



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Why Men Leave the Church and How to Get Them Back – Part 2

Guest(s): David Murrow

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Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the James Dobson Family Institute and President of the American Association of Christian Counselors. I wanted to take a moment to let you know that we here at the James Dobson Family Institute love you and we're praying for you. If you're struggling and need some encouragement, we'd be honored to pray with you. You can call us toll free at (877) 732-6825, or simply go to drjamesdobson.org.

Ryan Dobson: Hi, I'm Ryan Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk's 10 Year Anniversary Retrospective. Every day this month, Family Talk will present a classic program from the archives just for you and to celebrate 10 amazing years of my dad's ministry. Today we're listening to an interview recorded in the early years of Family Talk. In 2011 TV producer, David Murrow sat down for an interview with my dad in which they discussed the startling absence of men in the church. Listen closely because my dad and David offer some insights you might find helpful. Now, besides the problem that men feel lost or alienated causing them to drift from the church, today we also want to acknowledge that many moms are overworked and feel underappreciated and they need the help and encouragement of their husbands. Well, I hope you find time this weekend to celebrate and dote on all the special ladies in your life that you call mom. Happy Mother's Day to all the amazing women out there. With that said, let's dive into the final segment of this classic program today on Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: I just met David yesterday and as our listeners are going to observe very quickly, he has great things to say and I want to share his insights with them. David is a television producer and writer by trade. We mentioned yesterday that he's produced material for the Food Network and the Travel Channel and many other big networks. He and his wife Gina live in Alaska where he worked for Sarah Palin while she was still governor of that state. With that, let's get started. David, I loved yesterday's program with you. You're saying new things. They may not be brand new thoughts, but they certainly have a new application and a new concept that will certainly make sense to many people. You've written two books, Why Men Hate Going to Church and How Women Help Men Find God,

and we're going to focus largely on that second book today. But thank you for being with us and I'm really excited about hearing from you again.

David Murrow: Great to be here. Youth group used to be a very kinetic, fun, active thing, but in the last 10 or 15 years they've brought in long sets of praise and worship and I'm telling you, these young men are just, they're not responding well to it at all. They stand there for 15 or 20 minutes with their hands in their pockets in a darkened room singing love songs to another man, it doesn't resonate with the masculine heart. I'm just hoping for a counter revolution in youth group. We've got to start recognizing that if we don't bring boys along in the faith and don't make it a faith that they can relate to as they're coming up, they're not going to be with you as adults.

Dr. Dobson: Well, what should have been done when you were that age and they were losing you?

David Murrow: But here's the thing. I was not gone long. Precisely because youth group when I was a kid really was a kick in the pants. There was pie in the face, we did fun things. The Bible teaching was short and to the point. I met Jesus in that sort of an environment. Whenever people ask me, "Well what should we do in our youth group?" I say, "Go copy what Young Life does."

Dr. Dobson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

David Murrow: Because they still target that unchurched young man. And if you get him, you get the whole high school. But I was a young man, I briefly took up golf. I had no knack for the game. So after a few rounds I did what men do, I quit. Because I was no good at it. Here's the thing, if a boy grows up in a Sunday school program that's based on verbal expression, reading from books, emotional expression through praise and worship, the girl standing next to him will usually be better than he is. He gets the feeling that he's incompetent in church. But if a man feels like he's losing week after week, he wants to put his clubs away and quit.

Dr. Dobson: Let me play the other side on behalf of somebody that's sitting out there, maybe a woman who doesn't really track what we're saying and may even be irritated by it. Love is the centerpiece of the Christian faith. That was Jesus' main theme and you do want to emphasize the importance of giving your heart and soul to this Christ, being willing to give your life for him. Where's the disconnect there?

