



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A Marriage That Can Go the Distance – Part 2

Guest(s): Rev. Bob Kraning

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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.
- Rev. Bob Kraning: Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ has forgiven you.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and you just heard a few words of wisdom from today's guest, Reverend Bob Kraning. Bob originally recorded this presentation more than 40 years ago. It was in 1982 at Forest Home Christian Conference Center. At that time, Bob and his wife Carol had just celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. Reverend Kraning was the associate pastor at Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, California. He also served as executive director of Forest Home Christian Conference Center, which seeks to fill campers with a Christ-centered experience at every age and stage to hear the gospel, explore the word, pursue God's call for their lives, and then to connect with God. Bob went home to be with the Lord in 2020. He is survived by his wife, his two grown sons and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
- Bob and Carol were married for over 60 years, which is a true testament to the value of his insight of a marriage that lasts a lifetime. And remember, Dr. James Dobson and his wife Shirley have also been married over 60 years. Lasting love indeed. By the way, if you're seeking to build a love that will stand the test of time, why not consider getting a copy of Dr. Dobson's book *Head Over Heels*? It offers practical guidance on how to use your head in matters of the heart and to build a relationship that will last. Now we'll be happy to send you a copy of Dr. Dobson's book, *Head Over Heels*, as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today. So simply go online to drjamesdobson.org and then visit our store under the resources tab.
- We are here to provide couples with the resources they need to make their marriages strong and vibrant, especially yours. Now in today's classic presentation, Reverend Bob Kraning, will share what he's learned about how to weather the storms of life alongside your spouse. It's inevitable. Couples will

most certainly face struggles even in the day-to-day parts of life. And if you have the right tools to use, you'll not only make it through those times, but you'll even grow closer as you walk through those moments together. So let's join Reverend Bob Kraning right here, right now on Family Talk.

Rev. Bob Kraning:

I watch young couples trying to get adjusted and the big adjustment is going from that idealistic expectation into reality. And many of them today don't even attempt it. When the idealistic expectation doesn't come alive, they just hang it up and somewhere in there we get frustrated with one another and sometimes we even get angry with one another. The question is, how do we handle our anger? How do you handle your anger? I'm sure if we went around the room this morning, everybody was honest, there are lots of ways that anger is handled in here. There are noisy people in here. When you're angry, you say loud things, you do loud things, you slam a door, you do something to let your spouse know that you're not happy. Other people in here are probably incredibly quiet. So quiet, it's scary. I tend to be that way.

See, now you would think knowing me, some of you were here last summer when I had no voice and you all laughed. You thought it was very funny. I did not think it was funny. But in your mind, you're going Kraning without a voice. What a marvelous experience. And yet I tend to be, when Carol and I get into a hassle, I tend to be very quiet. I tend to just kind of go in a shell and I just kind of want her to know that I'm bugged. And so I do that by just not saying anything. And I kind of walk around and I don't do anything loud. I just don't do anything. And it doesn't take, and the boys can walk in the house, our boys will walk in the house and if dad is not noisy, they know something's wrong because dad's basically noisy person. And when dad's not noisy, something bad is wrong.

See, it's interesting, we handle our anger in all different ways. But let me tell you something, if we don't within our marriages handle our anger basically with communication, we are in trouble. If we cannot communicate through anger, if we cannot communicate in the midst of an angry frustration and be able to talk it through. Some of you guys who've been in my seminar that I've done in the afternoons know that one of the things that I've hit it and hit and hit and hit hard on, and I still believe it is a fact, you need to set a talk time in your marriage. You need to have a daily time that is set to talk. And people say, "That is dumb. We live together." I said, "Yeah, I know you live together, but you don't talk together."

Walk in any restaurant and look around the restaurant and you can spot all the married people. They're not talking. You just walk in a restaurant and watch. The next time you go, you'll see all the engaged couples and all the dating people are in intense conversations. All the married people are eating or they're just sitting, they haven't even gotten their food and they're just sitting. They're just sitting kind of looking at the ceiling and looking over other people. And then every now and then one of them will go, ba-dum. And the other will go, what? And then they'll say it again and that person will respond and then they'll look for. You just look around the next day. You're laughing, but you look around.

Married people tend not to talk and then they hit a problem and they don't know how to talk. And it's unbelievable that we learn in marriage how not to talk.

