



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** What Women Should Know About Men – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Shaunti Feldhahn

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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: Well, welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Relationships between men and women can be challenging to navigate without proper understanding about how God designed each. And just like any other journey in life preparation can make a huge difference in its success. Now, these differences also translate into areas of a relationship. And in just a moment, we're going to get into part two of a conversation on that subject featuring popular author and speaker Shaunti Feldhahn and our own Dr. James Dobson. Shaunti Feldhahn is a graduate of Harvard University, a bestselling author and a social researcher. And in just a moment, she'll be sharing with us her keen observations about the dynamics of interpersonal relationships between men and women. But first, a quick listener note, some of the content we'll be discussing in this program today is intended for mature audiences. So parental discretion is definitely advised. And now let's join Dr. Dobson and Shaunti Feldhahn right here on Family Talk.
- Dr. James Dobson: Well, Shaunti, we're going to hear some other good information from you today. Shaunti is the author of, *For Women Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men*, based on a survey that she did with more than a thousand men who were both Christian and non-Christian, or at least churchgoers and non-church goers. But before she began writing, she held several public policy positions and was an analyst on Wall Street. She's married to Jeff and they have two children. Shaunti, I'm delighted to have you back with us for another day. Now, I've been referring to several things we think that men need from women. Let me ask you straight out bottom line, more than anything else, what do men need from women?
- Shaunti Feldhahn: Bottom line, what they need is to feel respected and trusted by their wives and to feel their support because we don't realize how difficult this culture is for our men and really what a need that they have to feel that there is one person in their world who is on their side and recognizes they go out into the ring every day and they need somebody in their corner.

Dr. James Dobson: You're really right about that because the culture just rips into the self-worth of men. Have you been watching ads, for example, on television that have in almost every one of them, what I call the stupid guy? The wife is secure, she's beautiful, she's young, she's got it all together, and he acts like a 13-year-old who happens to be overweight and bald and nerdy. Over and over and over again they're giving a message that men are really dumb, they're stupid. And the amazing thing is that that must sell products even to men. I don't understand that. I don't get that at all. It makes me mad.

Shaunti Feldhahn: If you survey these commercials and if there's ever anyone who's a buffoon, it is almost always a white male. It is almost never a woman. It might be a black man every once in a while, but it's a man.

Dr. James Dobson: Not often.

Shaunti Feldhahn: And the man is always the one who's sort of allowed to be torn down. And I think unfortunately, we women, even wonderful Christian women who want to support their husbands, we've kind of bought in a little bit to this, it's okay to tease them, we can take them down a peg. And not realize that our men really, truly do need our unconditional support and affirmation in order to be the godly men that they're created to be. I hate to use this word, but it's really true, we women hold a lot of power in our hands. God has given us a huge responsibility to either raise our man up or tear him down.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, how do you do it? How do you raise a man up? How do you build his self-respect?

Shaunti Feldhahn: Well, I've had many, many men tell me this as I interviewed and surveyed over a thousand men for this book, and many of them have said, I can be encountering many messages from the world that I have no idea what I'm doing, and I can be encountering all these things in our culture that just really feels free to rag on men. But if I know my wife supports me and affirms me, I can conquer the rest of the world no problem. And part of what that looks like is really building an environment of affirmation in our home. And you know what? We women sometimes think, well, I'm not going to be his doormat. He doesn't need my help. Oh, yes, he does. He absolutely does need our help in order to really become the man that he was created to be.

Dr. James Dobson: I've talked often about my early relationship with Shirley, but it was right at this point, I had not accomplished anything. I was still a student. And all through that time, Shirley was building me up. I just looked back on it and she got this somehow. I think she believed it. She wasn't playing games with me. She really believed. And if you don't believe it, then it doesn't help. But she just elevated me. And then when our kids came along, she talked in such glowing terms about their dad. She made me look so great.

Shaunti Feldhahn: And how did that make you feel?

Dr. James Dobson: Of course I have revered her because she understood my own needs and then I tried to meet hers.

Shaunti Feldhahn: And listen, here's the thing the women out there need to hear. They need to hear that from you because what it means is it's that wonderful paradox whereas we women are likely to say, well, I'll respect him when he is earned it. I'll affirm him when he is earned it. Instead, how would we feel if he only loved us when we earned it? And how wonderful is it when maybe, okay, I haven't been the most lovable wife today, but my husband will extend me grace and mercy and love on me and do these wonderful things for me. And what does that do? It softens my heart. It totally convicts me. It makes me want to be lovable. And it's the same thing with our men. Shirley built you up for those years and was always using an opportunity to brag on you. What did that do for you? It made you want to be a better husband, a better father.