David Murrow: Straight in my third book called, The Map, which basically describes the life of Jesus in three journeys. The first being submission, the second being strength and the third being sacrifice. Submission the first part of Jesus, his life is where all the soft things are. That's the beginning. That's the foundation of our walk with God. Eventually though, we have to turn and become like he was in his second journey where we see him casting out demons and battling the

Pharisees and doing great miracles. That's where the more masculine parts of his-

Dr. Dobson: Money changers-

David Murrow: ... throwing the money changers out of the temple, yeah. And then there's a third part of his journey, which I call the journey of sacrifice, where he actually goes passive. He allows himself to be stripped, beaten, crucified, et cetera. This is the pattern of developing men. You develop your soft side, then your hard side. Then you go back to your soft side. And if you think about the great men of scripture, their lives all follow this pattern. This pattern of submission, strength, and sacrifice, all the great men that have pushed the gospel and advanced the gospel in our time follow this pattern.

David Murrow: So when you say, "Well, how do you balance that soft side of Jesus and that tough side of Jesus?" This is my attempt right here, this new book is to help men see that yes, you have to get in touch with your feminine side. You do have to become soft, you do have to become broken, but brokenness is not the destination. And I just want to say things may seem really dire and the church is, we are a little bit off-kilter when it comes to men, but it's a little bit... I think a lot of really good things are happening in a lot of good churches and I just want to encourage women, keep praying, use resources like this book and other things. Get together, pray with your sisters and God will answer your prayers.

Dr. Dobson: And maybe take a different approach with regard to men.

David Murrow: Well, and that's the other thing. In the book, I kind of break it down into three big topics. The first one is you've got to understand how difficult it is for men in the church today. Whether we realize it or not, we have created a worship culture that is a little bit more woman friendly than man friendly and it really began back in the Victorian era. This has been going on for about 150 years. There was a change in the economic conditions in America and England and men started to go off and find work in mines, mills and factories. The able bodied man pretty much disappeared from church pews and so pastors looked out at their flocks and they saw women, children and aged men, which is pretty much has been the church attendance pattern for the last 150 years. So they began to subtly tailor their methods.

David Murrow: Before 150 years ago, if you went up to a pastor and you said, "Can I have a personal relationship with Jesus?" They wouldn't know what you were talking about. But now we've started, we brought in metaphors like that into the church, "Have a personal relationship with Jesus." Even though that doesn't appear in the scriptures, it takes the gospel and expresses it in terms of a woman's greatest desire, a personal relationship with a man who loves her, and there's been a change in the decor, we've had all the quilts and the flowers and the banners that all came in during the Victorian era. There've been all these ministries, the women's missionary societies and the ladies teas and all those things were new during the Victorian era. So the infrastructure that we have in

the church today came out of that era and we still, we've really without realizing it, created a Christian culture that is somewhat easier for a woman to relate to than for a man.

Dr. Dobson: It must be true because we indicated yesterday from a statistical study that indicated 90% of men say they believe in God, but only one in six will be in church on a given Sunday.

David Murrow: Right.

Dr. Dobson: Something's wrong.

David Murrow: And you know, church does work for some men. The average church in America draws an adult crowd that is 61% female, 39% male. So those 39% men are obviously they're getting their needs met. They're there for a reason. But the population is 52% female, 48% male here in the United States. So there's a huge gender gap and no other religion in the world has that gender gap. If you go to an Islamic temple, or a Mosque or whatever, or a Jewish temple, or a Buddhist temple, you're going to find just as many male worshipers as female. But in Christianity, in Christianity churches of every Stripe, every Western church, Catholic, Protestant, you will find more women than men in church.

Dr. Dobson: You see the men praying five times a day than a women that are kneeling there and praying.

David Murrow: At one point, I got so frustrated with Christianity, I got to the point where I began to wonder if I could be a Christian and a man at the same time.

Dr. Dobson: Is this when you were young?

David Murrow: No, I was actually an elder in a church. I was in my late thirties, early forties and our church was such a cautious place, such a nurturing place and then I would open up the scriptures and Jesus was anything but that. And I began to realize that if Christ came to our church, he would probably be thrown out. He would be considered unfit to lead. So I was just really frustrated. Meanwhile, in Islam, I saw men literally giving their lives for their faith. So I didn't tire kick that religion very long. I mean God called me back but I got to a frustration point where I began to realize, "You know, nobody would die on a cross for what we do on Sunday morning. There has got to be more."