And one of the great ways we get through angry moments, and I think one of the things that's helped Carol and I, and I tend to be silent, Carol wants to get things solved. Like Carol tends to come at me. She wants it solved, she wants to know the answer, she wants to know how I feel and she wants to know what's going on and she wants to be reassured. Osborne says in his book, "When your wife asks you if you love her, she's not asking for information, she's asking for reassurance." We've got to talk. We've got to be able to communicate with each other and to be able to talk through those kinds of things. If we don't, we tend to get destructive. We get sarcastic, we get verbally abusive, we pull up old problems and make them current. And then probably the most important thing he says in this passage is, "Don't let the devil get a foothold."

I'm convinced that the devil gets his toes in the best in a long-term anger situation. You get a couple that get in a hassle and can't get it solved, all of a sudden you've got a husband who's getting strokes from a secretary, you've got a wife who's getting strokes at work or somewhere else and all of a sudden you've got an extra affair going on because people can't solve a problem within the structure of the marriage. And all the devil needs is one little crack. So I encourage you in that area, agree to disagree, make room for one another. Let me just tell you about some of the differences between Carol and I. We talked about this. We're different people in some areas. I'm a sports freak and I'm not as bad now as I used to be, but I'm still bad. But I used to be awful.

I'll tell you how bad I am. I was in Bonn, Germany when Carol and I were in Europe this year. I was in Bonn, Germany at a convention and a guy walked up to me and introduced himself and found out I was in Forest Home. And he came over and introduced himself and Paul and I began to talk. And the longer we talked, I thought, I know this guy, I know this guy. And he kept talking and he's the head of Navigators for Europe. He's the European director of The Navigators organization. And we were talking and all of a sudden I said, he's telling me some major thing and I have no, and as my wife has told many of you, I'm a terrible listener and I'm turning over. He's telling me this marvelous thing about The Navigators and I'm thinking, who is this guy? Who is this guy?

And right in the middle of this conversation, I went "Army. You were an all-American fullback from Army." And he's in another world. I mean he's telling me something. And he just stopped. And he says, "What?" I said, "You were an all-American fullback at Army." I said, "You were there the same time Roger Staubach was at Navy." He said, "How did you know that?" I said, "I used to be a sports freak." I said, "I knew. I knew who you were the minute I saw you and heard your name." And we laughed. He laughed for about 10 minutes. He said, "Kraning, I'm trying to be spiritual and you're talking Army."

But that's how I used to turn. My head just turned that way. I knew everybody and I knew everything they'd ever done. And I married a wife who is very much into classical music. She really enjoys classical music. Classical music to me is strange, but you know, it's interesting. Those are two very big differences we have. I'm very much a private person away from Forest Home. I do not like to entertain in our home. I do not like to have lots of people at our home. If we never had anybody for dinner but our family, I'd totally content and some of you are going, aye, that's hard for me to believe, but I'm like that. I'm a very private person at home and my home is not a hotel. It never has been and it probably never will be. And I'm just like that.

Carol loves to, if we had 28 people every night for dinner, Carol would be thrilled. She loves people at our home. She loves to have people and she loves to entertain and she knows that I'm private and she tends not to entertain much because of that, but I've had to make allowances there. We're two very different people there and we think differently there. I'm an only child and I never had to apologize very often as a kid, occasionally to my parents just to keep peace, but I never apologized much. Carol grew up in a family of five kids. Carol apologized every day just to survive.

And we're two totally different people and it's very hard for me to apologize. It's very hard for me to say, I'm sorry. It's very easy for Carol often. Carol will make many more concessions to me at that point than I will to her. We talked about it. She brought that up recently. No, but it was in a healthy conversation.

We were talking about this week and I said, "What are other different?" And she brought that up immediately. She said, "Your only child background. You're totally different than I am." I looked back over our marriage and I said to Carol the other day, I said, "Don't you feel we get angry a lot less and when we do sometimes get bugged, it's over more important things than it used to be." It usually is over an issue now, some major issue that either has to do with how we feel about a conviction in some area, we just don't agree rather than just the little nitty-picky things that come up all the time where you just get mad for no reason. I'm just mad. I'm just mad. He just came in looking funny and I'm mad. Or he said he'd be home at five and he'd get home at seven after and I'm just bugged. Those are the kinds of things you go through sometimes early in a marriage. I think the maturity of a marriage, you tend to make your anger worthwhile.

