



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Help for Busy Moms – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Rob and Dianne Parsons

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Hello, everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, a Radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

**Roger Marsh:** Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh.

It was over 30 years ago that Dr. James Dobson received a request to address an assembly of British church leaders. He asked them how he could help them in the area of strengthening families in the UK.

In that group was a young attorney, who was also a college professor, by the name of Rob Parsons. And during that meeting, Dr. Dobson immediately felt the call to become a part of the new Kingdom vision in the UK. Dr. Dobson helped Rob, and his wife Dianne, found the ministry called Care for the Family in the United Kingdom. And from that beginning, the Parsons have been devoted to offering help and hope to mothers, fathers, children, and grandchildren of all ages and stages of life.

On today's classic edition of Family Talk, you're going to hear these dear friends reminisce about how God has used their ministry in the past and how they are working to tackle one of the biggest challenges facing families today, and that is how to offer effective help for busy moms.

Here now is Dr. James Dobson to introduce today's guests here on Family Talk.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Rob, of course, is the executive director of Care for the Family, which is a wonderful organization in the UK, located in Wales. And for that reason we have just bonded with these folks.

Rob is a former attorney, I guess he still is one, but was a trial lawyer, a barrister I think you called yourself in those days, and it is just really neat to have them here. They're both in jet lag. They'll probably go to sleep and just fall over here.

Rob and Dianne, how nice to have you here.

**Dianne Parsons:** Thank you. It's great to be here.

Rob Parsons: Wonderful to be here, thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: I remember meeting with you in the very early days when we agreed that I was not needed to come to London, or to the UK, to do what we do. Why not have somebody there that the people in that country know and trust? And Rob stepped up to the plate, left, I'm sure, a lucrative assignment and started this ministry that God has blessed.

Rob, looking back on it, you must be excited.

Rob Parsons: It is amazing, because I'd left this quite large law practice and suddenly we began Care for the Family, just myself and a part-time secretary in one room and hardly knowing how it would go, Jim, but my scariest time came when you and Shirley came to one of our marriage seminars.

Dr. James Dobson: I remember it well.

Rob Parsons: And you just happened to be in Edinburgh, and Dianne and I were doing a marriage seminar, and suddenly you slipped in and stayed the whole seminar. And you came up to me in the interval and you said, "Rob, I love this material." And I said, "Well, I'm not surprised, because it's your stuff."

Dr. James Dobson: I remember that day. Well, I was there working on a book, which turned out to be, *When God Doesn't Make Sense*.

Rob Parsons: Yes, that's correct.

Dr. James Dobson: And you came to Edinburgh and Shirley and I came to hear you, and again, I'm just so proud of you and what's happening now. You've written a number of books that have been very, very successful including *The Sixty Minute Father* and *The Sixty Minute Marriage*, and what else can you do in 60 minutes? But Dianne, you've got a book that now you have collaborated with Rob on.

Dianne Parsons: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Describe it.

Dianne Parsons: Well, it's called *The Sixty Minute Mother* and it's come out of a passion that I have for women who are mums and who have a tough job bringing up children. Lots of it not recognized. Mine came out of, I think, a time when I was really unwell.

I'd had Katie, who was three, and Lloyd, who was six months old. And I can remember waking up one morning thinking, "I just can't cope anymore." And something just happened to me and I was a relatively normal, bubbly person, but something happened that I can remember waking up that morning thinking, "I cannot cope anymore."

Dr. James Dobson: Would you call that postpartum depression or do they not call it that?

Dianne Parsons: I didn't call it that, because I knew it was something different, because it went on for not weeks, or months, but years. And out of that came a burning desire to be very real and honest with women and for women.

Dr. James Dobson: And to reach out to many other women. You speak every year at what's called Spring Harvest in the UK. That's the big Christian event of the year, isn't it?