Roger Marsh: And what a sobering point as we reach the midpoint of this classic Family Talk broadcast. I'm Roger Marsh and you are listening to Dr. Dobson's conversation with author and TV producer David Morrow. We will continue this timeless program in just a moment after this quick message from Dr.Dobson.

Dr. Dobson: So many men I meet have such good intentions. That's why they say yes to their wives and children so often. Unfortunately, those yeses soon become nos as

plans change and other pressures take priority and this turns many men into promise breakers.

Roger Marsh: For Family Talk, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. Dobson: Are you a promise breaker or a promise keeper? How would your children answer if we asked them that question? On Monday, one son asks his father, "Dad, can we go fishing on Saturday?" The father says, "Yes, sure," without really thinking. The days pass and then Friday comes and the man's boss calls and asks if he can come in for a few hours on Saturday or an old army buddy calls and asks if he wants to go to a ball game with him on Saturday. The man says yes. Saturday morning there's a son waiting for him at the breakfast table with his fishing hat on and his fishing pole and his net ready by the door, "Sorry son," the man says, "I forgot about fishing. Daddy has to work today. Maybe next week," or the week after that, or the week after that. And another promise has been broken. What the world needs and what your children need are a few more promise keepers and a few less promise breakers. Is there a commitment that you've made recently that you've pushed to the back of your mind? It's not too late to redeem that promise.

Roger Marsh: As you may know, the month of May marks our 10th anniversary. In recognition of that milestone, we are revisiting some of Family Talk's most popular programs for you all throughout the month. Now for your convenience, we have compiled all 20 of these hit shows onto eight audio CDs. Here's a little bit of what you'll hear from Dr. Dobson's interview with Rebekah Gregory.

Rebekah Gregory: For 26 years I expected to get out of bed and put two feet on the ground and when I couldn't do that anymore, when I could no longer put two feet on the ground, my entire life changed and not just physically but emotionally and it really made me appreciate just being able to get out of the bed at all. Life is beautiful, but we have to decide that we're going to count our blessings and not count our problems.

Roger Marsh: You also won't want to miss Dr. Dobson's riveting conversation with author and radio host Eric Metaxas as they discuss the importance of remembering America's heritage as a nation. Here's a quick piece of that discussion.

Eric Metaxas: To my mind that it's strong evidence for this over and over again that we have been great because we have been good and if we want to be great again, we have to be good. Honestly, we cannot make America great unless we the people understand this idea of what it means to be good, what it means to love our enemies. That doesn't mean we agree with them, but it's a whole different way of doing business that we have been doing since the beginning. We have been a different kind of country and we need to understand what that means.

Roger Marsh: All of these entertaining and informative programs are sure to become a cherished part of your family resource library. Now Family Talk's 10th

anniversary broadcast collection can be yours as our way of thanking you for a gift of \$50 or more to the ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute, partnered with Dr. Dobson and supporting the institution of the family. You can make your pledge over the phone by calling (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. Or you can make a contribution online when you go to drjamesdobson.org. That's D-R jamesdobson.org. And now let's get back to the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's interview with David Morrow on this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: Well, How Women Help Men Find God. That's the name of your book. How indeed?

David Murrow: Well, the first thing, as I said, you've got to realize that church may not be the way it's going to happen or you need to find a church that understands men. There are outposts of healthy masculine spirituality in every town-

Dr. Dobson: We're generalizing.

David Murrow: Right, but the number one thing you can do to help your man find God is to find a church that's full of men. Because men don't follow religions. They don't follow programs. Men follow men. They want a pastor who is a healthy masculine role model to them. He doesn't have to be macho, but he's got to be a man. They're looking for an environment where they can do well, where they can find volunteer opportunities that match their skills.