Not how you handle it, but what it's over, it's over major issues and you tend to find that in major issues, you have to talk them through, you've got to get through them, and they're critical issues. And we've been through some tough talk times, but boy, get time when you talk. Okay, next thing that he talks about, let him who steals steal no longer. I just tried to write down four things that we steal in a marriage and I'm sure you could add to this list, maybe 10 other things. First thing I wrote down was time. We tend to steal time a great deal. A little thing that I read recently where a guy wrote down, he said, "If you put your work factor into 50 hours a week." Okay. Some of you may be 40, but let's say

50. Some of you're up to 90 and I hope God speaks to you while you're here this week because you're in trouble.

But let's say you work 50 hours a week and let's say you spend 10 hours driving to and from work. Let's say you sleep 56 hours. Now you can adjust that any way you want to. I don't sleep 56 hours, but you might. That leaves 52 hours. I guess my question is what do you do with that 52 hours? If the average child gets seven and a half minutes a week of daddy's time, what do you do with that 52 hours? What do you do as a wife, what do you do as a husband with that time? Time is a thing we can steal from each other very, very easily. You get bugged at your husband a little bit so you know he's going to be home on Thursday, so you plan things so you'll be gone on Thursday. I'll show him. He's going to be home, I'll be gone. He's always gone. I'm going to be gone.

A husband, he could come home at six o'clock or five o'clock, but he chooses to go play racquetball or something weird. See? See, nothing wrong with racquetball, but if it's consistently taking time away from a spouse and you're doing it for any, and we do it for all kinds of reasons. Guys say, well, I go play racquetball five times a week because I want to be healthy, and his marriage is going right in the pits. See, what do you do with your time? What do you do with those 52 hours that you have? How much of that kind of time does your wife get? How much of that time does your husband get? And how constructive is that time as you spend it together? What kind of time do your children get out of that? See, there's a lot of factors in there that have to be dealt with.

Second thing that I wrote down is the other thing we can steal is individuality. Not allowing our spouse to be themselves whichever direction. I'm just going to talk about some things that have changed in my prayer life, about how I pray about myself and my wife. I have changed a lot in the last six months and I think it's helped me allow her to be a person more than I used to. And I think wives have to do the same thing for husbands. I'm talking about from a husband's standpoint now.

Third thing I wrote down is money. Every now and then you get one member of a marriage that will do weird things. The guy that buys five cars in one year because he thinks it's fun and they can't make the house payment. That's crazy. That's just craziness. Some people have the kind of money they can buy five cars in a year. It doesn't even make their bank account hiccup. But there are other people who can't do that. See, mine would do more than that if I got into some weird way of doing things. But how do we handle those kinds of things? We can rob each other there. We can be very tight in those areas or we can be ridiculous in those areas and create so much stress that we cannot cope.

Fourth thing I wrote down, and maybe the most important is trust. You know something? I hope you have been together long enough to know the vulnerable areas of your spouse. I am convinced that every person in this room is fragile in some areas. I want to tell you some things. There are some things that you can know about the Kranings and there are some things you'll never know. And I

hope that's true of every couple in this place. There are things that are private to the Kranings. There are things that are private to Carol, but I know them and if I somewhere breach that privacy, I can really clobber and rob something that is very, very dear to both of us. There are intimacies in a marriage and in a love relationship that just ought not to go outside. And the longer you're married, the more you're aware of the fragile areas of your spouse. And gals, I don't care how tough he seems to be. I'll guarantee you he's got some glass in him somewhere and if you get a hammer to it at the right time, you're going to break it.

And I think every guy that's been married any length of time knows that you've got a wife who has some fragile spots. And boy to me, the trust that we have with one another. And then the fourth thing, very quickly, let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification. It's interesting, I've preached on that, but I've always preached it kind of as the family of God and I think that's very valid. I think that's where it's written.

But boy, if there's ever a place where that's critical, it's within the structure of a marriage. How do you express your joys? How do you express your sorrows? How do you express your anger? How do you express your happiness? It's with words. How do we use words? How do you use your words? Have you ever said something to your spouse that the minute you said it, you'd give anything if you could take it back? You just give anything or an hour later or you spend the next seven hours apologizing for one statement. Five days later you're still making apologies for one statement. Just some words that were a shot, just a bullet that went out.

Let no unwholesome word proceed of out of your mouth, but only those things that are good for edification to build up, to help. I'm convinced that in most of our marriages, if we could really guard our tongues, we could solve about 90% of our problems. It's the little statements that we make. It's the little shots that we take. It's the little bullets that go out of the end of the gun that we then have to spend great amounts of time recovering from. And He warns us. He warns us within the family of God. And certainly if it's important there, it's got to be important in our own homes. The little shots we take at our kids sometimes, the things that we say to them that are devastating, it's all words. And He just reminds us that it's very, very important. Words, I wrote down words tend to last. They tend to stay around. And remember that that person you're married to is fragile. Be careful what you say.

And then the final thing, and do not grieve the spirit of God. He says, and then he comes down. He says, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ has forgiven you. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another. I think if there's anything that Carol and I have done in 25 years, it's learn to forgive and forget. My greatest example probably came from my own father, and I won't tell you the incident, but I pulled a real boner when I was in high school and it still stands out in my mind.

