



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Shared Hope: Rescuing Children from Sex Trafficking

Guest(s): Linda Smith

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

Roger Marsh: Hi, this is Roger Marsh, and welcome to Family Talk. Today, we present to you an interview that Dr. Dobson recorded in the spring of 2018, that we are airing today in honor of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. That's today, January 11th.

Millions of children and young women have been enslaved, abused, and exploited by the sex trafficking industry. It is infiltrated into almost every country on the planet. Hello, everyone, and welcome to Family Talk, with your host, psychologist and bestselling author, Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh. Thank you for joining us today as we talk about this extremely difficult topic. With Dr. Dobson in the studio for this broadcast is former U.S. Congresswoman, Linda Smith. She served in the Washington State legislature from 1983 to 1993, before winning a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives on a write-in campaign in 1994.

However, she quit her political career in 1999 after witnessing the horrors of sex trafficking in Mumbai, India. Linda is now the founder of Shared Hope International, which is an organization to bring justice to the perpetrators of the sex trade, and restore the women and children whose lives have been ruined by it. On today's program, Dr. Dobson will talk with Linda about why she started Shared Hope, and the legislation they are trying to pass to help bring an end to sex trafficking here in the United States. Now, before we begin, some of the material discussed during today's broadcast may not be suitable for younger children, so parental discretion is advised. With that said, let's dive into this conversation now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: I want to tell you, those who've just casually tuned in today, maybe you were driving down the freeway and you're spinning the dial, and you came across us, and I want to tell you and everyone who's listening today that if the topic we're going to talk about does not grab you by the heart and give you a passion for an end to an evil that is almost unsurpassed around the world, I think this is it. If this does not grab you by the heart, there's something wrong with you, and it's

not a new matter to us. As a matter of fact, my introduction to it came in 2003 when I had to guest on the program that really got to me and I never forgot it, and I think she will tell you that was a significant moment for both of us. Her name is Linda Smith. She was in the U.S. Congress from 1994 to 1999. Linda, I'm so glad to have you here.

Linda Smith: Oh, I love this. It just feels like old times, but we're just the same, aren't we?

Dr. James Dobson: You started an organization called Shared Hope, and you're still the head of it.

Linda Smith: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: It's an international organization on behalf of children who are being abused, children who are being sexually trafficked. Start by telling us where that passion came from, because you went to the front of it, and it was so important, you were willing leave the Congress to deal with it. What is going on here?

Linda Smith: Well, as a member of Congress, we would get lots of calls, but I could only give maybe five minutes to each call, but if it was a person of faith, our office was instructed to answer that pastor, that reverend, that missionary their needs because so many members of Congress were not working with Christian organizations or acknowledged what Christian organizations can do, and so I get this call and I'm told about children being sold for commercial sex in Mumbai, India. The guy talked and talked. I thought he was exaggerating, but then, I couldn't sleep that night, so we had five days between votes during the Clinton impeachment votes, and I just got on a plane, privately funded because I didn't know what I was going to do, and I went to India where children were being sold for sex. Many of them resembled my 11-year-old granddaughter, and my heart was broken, and God does what He does. He just showed me, James, what I believed, and that is faith without works is dead, so what was I going to do with this child?

Dr. James Dobson: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Now, that was one country. Yeah, that was India, but it's worldwide now, and it's in the United States.

Linda Smith: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, when you were in the Congress, this is what you discovered, that is the man that walks, he is like a person who obtains a prostitute, that he is not booked, but the girl is considered the prostitute, and she is the one who is treated like a criminal. I can't believe that. I have a daughter and a son. They're grown now. The thought of either one of them being abused in this way grabs my heart.

It's what I mentioned earlier, if you don't feel that, there's something wrong with you, but it's going on, and perhaps a million a day.

Linda Smith: It is so hard to comprehend because we don't see it. Just like I didn't know before the night that I held that first little girl in my arms that was being trafficked and she was very sick, I didn't know that this was happening in America. When Shared Hope International did the research on trafficking America, I was just as shocked to find out that there were middle school kids that were the product that were being sold to ordinary men, just like in India, and by the nature of us calling them-

Dr. James Dobson: Here in the United States?

Linda Smith: By the nature of us calling them prostitutes anywhere in the world, by that nature, we automatically made the prostitute the bad person by labeling, and the man not quite as bad, had he not brought money to the crime, so when he brings money to the crime, instead of being a rapist, a kidnapper, a person that violates these children, he then becomes not as bad, so that's a cultural issue in America, and I think it's a faith issue. God doesn't like it when we label another person and make them lesser because of a label. He didn't like it, doesn't like it when we call an unborn baby tissue or fetus, and He doesn't like it when we call a child a prostitute and deny them justice.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's get this straight, this child has no choice in the issue whatsoever. That child is delivered to this man.