David Murrow: And quite frankly in a lot of churches, those opportunities simply don't exist. But fortunately there are churches that do. This notion that kids are going to stay in their own parents' church anymore. Boy, that's really passing away quickly. We live in such a consumer driven society. So if your son wants to try out another youth group, I think the answer is yes. Let him explore the spiritual landscape. And if you've got a young boy or whatever, when you check out the church, the first thing you should be checking out is the Sunday school program. Make sure the boys are with male teachers. Make sure that there's opportunities to move around and wiggle because what you don't want is a traditional class or a Sunday school class where the boy feels like the girl sitting next to him is better than he is because boys are competitive and if they can't compete, they don't want to play.

Dr. Dobson: Okay. David, I'm going to meddle a little and it's probably going to make, again, some of our listeners irritated, but the pace of the church service is not conducive to men I think. It ought to go faster. It ought to have more energy. It ought to move. I'm not sure it ought to be as predictable as it is.

David Murrow: Yeah, unpredictable unpredictability is a good thing. I mean, as I opened the gospels and I see Jesus surprising his men all the time. And one of the things we're seeing, the fast growing... A lot of people are studying these mega churches that are growing so quickly. Those also happen to be doing very well

with men. And I think one of the reasons is, is exactly what you've touched on, is they do keep things moving. They do bring energy and men appreciate that. There's a lot of praise songs that have come out recently, which invite you to imagine Jesus as a love or rather than a leader.

David Murrow: When a man loves another man, he doesn't talk about, "You know, I'm in love with you." A man's never going to do that. A man is going to express his love in terms of respect and not romance. I'm going to say, "You're a standup guy. You ever need anything, I got your back. I respect you." I'm not going to say, "I'm desperate for you. I'm lost without you. I am so in love with you." You see, you feel how weird that is. A man has to do a lot of mental gymnastics in his head to imagine himself being in love with Jesus.

Dr. Dobson: None of us are pastors, but I hope that there will be some takeaway value here. I hope that they will see we're not being critical of the church. We love the church and Christ died for the church and I would give my life for it.

Dr. Dobson: I would, but there might be some ways to do things a little different that will appeal to that massive masculine humanity out there that is not quite there.

David Murrow: Right, and I've built a whole website called churchformen.com. Pastors come there all the time. It's full of little things that pastors can do to just man things up a little bit and it's not a macho thing. It's just bringing a healthy masculine spirit that's present in the gospel, bringing that into the church. That's what we need.

Dr. Dobson: Men like to rescue those who are in need and especially women. And that there is a program in a particular church many of them I think, where on a Saturday morning, the men will go to the homes of single mothers or those widows and others and fix their car and paint the house and be men.

David Murrow: Yeah, that's New Commandment Men's Ministries right here in Colorado. And they bond teams of four men with a single mom or a widow or someone who needs help. And they're finding that men who never really had much interest in church are really excited about serving these women. And then through that are getting closer to Christ. Then you find them reading their Bibles and doing the other thing.

Dr. Dobson: Now here's another example that you gave. A Chainsaw Ministry. You better explain that one.

David Murrow: Yeah. It was a church in Livingston, Texas. Whenever there's an ice storm or a hurricane or whatever, I think it's Central Baptist Church, the men get together, they throw their chainsaws into the truck and they head to the side of the disaster. They're often the first responders there and they're cutting trees down and stacking wood.

David Murrow: And they do it all for free. They do it in Jesus' name and the guys love it because, here's the deal, in the church, the core competencies are music and teaching. And if you can't do those things, you really don't have a way to serve. But if you can say, "Okay, the core competency of a Christian this week is running a chainsaw," a lot of guys will say, "You know, I can do that. I can serve my Lord." And when men do that, they're encouraged and so are the people who receive the service. It's the balance the church has been dealing with for a thousand years. If you think about the great encounters that men had with Jesus and God, and scripture was often a bodily experience, they were out in the wilderness or the burning bush or the pillar of fire.

David Murrow: There's just this component to it that when we insist on the gospel coming in only through the ears and the eyes, we kind of miss some of our men.

Dr. Dobson: Well, let's go back to your book, *How Women Help Men Find God*. We've been applying that to the church situation like we did last time. With the minutes that we have left, talk about this title. How can women help men find God? It's not by nagging them.

David Murrow: No, no.

Dr. Dobson: Or demanding.