Dr. James Dobson: And especially if she would do it in public. And I'm reminded of Dr. E.V. Hill, a pastor in Los Angeles who was just a marvelous speaker and preacher. And he told a story at his wife's funeral, I think she died of cancer, he called her Baby. And he talked about when they were younger that he decided he was going to go invest in service stations. And Baby didn't think that he should do that because she thought it was a mistake and women often sense the dangers in an investment. But he ran past her objections and he invested in this service station or maybe more than one and he lost everything. He said, she could have destroyed me at that moment. The way she reacted to my failure could have just completely dismantled my self-confidence. But she said, if you had been drinking and smoking and gambling and doing all those things, you'd have wasted a whole lot more money than we did here. Let's pick it up and start over. And she stood with him. Wasn't that wonderful?

Shaunti Feldhahn: That's wonderful. And you know what? I've talked to so many guys, I can almost put myself in their shoes to feel how happy something like that would make all the guys in your listening audience.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, what else can she do to build up his self-confidence?

Shaunti Feldhahn: There is something else, and it is a little sensitive, but it's important. If you don't mind me diving right in.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's do it.

Shaunti Feldhahn: And it's the issue of sex. Because one of the things that I found is that a wife affirming her husband includes in bed, and this was one of the major surprises that I found in the survey and across all the interviews that I did with men is because we women think of physical intimacy in marriage as just a physical need. And you know what? I have small preschool children, and when you've been pulled on by little hands all day, sleep seems like a physical need. And if what you're doing is comparing sex to sleep, sometimes sleep is going to win.

What I was hearing over and over again from guys wasn't primarily the physical component. What I kept hearing from them was that making love with their wives made them feel desired and it made them feel wanted and being desired by their wife gave them the sense of confidence and the sense of wellbeing in the rest of their life. It wasn't primarily a physical thing they were talking about.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, Shaunti, you were surprised to find out that if the wife did not enjoy it and was simply meeting his need that he wouldn't enjoy it either.

Shaunti Feldhahn: I was shocked in all honesty. It took me a while to sort of recognize what I was hearing here. And one guy said, a man would rather go out and clip hedges in the freezing rain than make love to a wife who appeared to be responding out of duty. And I went to my husband, Jeff, and I said, I don't get it. He's still getting sex. And Jeff said, no, you're not getting it, if she's only responding because she has to, he's being rejected by his wife.

Dr. James Dobson: And disrespected.

Shaunti Feldhahn: And disrespected.

Dr. James Dobson: He's not desirable.

Shaunti Feldhahn: He's not desirable. And here's the thing I'd encourage all the women out there to substitute something in your heads, because we have this idea, oh, men just want more sex. No. Men want to feel desired and wanted by you. So next time you think he just wants more sex, just substitute it in your head. No, he wants to feel wanted and it's incredibly important for a man. This is one of the reasons frankly, I think God says to save sex for marriage, is because as one guy said, and I thought this was fascinating, he was telling his teenage sons, one of the reasons you need to save sex to marriage is because in your memory, this thing that guys have about being wanted, in your memory, the worst experience you had before marriage will rank better than anything that you have with your wife. It's not true, but your memory builds it up that way.

Dr. James Dobson: You talk in this book about the pop-up.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: About the fact that there are these images that are there constantly for a man. Every one of us can recall them. It's like an album in our head.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Let me, for the women out there, this was such a surprise to me. This whole idea really answers the question of what does it mean that men are visual? And most of us know this. We don't know what that means. And okay, ladies, here's what it means. It means two things. And ladies, hold onto your seats a little bit as you listen to this because it is a little challenging for us to recognize the truth of this. The fact that men are visual means two things. It means that a man can't

not notice a woman with a great body, whether he turns away, closes his eyes or whatever he does, her existence on the planet is noted.

Dr. James Dobson: In fact, you said in your survey, 98% of the men-

Shaunti Feldhahn: Would notice.

Dr. James Dobson: Christian and non-Christian.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Christian and non-Christian. If they saw a woman, the survey question was, if there's a woman with a great body walks into his train station, you're just minding your business, sort of what impact does that have on you? And in varying levels, 98% of men said that it impacted them. Some would sneak a peek, some would try to turn away, whatever, but they all noticed, and really the guys that I talked to about the fact that there were 2% of men who said that it didn't impact them, all the guys I know said, liar, liar pants on fire.

Dr. James Dobson: And yet a woman often feels insulted by that. If she were more of a woman, he wouldn't do that, but he's made that way.