Linda Smith: When you look at domestic trafficking, often, it'd be like my little Lacy. Her dad was in Iraq, her mom had two jobs at a nursing home, and she watched her little brother and sisters, this 12-year-old girl. The trafficker's built a relationship with her at Starbucks. Sounds very American, doesn't it? Over the time, this young man got to know her, a friendship right at Starbucks, and eventually, he took off with her and sold her to five other men, and then said, "I'll get your 10-year-old sister." Loyal to her little sister, she was prostituted when her mom thought she was going to youth group at her church. Now, this is how they're working today.

Dr. James Dobson: How old was she?

Linda Smith: She was on her 13th birthday, is when he turned her. Now, this is more likely trafficking in America, because we know youth, their brains aren't done until they're 23 to 25, and so you get these young girls, starry-eyed, and this older teenager, early 20's guy will build a friendship, and the girl always feels older than she is. That's just human nature, and before long, they'll convince them they're beautiful, their eyes sparkle, and then they take off with them, and then they do always the same thing, "I'll get your grandma, I'll get your sister, I know where I got you." When we discovered this, when I presented it to the U.S. Congress as the only and first research on domestic trafficking in the United States, they were having their mouths hang open like, "How come we didn't know?" I said, "I didn't know either, and if I didn't have all this undercover footage, all of this buying and selling I'm seeing on all of this footage and all of these transcripts and documents, I wouldn't believe it either, but dear friends,

my old colleagues," I sat there and said to them is, "It's American men buying American kids, and we have to stop it."

Shared Hope went about then, instituting a law change in all 50 states. We have a legal Institute called the Center for Law and Justice on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking, and one by one, as we've rallied the legislators, as we brought along activists, we've brought the 50 states to having laws that do two primary things, they make her victim of a crime, and they make that buyer, a man committing a serious crime, not a misdemeanor.

Dr. James Dobson: Is it a felony in every state in the nation?

Linda Smith: It's now a felony in every state. When we started, it was not, and that was just eight years ago.

Dr. James Dobson: But it was not then?

Linda Smith: The biggest challenge we have and the reason, I think this program is important is that bias I talked about, that little 13-year-old girl, she was arrested several times. That one, that her dad was in Iraq protecting our country, and every time she was arrested, she was put in jail and strip-searched, and she was the criminal and told she was the criminal. That little girl is not the criminal. That 17-year-old that I actually saved about the same time, she's not the criminal.

Dr. James Dobson: How many states is that still the law?

Linda Smith: The problem we got is 27 states that still have that law.

Dr. James Dobson: Linda, come on.

Linda Smith: 27-

Dr. James Dobson: 27 states, they still considered the child the perpetrator?

Linda Smith: They do. Now, the interesting thing is they'll overhear in other parts of the law, they'll say, "We know she's a victim, but we still want to keep this part of the law so we can arrest her for a day and get her away from the pimp." Well, that's just another trauma. You're not going to protect that kid by arresting him a day, and you know, when they let them out, the pimps still knows where their family is. They still know what foster care home they came from.

That kid is not safe just because you arrested him a day, but what other victim of a crime do you arrest for the crime committed against him and put them in jail? It is one of the greatest civil rights violations, human rights violations, and we, as believers have to go back to what God says, and He says, "Each person is individually made and loved," and we can't be labeled by what sin does against us, and in fact, not even by the sin we commit.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Linda, let's go back to 2003. I was heading up, Focus on the Family at that time and doing the radio program. I was there for 33 years, and you came and told me this story, that you had just recently become aware of the scope of it at that time.

Linda Smith: Yes. Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: I tell you, you set me on fire.

Linda Smith: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. James Dobson: We talked about the implications of it and what people can do about it.

Linda Smith: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Take me back to that moment.

Linda Smith: Well, in 2003, Shared Hope at The War Against Trafficking Alliance we formed with the State Department held the first World Summit on trafficking of all kinds. I brought with me to meet you two of the traffic victims, two of the kids, two of the young women. You let the American people know about domestic trafficking because I started talking about what I was finding in America, and it wasn't any different than around the world, but you woke up people to trafficking of children, to the evil of commercial sex. It is not a victimless crime. It's going young.