Dianne Parsons: It's amazing. About 50,000 people go through Spring Harvest, which is held on a coastline in Britain and it's in a campsite, and about 50,000 people go through, there and people from all walks of life with great needs, great needs. So it's a privilege.

Dr. James Dobson: And you have spoken there many times.

Dianne Parsons: Many times.

Dr. James Dobson: To women.

Dianne Parsons: To women and to men. But my heart is...

Dr. James Dobson: About women.

Dianne Parsons: Yes, it is for women, really.

Dr. James Dobson: Well let's go back to the autobiographical aspect of this book, *The Sixty Minute Mother*, because you're really talking about your journey and yourself as it relates to many, many others.

Why were you depressed? You had a good husband who loved you, and therefore, a good marriage, and you had responsibilities that women long for who don't have it. Those who can't have children. There you've got two precious healthy kids and you're depressed. Why?

Dianne Parsons: "I don't know" is the answer. I look back on it and wished I hadn't had to go through it, but life is strange, isn't it? You learn things through the dark times that you would never learn if the sun was shining all the time.

Dr. James Dobson: That's right.

Dianne Parsons: It did just suddenly happen. They found that I had a real problem with my immune system several months, or years even, down the line, but that caused me to go into a real depression, so much so I couldn't even write a check in the local supermarket. I couldn't look after my own children, and that made me feel incredibly inadequate.

Rob was on this fast track ladder in the law practice, and here I was hanging onto the bottom rung trying to survive. And so when I came out of that, it made me feel there must be other women that go through those things, and they need to know it's okay that something good may come out of it at the end.

Dr. James Dobson: Rob, did you understand what Dianne was going through?

Rob Parsons: I did, Jim, but I honestly feel that I made many mistakes. Where I was from a very poor home, Dad was a mailman, mum was an office cleaner. We didn't have things like an inside bathroom or running hot water, so when I had the chance to be a lawyer, it was amazing for me. And I think I went on a kick to prove myself. And frankly, I think I was just too busy.

I wrote *The Sixty Minute Father* about mistakes I felt I'd made in those years when the children were very young. I'd come home late from the office and Dianne had long since given up trying to talk to me, but two small children hadn't. And these kids would be trying to share their day with me, and I'd be on another planet, and it wasn't until the telephone rang and a little boy said, "Daddy, it's for you." I'd suddenly come alive and I'd be dispensing my wisdom, my strategy, and my counsel.

And then Dianne became ill, and it really shook me, because I realized that all I was relatively successful, certainly more than I'd ever dreamt of, my family were cracking up around me, and my kids were missing me, and my wife, I wasn't giving her the support I needed, and I was trying to say yes to the whole world. And in the process saying no to those who were my primary responsibility.

Dr. James Dobson: Does that sound familiar? I have heard this combination. That just comes up repeatedly.

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely. And I think for me it was Rob was in this career and motherhood was being just a mother. And I thought, "Is this all worthwhile. Is this job worthwhile?" Because it never seemed to me that anybody ever praised mothers for the job that they do at home.

Dr. James Dobson: They still don't, do they?

Dianne Parsons: Not really. I was speaking the other day, actually it was in Spring Harvest, and I did have a round of applause when I said, "I really wish the government would pay mothers what they deserve to be at home with their children."

Rob Parsons: But it's a strange thing because, and I don't understand this, I'm sure there are lots of people running marriage seminars and they've not been through those tough times, but we have found that the tough times have been the key, certainly, to the work we've done in Britain, this sharing of difficulties and some pain.

And in some ways I thank God for that time, because although it was very hard, it really brought me up. And I must say, and I'm not trying to be extra kind to you, but the things you were saying at that time, Dr. Dobson, affected me enormously. You said something like this, "We are so busy giving our kids what we didn't have. We don't have time to give them what we did have." You probably don't even remember saying it, but I remember hearing you say it, and it affected me deeply.