Shaunti Feldhahn: It's the way guys are made. And here's the thing honestly, because again, this is the first piece of it. It really is critical. Whenever I talk to groups of women, I can sense the ice in the room when I start to talk about this, but here's the critical piece for us to understand. It's really the distinction between temptation and sin and the temptations that we face in our life are not sin. Jesus was tempted in every way and yet without sin. And so the issue is then what does the guy do with that? And that's where the choice comes in and that's where we have to support and help our husbands.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh boy, do I agree with that. And I've admitted many times I am not a theologian and somebody's going to jump all over me for this, but when Jesus said, "He that looketh on a body to lust after her have committed adultery with her in his heart already", He was not talking about the awareness of or the attraction to a member of the opposite sex. He was talking about lust, which involves the will. It involves the choice, as you just said, it involves the willingness to do wrong. And if you decide, I will defy God, I will break His law, I will violate another man's wife. If he draws that conclusion, he has committed adultery in his heart already. But merely observing an attractive woman is not a sin because God made him that way, and if he didn't have that reaction, he'd be a man in a great deal of trouble.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Yeah, right. Well, that's the thing that I think most of us women really need to get, is because this is something we get very defensive about, and I'll tell you right now, it's hard for the women in your listening audience to believe what we're saying because they think we're making excuses. It's his issue. He just needs to figure out how to stop it. And the thing for them to understand is this issue of noticing, the fact that her existence on the planet is noted, that is

involuntary. They can't do anything about it. And here's the analogy that helps us women get this. When I do talks, I bring a big sign with me or I put something up on the screen and I say, okay, here's an analogy that one guy said, and I put these words up on the screen, "Don't read this".

And I challenge the women, look at those letters and don't read the words. It's impossible. Your brain reads the words before you've realized it. I said, that's what it's like with a guy. His brain reads, great body, before he's even thought about it. And that's one of the other reasons I did add in the chapter that I cover, the men are visual, subject. I added a lot of encouragement because listen, I had so many guys tell me, look, this is a temptation, but you know what? It is countered immediately by other considerations such as the fact that I love my wife and I wouldn't want to ever do anything to hurt her. And it really is important for us to understand. Another guy said, you have to understand that men loathe this temptation. Most of us would cut it off in a second if we could. It's just the way they're created.

And I think actually that this is important for us to bring up the second thing that men are visual means, because it really does have impact on this. The second thing is if the first thing is that he can't not notice a woman with a great body and he has to make a choice what he does with that, the second thing is, is that image of that woman is burned into his brain. It's what you brought up first. It's what my husband calls a mental Rolodex and it becomes part of this sort of gallery of images stretching back to his teens that could rise up at any time without warning.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you aware that there is a biochemical basis for the pop-up? Epinephrine is a substance in the brain that stamps those images into the memory bank, and that's why pornography is so dangerous because you never get that out of your head. Once you've seen it, it is stamped. If it made an impact on you, it tends to stay there. And it just bothers me so much that it begins at 13 years of age for some boys who stumble onto this stuff and there it is for the rest of their lives, and some of them can remember those images literally for decades.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Here's really one of the things where it ties back to the sex issue, because one of the things that I was surprised to learn, and it makes sense now that I hear this from guys, is that those images that you were talking about on the internet and pornography and whatever, one guy said, here's what those images convey to me. They all convey one thing. It's a sensual woman looking me in the eye in that picture and saying, I want you. That's what all those images convey. Since that is what a man wants to feel from his wife, if he doesn't feel that from his wife, it's going to make it that much harder for him to resist the lure of that image, even though he still must. But boy, what a wonderful opportunity for us to recognize this and recognize that we have a real role to play in helping support him in that struggle.

You know what, honestly, Dr. Dobson, this is something that I was just devastated when I found this out, and I sort of realized the full extent of this.

Think about this, if a guy, and I'll ask this to the women in the audience, if a guy can't not notice a woman with a great body, and if that image is burned in his brain and could rise up at any time to assault him without warning, and then he has to tear it down and tear it down and tear it down, what is this culture like for our men? It's devastatingly difficult for our men to keep their thought lives pure.

Dr. James Dobson: Because it's everywhere.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Because it's everywhere, it is a minefield. And we women have to understand how to be supportive in that rather than condemning our men for just being created the way they're created.