Something my father had forbid me to do, I did it. It caused some damage, it caused a lot of hurt. And I remember the night when I had apologized and I was crushed after I had done it, obviously as any high school kid is. But I'll never forget my father standing in front of me and I was sitting on a chair in the living room and my dad got up and walked across the room and stood in front of me and he looked down and he stuck his hand out. I was like a junior in high school and he stuck his hand out and he said, "Bob, I just want you to know something. I don't agree with what you did and you know that." But he said, "I want you to know that I forgive you." And from that day to this, I never heard another word about that incident. That was the end of the incident and it was major.

But once my dad saw repentance, my dad said, you're forgiven and never again, and I did other stupid things, but never again did that be his bridge to get at me for the thing I had just done. Boy, this is just like, or remember when. Never. Probably the greatest lesson of forgiveness I learned in my life was from my own father when he said, I forgive you, you are forgiven. And my dad never again threw that up at me. Tender-hearted, forgiving one another. I think if it was anything that Carol and I have done, it's been to forgive quickly and get it out of our system and get it over with and make it permanent. And boy, that seems to be critical to me. Learn to forgive.

And I just wrote down at the end, it's interesting when you look back over your years of marriage, it's basically the good times that you remember. It's the fun we take pictures of. Did you ever notice that? Did you ever look through pictures, albums and see pictures of arguments and giant hassles? Hey, here's our biggie we had in 58, and here's the husband slamming the doors as he walks out in the street and here's the wife driving her car in anger. Isn't it funny? We don't keep pictures of those things. I looked through our picture albums the other night, we got a stack of them and I flipped through some of them and I saw a week we spent at Lake Havasu in a tent.

I saw a whole flock of pictures of our two kids about that big and the first time we ever went snow skiing. I saw a trip that Carol and I took when I made \$58 a week and we saved a year to go for three days. And I still have pictures of that. Those are the things you keep pictures of, not the crud. You get through the crud so you got 50 years of pictures to look at because those are the things that excite you about your marriage. Those are the things you laugh about. Those are the things you have fun about and that's why you work through your hassles and that's why you work through the things that are tough. So you got good pictures to look at in the times that are good.

My wife and I walked in the room the other night of our oldest boy who was getting married the 31st, and he's always lived at our house. This will be the first time he's been gone. We walked in his room the other night and we just looked around the room and all the pictures. He's got pictures all over his walls of his high school football days, his college football days. And we stood in there and we cried a little bit, but we said, "Wow, what a privilege. What a privilege to have 22 years with this kid. If God takes him tomorrow, what a privilege we've

had to have 22 years with him." Hey, that's what our family's all about. And that's what our 25 years is all about. And that's what our little picture albums are all about because we've worked through some hassles and we've worked through some crud to have the privilege.

Roger Marsh:

What heartfelt stories and words of wisdom from Reverend Bob Kraning today here on Family Talk. I'm reminded of the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter four verses 31 and 32. He writes, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you." A marriage centered on God that practices compassion, grace, and forgiveness can surely last a lifetime. And by the way, if you'd like to listen again to any part of this classic presentation here on Family Talk from either part one or part two or both. Visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

For more than 45 years, Dr. James Dobson has been advocating for marriages and families. And if today's program has encouraged you to grow stronger in your marriage, you'll enjoy watching The "Love for a Lifetime" DVD, and we'll be happy to send you a copy as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today. To get yours simply visit the store under the resources tab on our website, drjamesdobson.org. Hit the resources tab and then search for "Love for a Lifetime." You'll be glad you did.

Parents are in charge of passing onto their children God-led principles and values and one of the biggest problems facing families today is the attack on masculinity. And in order to help parents navigate the obstacles of raising their sons, here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we've 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 it's easy to receive this free 10-Day email series. Simply click the link at the bottom of the broadcast page when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, before we leave the air today, I want to share another very helpful resource for you. Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we are remastering Dr. Dobson's biblically-based transforming truths into 60 second audio messages. These timeless nuggets of wisdom are called the Dr. Dobson Minute, and it's our prayer that they will guide young families and give them practical information and teachings that will strengthen marriages and families. You can listen right now. If you'd like to hear a sample, go to drdobsonminute.org. That's drdobsonminute.org. I'm Roger Marsh and you've been listening to Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

Announcer:

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

Dr. James Dobson:

Well, thank you everyone for tuning into our program today. You may know that Family Talk is a listener-supported program, and we remain on the air by your

generosity literally. If you can help us financially, we would certainly appreciate it. God's blessings to you all.