Dr. James Dobson: I remember it, but I'm amazed you do is the thing. That is the way it is. You have an illustration in this book that fits right at this point. You remember talking about the caterpillar? That is a wonderful example.

Dianne Parsons: It really is.

Dr. James Dobson: Share that

Dianne Parsons: You share that, Rob, because somebody gave you that story.

Rob Parsons: Oh, it's this business of the thing Dianne talked about how hard it is to let our children go. We spend all our life protecting them. We see them across the road, but we can't protect them all their lives. But the illustration is a woman goes into a garden, she sees a chrysalis. This butterfly is trying to get out of the chrysalis and leave the caterpillar behind, but it's struggling. And she feels tremendous compassion for it. And she goes in and she gets a little knife, and she cuts the edge of the chrysalis to allow the butterfly out more easily. And sure enough it comes out very easily, but then it flaps its wings a couple of times and falls to the ground, and actually quickly dies.

And she's sad at that, but later she meets a friend who understands these things, who explained what happened. And she said, "Susan, you meant well, but in truth that butterfly was meant to fight in the chrysalis, because the fight makes the wings strong. And you were kind, but actually..."

You have to let our kids, because they began talking about go through tough times. You almost have to stand back sometimes, and in some ways, even allow them a little hurt. But it's the hardest bit of letting go, especially if you're a bit of a control freak like me, because you want to sort everything out for them. But the principle of the butterfly works, I think, in many areas of life. And in our own experience, the principle of the butterfly, the hard times worked very strongly.

Dr. James Dobson: Our Heavenly Father allows us to struggle to get out of the cocoon. And so it applies to us as well as to our children.

And you grew and became stronger, Dianne, as a result of going through this. The Lord could have taken that away and He let you struggle.

Dianne Parsons: Yes, absolutely. And you do wonder why, and you do think, "Is there something I've done wrong? Am I making a real mess of this?" But as you look back, I almost see God giving me pieces of jigsaw from the sky to fit into the puzzle, and it's a real relief.

But I think as well, it's how we learn to deal with those issues if we allow God to work through them later on, not at that time. Because I didn't even feel God very close to me at that time.

Dr. James Dobson: You probably suffered from low self-esteem at that time.

Dianne Parsons: Oh, very low.

Dr. James Dobson: And felt like a very bad mother.

Dianne Parsons: Very low self-esteem.

Dr. James Dobson: All those things go with it.

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely.

In fact, I can remember being at a law society dinner with Rob, and I had just had Lloyd. And as I walked in, I met a friend and she said to me, "Hi, Di, how are you? When is the baby due?" Because my stomach hadn't gone back down to its normal size.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, boy. You never forget a comment like that.

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely. And she didn't mean...

Dr. James Dobson: I want to tell you something. I made that mistake with a woman one time. I will never make the same mistake. I don't care if she's 10 months pregnant. I won't ask. This lady didn't let me off the hook either, boy.

Dianne Parsons: And then in the same evening, we were sat around a table similar to this and a young lawyer woman said to me, "Hi, Di, how are you? Do you work?" And I just wanted the floor to open up and swallow her.

And I can remember thinking, "Well, do I work? I know that I have two children that are totally dependent on me, and I know that the hours I put in are probably a lot longer than the hours that she puts in." But I can remember muttering back, "I'm just a mum at home with children." But somebody gave me something years later, and I have some sympathy with the woman who wrote this:

"Yes, I do work. I'm in a Program of Social Development and at present I'm working with three age groups. First with babies and toddlers, that involves a

basic grasp of medicine and child psychology. Next, I'm working with teenagers, and I confess the program is not going too well in that area at the moment, and finally, it's evenings and weekends. I work with a man, aged 39, who's exhibiting all the classic symptoms of midlife crisis. That's mainly psychiatric work. The whole job involves planning and a make-it-happen attitude, and the ability to crisis manage. I used to be an international fashion model, but I got bored."

Dr. James Dobson: That is great stuff.

