



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Help for Busy Moms – Part 2

Guest(s): Rob and Dianne Parsons

Air Date: May 10, 2024

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and before we go into today's broadcast, I want to remind you that the month of May is special here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute because we have a special \$300,000 matching gift in place right now. Every dollar you donate to JDFI will be doubled up to \$300,000. Learn more about how your gift can be doubled today and have twice the impact for marriages and families the world over when you go to drjamesdobson.org. Of course, this Sunday is Mother's Day and when we think of a mom, we know that she has many, many hats to wear, if you will. In various forms, she's a caregiver, a spiritual guide, a nurse, a party planner, a chef, a psychologist, entertainer, safety monitor, and also a shoulder to cry on. That, in addition to being either a wife or a single parent, or possibly even juggling a career or being the household manager.

All of the demands of being a mom can certainly seem unending, even if her husband is completely engaged in the parenting process and throughout the various seasons of parenthood, a great number of moms are worn out, overextended, and quite frankly, burned out. Now, if that describes your situation, we've got some good news for you today here on Family Talk. We're about to hear the encouraging conclusion of a special two-part conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and his special friends, Rob and Dianne Parsons. The Parsons family lead the UK-based ministry called Care for the Family. And together, Rob and Dianne have written a number of helpful resources aimed at helping parents and families. Now on today's classic edition of Family Talk, we're going to continue hearing the dialogue on the theme of help for busy moms. So now let's join Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Rob and Dianne Parsons for today's edition of Family Talk.

Dianne Parsons: First of all, is motherhood a worthy job to do? Secondly, I think they think that they are alone very often in the situation that they're going through, that nobody else could possibly be going through that situation. My cry to them is you are never alone in it.

Dr. James Dobson: It's a relief for them just to hear that this is normal.

Dianne Parsons: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: That many, many women experience it.

Dianne Parsons: And you know why I think we feel alone is, because we feel almost ashamed to share what we are going through. And another point to that is I believe that we are so quick to judge each other that we are ashamed to share, and my heart to women is please don't judge each other. You never know what's around the corner for you.

Dr. James Dobson: How common is rather irrational guilt in the women that you're talking to?

Dianne Parsons: Very common. I think as somebody once put it, guilt comes with the umbilical cord and most women would feel guilty of, are they a good mother? Are they a good wife? Are people looking at them and thinking, are they doing a good enough job? It's a real issue. Guilt is a huge word for women today, especially those mums at home with children.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, part of that comes I think, from what the feminists have said to mothers, what do they say? You're in a little different culture than we are, are the feminists giving messages to stay-at-home moms there as they are here?

Dianne Parsons: I don't really honestly know whether it is just the feminists or whether it's just society as a whole who downbeat motherhood at home with children. It's very hard for women to feel of any value when they're home with their children because number one, they don't get paid for the job they're doing, and they're doing many jobs. It's teaching, it's psychology very often, it is medicine very often and you just do not get paid to the value of the job that you're doing. So that must make you feel unworthy.

Dr. James Dobson: And one of your purposes when you talk to women is to say, first of all, you're not alone. And secondly, you're wrong about that attitude about yourself.

Dianne Parsons: Yes, yes. We need to uplift these women. I speak in seminars and when I say those things to them, I can see their heads rise and I can see almost dignity poured over them because they feel as if they've lost all dignity.

Dr. James Dobson: Rob, what about unrealistic expectations? You talk about that in the book.

Rob Parsons: Well, I sometimes think that we begin with our kids and we honestly think that for a while we're the perfect parents and we are going to produce the perfect children. I think that's particularly hard if your complying child comes first. Our little girl came into the world, the first thing she did was apologize to the midwife for being a little late. And so for a while, we honestly thought we were the perfect parents and we foolishly gave other people critical advice on where

they may be going wrong with their kids. The problem is, Heaven looks at the kind of child they sent you last time, they'll send you a different one, and everything that worked with this first one doesn't come near the second child.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me read it the way you wrote it. This is page 97. "The first child is normally quite a test, but you read a couple of books, talk to friends, and eventually you feel that you're beginning to get the hang of it and that's what lures you into having the second. The problem is, that Heaven in its humor looks up the kind of child it sent you last time and now delivers one that is the opposite in every characteristic."