From that, all over the United States, there are people to this day that say, "The reason I got active is I heard you and Jim Dobson or Dr. Dobson," is usually what they call you. "I heard it, and it got my heart, and I started thinking," and they got busy, so you have planted seeds all over the United States. I'm hoping people today will say, "We're going to stand against the injustice. We're going to stop this injustice," and one thing we're going to do is change our language. We're not going to call kids prostitutes. Number two, we're going to change the law that calls them prostitutes, and we're not going to allow them to be arrested.

Dr. James Dobson: Why don't we call it pedophilia, when a grown man will abuse a child, a legal child? Why is that not pedophilia?

Linda Smith: Well, I agree with you, but I have a lot of those scientific types around me that think they have different descriptions, but no, I agree with you. Those are babies. They are kids. They deserve to be protected. They don't deserve to be sold, and any man that preys on them in any way, and sometimes women, but it's usually men, should go to jail.

If we don't go upstream to where the trafficking is created to the buyer and what creates the buyers, we're going to lose. This month, we are passing a bill

that simply says this, "If you are online facilitators of delivering a kid to that hotel room or any kind of prostitution, the kid is a traffic victim and you're a criminal, you, the facilitator," so we are winning some battles there because most of the delivery is online. The recruiting of kids is online.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me illustrate and ask you more about what you just said. Through your efforts, the Congress is about to pass a bill that addresses the issue you've been talking about. Tell us what that bill is going to do.

Linda Smith: Well, the bill will simply say that if you're facilitating trafficking online no matter how big your corporation is, you're facilitating trafficking. You're a part of the trafficking act, and that those kids and young women and boys have an ability to bring you into a criminal or civil charge. They can say "They were a part of my trafficking because that's where I was trafficked." It's a huge thing.

Dr. James Dobson: To this point, they have no power.

Linda Smith: To this point, the Communications Decency Act, which is a very complicated law, was being interpreted by the federal courts to not allow any online seller, facilitator of a trafficking act of selling a kid to be criminalized. The law says simply, and the judges that are sympathetic have actually said, the law says they cannot be brought to trial. You cannot bring an action to a facilitator online, a third-party facilitator that builds a website, creates it for people to be sold on, they cannot be charged. Now, if this passes today, Shared Hope International and other groups have come together, The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and we've rallied the people around the nation.

Dr. James Dobson: Linda, I want to go back just briefly. I want to carry on what we're saying here, but I want to go back to a comment we made about Google and others that are facilitating this wickedness. We really ought to put some flesh on those bones to explain, and so people understand. What is Google's role in this?

Linda Smith: Well, often, we use Google to represent the tech industry as a whole. The tech industry as a whole fought any type of legislation that would limit any kind of interaction online. We object to that.

Dr. James Dobson: Including the abuse of children.

Linda Smith: Well, the result is the abuse of children on sites that hide behind law and they have a framework, what is called a platform, where kids are sold, and yes, they did defend the right-

Dr. James Dobson: They're not doing the selling, but they facilitated.

Linda Smith: They facilitated, yes, and so there isn't one monster. I called Google and I often use Google and Goliath together, they're both big, and yet, I don't want to bring

Google down. I want them to do good things. I just want them to understand and all the tech industry that we will protect the children in America.

Dr. James Dobson: That this circles back to me in a way you would not know. I was on eight commissions in earlier lifetimes.

Linda Smith: With Reagan.

Dr. James Dobson: With Ronald Reagan first, and then others after that. One of them had to do with abused and exploited children, and so we were dealing with the issue you're talking about then. I'm embarrassed to say that we must not have gotten it done because it's still going on.

Linda Smith: The delivery system has changed. We used to think we had fought pornography because we regulated and we're able to look at places. Pictures were created, right?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Linda Smith: Well, what happened on the internet is pictures are taken and sent in a second, so our fight has gone online, so now you made a huge advancement by the work you did. The work you did of revealing the damage of pornography and acting on pornography ties tightly to what we're doing now. Some of the research has come over the years about what pornography does to the brain to make a person compelled to do bad things to another person. We have a conference that's called the JuST, which is Juvenile Sex Trafficking Faith Conference. We have those scientists that are saying just what you said so many years ago, and that is, "This is dangerous."

"It's destroying our boys. It's dangerous." Well, it is the creation of the mindset of the buyer that would drive this market.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's where I link in again, because I was on the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. It was another of the eight commissions I served on.

Linda Smith: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Ronald Reagan was in the White House, and he was behind the effort to address pornography and especially child pornography, but he went out of office in 1989, and George Herbert Walker Bush came in, and he continued to fight it, but not with a lot of passion. Then, when he lost to Bill Clinton, the whole effort was discarded, and the Department of Justice lost interest in it, and it was not funded and all of our work began to dissipate.