Dianne Parsons: And I tell you, the women who are mums at home, when I say that in these seminars, they are so relieved. And to just tell them that they are directors of social development, you can see their heads rise and self-esteem just build in them. It's wonderful.

Rob Parsons: I actually have some business cards printed for Dianne, which said, "Dianne Parsons, Director of Social Development." And she noticed that when she was in government buildings or somewhere and they asked for what she did, and she gave them this card, they really treated her well.

Dianne Parsons: Oh, yes. It was amazing.

Dr. James Dobson: That's a sad value system of the culture that says it's not worth a woman's time to raise children. It is worth the very best that both a man and a woman can invest in.

Dianne Parsons: And I have to be honest, it wasn't until my children were a lot older did I realize that. That's why I really wanted to share with women that the job that they will do is the most important job that they will ever do, that their children will remember them forever, for good or for bad.

Dr. James Dobson: I never allow a woman to say to me, "I'm just a mom." I will jump all over that, because that reveals this cultural bias that I disagree with so strongly. We do need to reaffirm moms. What is more important than raising the next generation?

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: The husband is a key to it, because if he values her, she can make it.

Dianne Parsons: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And if he doesn't, then it becomes really difficult.

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely.

Rob Parsons: And it changed for me. I spent all, not all my life, but a lot of time now speaking in the business community to businessmen and to corporations about getting some decent lifestyle balance.

I was speaking recently at a very big financial institution. I brought their keynote address at the end of their day, and when I finished the chairman, a man about 60, stood up to thank me. Tall man, pinstripe suit, gray hair. But he was having difficulty speaking, and I didn't understand that. But when he sat next to me, I could see why. This man was crying, which was embarrassing because all his people were out there. He was the chairman of the company. And I reached up my arm and I said, "Are you all right?" He said, "Rob, I am, but I found it all a bit emotional. I've been away for five days, and I just got back and said to my 14-year-old boy, 'Son, did you miss me?'

'Dad,' he said, 'I really didn't, because you're never here.'" And he said, "What upset me was this boy wasn't being sarcastic, he was articulating what has become for him a lifestyle." And what I'm finding is what happened to me as we talk about things, the kind of things, Dr. Dobson, you've talked about over the years, how fast the door of childhood closes. It closes so fast, it takes your breath away, that men have lights turned on for them. And actually many of them do change, it's just that no one's talking to them about these things. And it's not until the end of their career and they got the car parking space marked CEO in the office overlooking the lake, and they look around and think, "Where did my life go?" They begin to really think about these things.

Dr. James Dobson: Dianne, we can't leave you in a state of depression. How'd you get out of it?

Dianne Parsons: No, I just believe God gradually brought me out of it. It was a long, long time, and it was a time when I couldn't even go to church. So we opened our home to a group of people who were struggling, because I was struggling with my faith. And lots of people came in, all different walks of life, including mums. And it was a long time before I came out of it, but when I did eventually get a lot better, I felt I wanted to give something back in to these mothers who might be going through the same thing.

So I get days now where I still feel tired, and I have to be very careful, because of my immune system, but I do feel a lot better. And I just really, really want my life to be able to share with mothers and women how special they are.

Dr. James Dobson: So you began to come out of it when you began giving to others?

Dianne Parsons: Do you know, I don't even know that. I think that it just went over such a long period of time and I had to, in that time, have mums into the home because I couldn't go out. So it was a gradual process, really. But I did come out of it, and I really believe that God wants me to use it as a great tool to get to other mums and ladies.



Rob Parsons: But that is an interesting comment, Dr. Dobson, because the church got behind us and asked us to open our home in this way, and we called it For Strugglers. And it was for people who kind of had lost their faith, or had no faith, or were going through some emotional difficulty and people crowded into our home once a week. In fact, we still hold it. We still have that.

Dr. James Dobson: That was before Care for the Family.