David Murrow: Just real quick, help them find a church where there's a man, that's number one. Help them find other godly men hang out with. Don't nag them about their spiritual lives. I wrote this book not just for women and their husbands, but any woman who wants to reach any man in her life. I mean, a lot of women want to know how to reach their sons.

David Murrow: How do you reach your adult son for Christ or your dad? I mean that's a huge issue today. With the children one of the best things that women need to know, a woman should never give a Bible to her son. It should always be bestowed upon him by a man he respects. The most important thing you want to do with your little tiger cub is to give him the impression that church is a men's thing. The minute you are seen as the driver, the spiritual driver of the home, your son will think, "Oh, church is for women and I'm not interested."

Dr. Dobson: David talked to the woman out there whose heart is breaking. Her husband, perhaps her son are far from the Lord. How can she present the gospel to them in a way that will speak to the heart of a man?

David Murrow: Well, prayer is number one. I recommend that women pray in groups, whether they're men take photographs and just focus intense prayer on their men. And then when the time comes and the best witness is a silent witness. In 1 Peter 3, Peter instructs the women that they are to be submissive to their own husbands, so that if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be one without a word by the behavior of their wives. And it's strange. When a man

does poke his nose under the tent of faith a lot of times women will try to correct his theology or jump right in there with too much enthusiasm. Just be cool. You might be a cheerleader on the inside, but you're a secret service agent on the outside. Just be cool. Answer his questions, get him talking about faith, ask him more questions.

David Murrow: And it's amazing when a man starts to talk about faith and he realizes you're not just going to cram the gospel down his throat, you might get another conversation later on. So the best witnessing advices is a silent witness.

Dr. Dobson: Isn't it interesting that women are more proficient in language than men. They talk more than men and they can express themselves better than men. And the scripture tells women to reign that in. They'll hold it. I know that that offends a lot of people, but it's in the word. And what are we going to do with it? There must be a reason for it and that reason is that you give the man the opportunity to explore it for himself, which is a more effective.

David Murrow: Yeah, you don't have to nag the men in your life. God is calling the men in your life and as you pray and join with God in that there will be an opportunity somewhere along the line and you need to be ready when it comes.

Dr. Dobson: I mentioned in the program yesterday what I've said several times on the air that my grandfather was not a Christian. A powerful man's man, but he just wasn't attracted to the church. He saw some hypocrites there and they used that as an excuse and my grandmother did what you're talking about here. She just prayed for him for 40 long years and two weeks before he died he'd had a stroke and he asked her to pray for him and he died with a testimony on his lips. She won him. She won him by following what 1 Peter says there.

David Murrow: And I would just say women don't carry this burden alone. I mean, you are not alone. Every woman in your church is praying for at least one man who needs a closer walk with the Lord. Get together. You know the devil gets really scared, when women pray together stuff happens. You are there to pray for and support those men and when you do and when your heart is right before God, I believe God will answer your prayers.

Dr. Dobson: We've been talking these two days with David Murrow. The book we talked about last time is Why Men Hate Going to Church. You must read that book and the second one, which we focused on today is How Women Help Men Find God. David, good job, good job in these books. Good job on our program. Thank you for what you're doing. This is really a passion for you, isn't it?

David Murrow: Yeah. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share it with so many people.

Dr. Dobson: David Murrow, my friend just met last time, but it's a pleasure to meet you and let's do it again.

David Murrow: Let's do.

Ryan Dobson: Well, that concludes the second part of Dr. James Dobson's fascinating conversation with TV producer and author David Murrow. I'm Ryan Dobson and I hope you've enjoyed this broadcast, which my dad recorded in the early days of Family Talk. It's so important that Christian men rise to the calling of leadership in their marriages and families. Visit today's broadcast page for more information about David and his ministry. You can find that at drjamesdobson.org, then click on the broadcast page. That concludes the first week in Family Talk's 10 year anniversary retrospective. Next week, more of my dad's classic interviews from the past decade. I hope you'll tune in then. I'm Ryan Dobson. Have a blessed weekend everyone.

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