham, but God spared her. Do you understand what I'm saying? That's an extreme situation. And see, when we hear the word submission, we go way over to the extreme. But I'm dealing with

this because it's an issue that kills God's design for our marriages because God designed marriage.

It was in His heart that the institution of marriage was ordained and created. And because He did it, it's not until we find out what was in His mind as it relates to marriage, that we're going to experience fulfillment. So we will never have a fulfilled marriage. You will have temporary satisfaction doing it the world's way. Temporary satisfaction. You get your friend, get you a sister to be accountable to, a prayer partner that would like to invest in your marriage. I believe that we should choose people that's committed to our husbands. If your girlfriend will sit and help you criticize your husband, get rid of her or stop her, stop her. I'm serious. Stop her because later on down here, she's doing exactly what the word warns against. She's putting your marriage asunder.

When you hear a woman or if you are criticizing your husband and the sister that's listening to you, she should stop somewhere and pull the rug and say, but you know what... And I think we should understand each other. We should let each other bleed. You know what I'm saying? In a safe environment. But don't bleed on a woman if she is not committed to the success of your marriage. Come on now. Don't bleed on her because she's going to do one or the other. She's going to put your marriage asunder or take your husband.

She'll do one or the other. I know I'm telling the truth. If she lets you continue to criticize your husband... And I would sit and listen to women and I do it now because you know what? We need to do that. I think that's why so many marriages are falling apart now is because women don't have those circles that they can move in and you don't really have the energy and the kind of time that God requires of you to invest into your marriage. And so the first pressure or the first trauma that your marriage experience, it starts to fall apart because you don't have that network. You don't have that support group. But God would have us to network in a safe, godly environment where you can leave here feeling I'm committed to the success of my own marriage first and then begin to ask God to give you someone that's committed to the success of your marriage.

Because you know what? They'll pray for you. They will encourage you and you'll know that they'll be disappointed if you don't stand firm and do all to stand. That's having someone in your life that's committed to the success of your marriage. Praise God. You can't be married by yourself. You need someone to help encourage you. And that's what the older ladies used to do. I remember my mother telling me when my husband first left to go in the military, I didn't want to leave Alabama and follow him.

And my mother said to me, "Honey, you better go with your husband. You better go with your husband." As much as she didn't want to see us leave. And then my father, he would say, "Let me tell you something. You may not ever been in the state that he's in, but I want you to know there are women there." I started following him everywhere he went, do you understand what I'm saying? But my parents, they made me sincere and serious about that saying, they said,

"Look, go with him. Stay there. Work it out." Now listen, my mother gave me this counsel. I didn't think it was so wise, but I didn't understand what it meant at the time. I later learned. She said, "Now, listen. She said, when your big get hard, just roll over." I said, "What?"

Come on. I said, "She need to break this down and interpret this. I don't understand what that meant." But what she meant was, look, when it get tight, when things don't go right, you be committed. You stay in there and you work it out. And for those of us that are born again, pray through. Pray through. Listen, it says that we are to leave and cleave, the word says that in Genesis 2:24 that for this reason, you will never be fulfilled in your marriage if you don't leave and cleave. Some of us still have emotional ties. We still have soul ties with mom and dad. Come on now. We do.

Now, my husband was the youngest child that his mother had. She called him her million dollar gold piece. Now, can you imagine what position that put me in? I couldn't top that if I wanted to. And that was the way she treated him. And a large amount of our struggle in our relationship was because there was a soul tie between he and his mother. And that thing had to be broken. But it wasn't until we got in the word that we realized that I was now his wife and his mother was his daddy's wife. Come on now. Come on now.

And so what we had to do, we had been married and saved a long time before we realized this. What we had to do is on one of our trips back home, he had to go to his mother and he had to say... He had to go to his father first and ask his father to forgive him for having a place in his mother's heart that only he should have had. He had to go to his mother and say, "I want to ask you to forgive me for taking that place and requiring that." He said, "And I want to release you now back to your husband, and I want to be your son, one that would honor you. Come on now and take care of you in your old age if you need me to. But I want to honor you, and I want to receive Godly counsel from you, and I want to support you, but I release you back to your husband." And he had to do this in front of me and his dad and his daddy was a glad brother.

Roger Marsh:

Such impactful words of wisdom from a truly godly woman today here on Family Talk, one of Dr. Dobson's favorite speakers, and this is only part one of this classic presentation from author and speaker Patricia Ashley. Now, if you missed any part of today's program, just visit our website at drJamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drJamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, as you just heard, some marriages do in fact go through difficult times. Perhaps you can relate, maybe you found yourself forgiving your spouse a thousand times, or you've been the one who had to bend over backwards to make your partner feel loved and accepted only to receive anger, indifference, or frustration in return. Perhaps you or your spouse may even be ready to walk out the door. Now, if this sounds like your marriage, please know that there is still hope. And here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we have a helpful resource just for you.

The book by Dr. James Dobson, it's a classic, called *Love Must Be Tough*. It offers the guidance that gives you the best chance of rekindling romance, renewing your relationship, and drawing your husband or wife back into your arms. Now to get yours, all you have to do is visit our website at Drjamesdobson.org and then click on the resources tab. Once you're there, select store, and once you're there, you can order your copy of *Love Must Be Tough*, and we'll send it to you as our way of thanking you. For a suggested donation of \$20.

Go to drjamesdobson.org, click on the resources tab, and then select store. Then you can order your copy. And again, we'll send it to you as our way of thanking you for your gift of a suggested donation of \$20. To support the JDFI. I'm Roger Marsh, and you've been listening to Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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