Rob Parsons: That was long before Care for the Family. And I think there were the seeds of Care for the Family, because we discovered a principle of the faith there, which is at the heart of all we do now in Care for the Family. And Dianne calls it the "power of weakness." That the world is full of successful people who've got to all together, and they're nice, but they don't help us too much. We need people to come and say, "Me too." And then to introduce us to God's grace and God's power. And the Bible says, when we're weak, we're strong.

And there is a sense about vulnerability that allows people to find answers in their own life and to see the grace of God in all. So, those struggler's evenings were remarkable times, and my respect and love for Dianne just grew and grew as I saw this... I saw a whole new woman emerge out of this experience. Just frightened the life out of me.

Dr. James Dobson: Dianne, were your children affected? How did they cope with your illness?

Dianne Parsons: Well, they were very young, but I can remember sitting in a chair, very clearly thinking, "Do I love my children? Do I love my husband? Do I love my children?" And I look back now, and sometimes I get a pang of pain to realize that Lloyd didn't have the bedtime stories from me that Katie did, and I just look to Heaven and say, "God, this is obviously not my problem, but I'm sad nonetheless."

But I don't think they have been affected long term by it, no, because Rob was in the background, and I have to say he was amazing with time that I could not give. I just spent lots of time sleeping, and it was hard. But Rob was amazing with them at that time.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I thank God for what he's done in your life, not only making you whole, but then helping you use that difficult period to reach out to others in this book, *The Sixty Minute Mother*.

And we want to hear next time a little more about what mothers are saying to you. The women that you talk to at Spring Harvest are not emotionally ill most of them.

Dianne Parsons: No.

Dr. James Dobson: But they experience many of the same things.

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: And ask many of the same questions. I was just thinking while you were talking, they're the standard questions that women ask when they go through something like this. One is, "Am I worthy as a person? Do I have any value at all? Does anybody love me? Am I a good mother? I'm probably not. Do I love my kids?" And then you come to the real kicker. Satan really throws this one at you." Is God there? Does He care? Does He know? Does He value me?"

Dianne Parsons: I often thought that.

Dr. James Dobson: You get the wrong answers to those five questions, and it's a difficult season of life. You call it the dark times.

Let's just pick it up next time with those women that are out there that you're ministering to now, what you're hearing, what you're learning, and what advice you can offer to those who are listening to us on the radio. It's really neat having you here.

Dianne Parsons: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: And let's do it again next time.

Dianne Parsons: Thank you so much.

Rob Parsons: Bless you. Thank you so much. It's a thrill to be with you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a heartfelt, classic conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and his good friends, Rob and Dianne Parsons, here on Family Talk. If you'd like to learn more about Care for the Family Ministries in Wales, or if you'd like to learn more about what's going on in the ministry of Rob and Dianne Parsons, you can visit our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

Now, the book that Rob and Dianne Parsons talked about today was entitled *The Sixty Minute Mother: An Hour of Reading For A Lifetime of Love*, and you can find a link for this book on our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

Now, we also recommend the book *Night Light for Parents*, written by Dr. James Dobson and his wife, Shirley. This daily devotional is filled with encouraging insights and spiritual wisdom. You can have one sent to your home right away. As a matter of fact, we'll send it to you as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today. Simply click on the bottom of the broadcast page when you go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). *Night Light for Parents* offers heartwarming stories, biblical truth, and practical parenting advice that has guided the Dobsons and many families around the world for more than three decades. So make sure you get your copy today. Again, we'll send you a copy of the book,

*Night Light for Parents*, as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today. Click the link on the bottom of our broadcast page when you go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

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You can also make a donation using our app, or by calling 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Lisa, and the rest of our Customer Care Team, are standing by ready to speak with you. And from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, please know how much we appreciate your prayers and ongoing financial support.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for part two of this classic conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and his special guests, Rob and Dianne Parsons, talking about more help for busy moms. That's coming up tomorrow, right here on Family Talk.

Announcer:

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