Dr. James Dobson: This is really getting personal, but I can tell you that one of the reasons I have not gotten into the internet is because I wanted to avoid that.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: I did not want to stumble across it.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Because it's with you and I know that there are ways to avoid it and that isn't the purpose of this program, but that has been a motivator for me.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Can I give some of the women an example of this that is all too common apparently? I had one pastor who was interviewing me on stage as a sermon time and he was being really transparent and he said, look, the reason that I don't want to go to see chick-flick movies with my wife isn't because I'd rather see something blown up. Of course, I probably would rather see something blown up, but I don't want to go to those movies because I don't want that image of that half-dressed woman or that woman in that sex scene popping up in my head for the next two weeks.

And that exhaustion of having to take that thought captive and tear it down over and over and over again. And when we women, once we understand the process of just that image getting burned in that brain and not being able to get rid of it, and the fact that it can come back so frequently, we do realize what a huge responsibility we have to not further hinder our husband's struggle. Oh honey, go see this with me. Or let's just watch this show on TV, even though you know there's just going to be a ton of images that are going to hurt him.

Dr. James Dobson: Shaunti, we all know that sex in marriage is important. That's not a new thought. If anything, you are saying that's even more important than we've known before, especially as the wife responds to her husband.

Shaunti Feldhahn: This is an analogy I've heard from several men and very important for us women to understand, the issue of feeling, again, physically desired by their wife is so central to their emotional health that the lack of that feeling desired, feeling rejected, would be the same thing as if for us, if he just stopped talking to us. If our man just stopped talking to us, we would feel abandoned. We would feel depressed. We'd feel unloved like he doesn't care about us. That abandoned feeling is exactly how unfortunately a relatively large percentage of men feel today when they just feel like their wife just doesn't desire them and it's all too easy for her to say, no. It is so critical for us to get this.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Shaunti, this is such practical information. I just can feel the response coming back through these microphones of women especially who are saying, those are new ideas, I didn't fully understand that. And there's a lot more in this book that we have not yet gotten to. And in fact there are three or four issues that I think it would be a shame not to have a chance to talk to Shaunti about in another program. We started out to do one program. We've now done two. How about three?

Shaunti Feldhahn: I love it.

Dr. James Dobson: Would you stay with us for a third program?

Shaunti Feldhahn: I would love that.

Dr. James Dobson: All right. It says, *For Women Only*, but I think men ought to read it too. Do you agree?

Shaunti Feldhahn: I've actually had a lot of men say that it was really encouraging to read it, not only because they want to give it to their wives, but oh my goodness, I'm not strange, this is a very common thing.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you sort of cheated a little with the title.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Yeah, exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you, Shaunti, and we'll pick it up next time.

Shaunti Feldhahn: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: And with that we conclude part two of our conversation with best-selling author and speaker Shaunti Feldhahn and our own Dr. James Dobson here on Family Talk. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for the conclusion of this three-part conversation as they will be touching on the need for romance in marriage and the one thing men struggle to admit to their wives. Now, so many couples deal with many of the marital issues that were covered on today's program, so if you would like to review this material once again or perhaps share it with your spouse, just visit [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). That's



[drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Once you're there, you can connect with Shaunti and her ministry and also tap into her wealth of resources for your marriage as well.

In John, Chapter 16:33, we read these words from Jesus himself. "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world."

Those encouraging words from Jesus remind us the truth is that the Christian life can be extremely difficult at times, and we may never understand the tragic circumstances that God allows. Maybe that describes your situation in the present time. Well, if you could use some encouragement to help you through a challenging season, I want to encourage you to sign up for a special free 10 day email series from the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. It's called, When God Doesn't Make Sense. And of course, these principles are contained also in Doctor's full length book of that same title.

Every day for 10 consecutive days, you'll receive messages that explore the depths of hardship and examine its purposes. Now, it's easy to receive this wisdom from Dr. Dobson himself. It's free. All you have to do to sign up is visit [drjamesdobson.org/when-god-doesnt-make-sense](http://drjamesdobson.org/when-god-doesnt-make-sense), no necessary on the word doesn't. Again, that's [drjamesdobson.org/when-god-doesnt-make-sense](http://drjamesdobson.org/when-god-doesnt-make-sense). And of course, if you're familiar with the book by that same title, remember, you can also reserve a copy of that book online as well and support our ministry at the same time. To order yours, go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Well, I'm Roger Marsh thanking you for making Family Talk a part of your day. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for the conclusion of this powerful three-part conversation featuring Shaunti Feldhahn and our own Dr. James Dobson. Till then, have a blessed day.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. Do you need help dealing with the everyday tasks of raising a family? I'm James Dobson here, and if you do, I hope you'll tune into our next edition of Family Talk. Our main purpose in this ministry is to put tools into your hands that will strengthen your marriage and help you raise your kids. Hope to see you right here next time for another edition of Family Talk.