Linda Smith: Well, I would hope to encourage you in that the seeds of some of that got into the hearts and minds of research in many places that have our same faith, and

some of the greatest research on the mind and the damage is coming out of people of faith, but they're using science, and that is showing clearly what happens to the little boy's brain.

Dr. James Dobson: So, you're encouraged, even though we've still got a huge problem?

Linda Smith: I'm encouraged because I think when people hear what they've heard today, they're going to take action, and we're going to take this on. We're not going to have a State in the Union, where they call that child a prostitute or where they're not aware of what pornography is doing to create their little boys into buyers.

Dr. James Dobson: We've got about two minutes left, Linda. Let's make good use of it. What else do you want to tell us?

Linda Smith: I think it's really important that everybody does something. Now, we're not all called to the same ministry. God put blinders on me, and now for 20 years, all I think about is fighting the evil, that would be called child sex trafficking now. That is what I do, but we're all responsible to protect the people around us. Learn how the traffickers work.

Understand how to protect your children. You can go on to Shared Hope site and there's all kinds of downloadable information. Every bit of research we have is there for you. There's some books that don't cost hardly anything. You can get them on Amazon for practically nothing too, but if you go online, you can get a book on America.

It's called *Renting Lacy*, and it documents the research we did for your government, but in a novel form, and you go in and you understand trafficking. If you want to protect your children, go and find *Chosen*. It's very easy to get. It's a 21-minute film. You can go onto our site, and you can show it to your kids, and it teaches them how traffickers work.

Dr. James Dobson: Linda, we're really out of time now, but you're writing a book on this subject. Explain it real quickly.

Linda Smith: I'm writing a book on domestic minor sex trafficking and going all the way back to 1910, but then, I fast-forward to close to the time you and I had our program, and I show what the modern abolitionist is doing, and it will talk about the faith community's leadership in this, which I think will be interesting because it'll be a secular book, and it's going to talk about really what people of faith have done too.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, Linda, today, this message is aimed primarily at women. Women are the mothers. Women have the heart for children. Imagine your own child being trucked off someplace, and that child probably came from a broken home and doesn't have stability and love at home, and to have that youngster abused in

this way by multiple men for money is evil and wrong. You know what Jesus said about it?

"Anyone who would hurt one of these little children, it would be better for them that a millstone was put around his head and he was thrown into the water." That's the way Jesus feels about it, and we allow this at our peril.

Linda Smith: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Abortion, the other things that we have fought that are evils are near the top of the list, but this one's got to be in that same category, and we've got to do something about it. Your organization's called Shared Hope International, and you're not only dealing with this problem in the United States, but around the world. It must break your heart.

Linda Smith: When your heart breaks, and God heals it again with His love, and He says, "Where you're weak," yeah, that's where I'm strong.

Dr. James Dobson: And in most of those countries, there's no law against this.

Linda Smith: Well, if there is, it isn't enforced, and in America, let's face it, we are getting laws, but it's not always enforced here either. Again, I say, well, if a man knows in his heart what is right and doesn't do it, to us, it's sin. Each person needs to take what they've heard and do something.

Dr. James Dobson: Linda, you're a hero to me. I told you that.

Linda Smith: That's special.

Dr. James Dobson: It's good to have you back here and glad to know you're still at this. You don't seem to have grown weary in doing good at all. You're still on the front lines.

Linda Smith: Well, you are too.

Dr. James Dobson: I thank you for that, and keep us informed, will you?

Linda Smith: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, this is Roger Marsh. Dr. Dobson and his special guest, Linda Smith from the Shared Hope International Ministry certainly left it all out there on the line, and as we leave you today here at the Dobson Institute, we'd like to provide you with some sobering statistics that are up to the minute. Due to the hidden nature of human trafficking activities, gathering statistics on the magnitude of the problem is a complex and difficult task, but the following statistics, taken from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Justice Department are the most accurate available. Each year, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 men, women

and children are trafficked across international borders. Some international and non-governmental organizations place the number far higher.

The trade is growing. It's estimated that at this time, there are as many as 100,000 people being trafficked in the U.S. alone. Please be in prayer. Many of these people are children or underage teenagers, separated from their families, and don't forget that today, January 11th is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. We appreciate your listening, we appreciate your prayers, and your consideration on this most important topic.

Now, in closing, this month only, we are offering the Standing Strong for Life three-track CD. It's yours as our way of thanking you for a donation of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, so go to drjamesdobson.org/standforlife. Let me repeat that. It's drjamesdobson.org/standforlife, or call us at (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825.

Well, that's all the time we have for today. Keep standing up for all precious human life, and 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.