Rob Parsons: Lloyd came into our life stamping a kick. And that little boy woke up every morning thinking, "How can I drive my mother crazy today?" And went to bed worrying he hadn't fulfilled that task. And for a while, and I'm sure, unless we have people talking about it or writing books on it, we think it's just us. Where did we go wrong? Where did we go wrong with this child? We did everything the same as we did with the first, but they're different. And I think it's especially true in the teenage years. Do you know one of the things we say in our seminars and it's in the book, I say, "I remember interviewing a very eminent psychologist." It's actually you Dr. Dobson, and I said, "Say something to the parents of teenagers, especially the mother of teenagers who feels a failure." And you said that a little bit, I don't know if you can remember it, about hormonal changes occurring and then blasting throughout. Can you remember that?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well I was just talking about the fact that you can have a perfectly wonderful 11 or 12-year-old who smiles, he sits on your lap, he thanks you for the food, he does everything right and six months later, he hates you, and he goes into the room and shuts the door and he doesn't want to be touched and he's upset and his self-esteem is rock bottom and all of that's going on. Well, historically through the years, we have blamed that on social pressure, their friends are making fun of them and things of that nature, and there is social pressure at that time. It's the greatest of any time of life, but there's something else happening. The hormones have gone crazy for a time and they are irrational for a time, and you can't sit down and talk that out. I mean, talking helps, but until this kid kind of gets on his feet physically, there's going to be a time that's hard to understand. All of that irrational anger that was over nothing, that wasn't there a year ago. And if you recognize it as a physical base, it's easier to deal with it.

Dianne Parsons: But that's the time when lots of mothers feel guilty.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Dianne Parsons: Guilty that they've made a terrible job, they're a failure, and that nobody else could have gone through that as badly as they've gone through it. I can remember looking at Lloyd and thinking when he was about 11 or 12, he was never going to leave home, he was always going to be around me. And

suddenly, as you say, here was this teenager totally switched off from me. I could only get through to him by almost taking a grunting degree. And it was... You take it personally and you say to people, "Don't take it personally," and then you feel the failure.

Dr. James Dobson: Dianne, there's another aspect of this that I talked about in my book *Bringing up Boys*, which I think would be helpful to mothers to see. Mothers stand in the way to some degree of a boy becoming a man. You see, as long as he is linked to her and it's a mommy little boy relationship, he can't be a man. So he denigrates her, he attacks her, he belittles her as your son did, as a way of moving you out of the way so that he can identify with his father and be a man. It's a perfectly normal thing, but you have to understand what's taking place there.

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely, absolutely.

Rob Parsons: That's very possible.

Dianne Parsons: Or is it possible that he loves you so much that he knows that he can't be attached to you so he pushes you away? Is that a possibility, do you think?

Dr. James Dobson: It is, but a boy has a passion to be a man or to be grown, and most boys do not know what it means to be a man. They have to learn that. They're not born with that understanding. A girl has an easier time of it, but a boy has to detach from his mother in order to make it possible. See, the girl just stays attached to her mother and becomes a woman, but a boy's got another task. He's got to let go, he's got to get free, and then he can move toward the role model that's intended for him. And I got to tell you, when that doesn't happen, you've got the problems. It's a good thing when it takes place, but it sure hurts. But the father really needs to pull the boy toward him. He's to come in there and show him what it means to be a man. He's to treat his wife with respect and dignity. He's to provide for the family and show that that's his responsibility. He's to protect the family.

He's to take that boy fishing or hunting or whatever it is you do together, bowling or tennis or whatever you do together, to bond with him and nurture him in some ways away from his mother. If he rejects that boy, especially early, there are two times when it happens. One is in adolescence, which we talked about, and the other is between 18 months and three to five years, it's right in that area, but the father really needs to pull the boy toward him. This has not been understood until fairly recently, but this is what all the research is showing, and homosexuality sometimes comes out of the failure to make that transfer because if he remains... Let's suppose the father is completely absent or he's rejecting... Sometimes a dad will identify with one boy and not another who isn't athletic or isn't masculine, can't do things quite as well. So the father will reject them.

If that happens, there's only one thing for the boy to do and that's the stay in the safety of his mother's arms, and that can lead to gender confusion later in life. Now, this is your book, not mine. So why am I doing all the talking here? Let's get it back where it ought to be.

Dianne Parsons: Interestingly though, I still get quite hurt, I suppose is the word I'm looking for, if Lloyd phones Rob a lot more often than he'll phone me. So is that normal? Is that natural?

Dr. James Dobson: It is normal and you ought to encourage it because he's saying in effect, "I'm a guy like you." That doesn't mean he doesn't love you.

Dianne Parsons: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: You have a role to play. You will always be his mother. You're the only mother he'll ever have. And as he gets a little older, he will come back to you, but at this time, he needs to identify primarily with Rob.

Dianne Parsons: Yeah, that's interesting because I think women need to know that, because I think there's a lot of pain-

Dr. James Dobson: Because they get rejected.

Dianne Parsons: ... that goes on that. Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dianne Parsons: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: It is perfectly normal and healthy, but hard.

Rob Parsons: I really thank God that I was able to learn those lessons when they were relatively young. Katie was three, Lloyd was a newborn baby and I just changed. I changed. And do you know the fascinating thing was a lot of my busyness was not necessary. I'd be reading Katie a bedtime story and the phone would ring downstairs and she'd say, "Daddy, please don't take it." I'd rush downstairs and then I'd make another call, another call. And after an hour I'd remember I'd not finished the bedtime story, and I'd rush back upstairs and she'd be fast asleep. And I've been a senior partner of a big law practice, I've written eight books or so. I've lectured all over the world. All those things have involved me in having thousands of business calls, almost all have been described as urgent. Do you know the fascinating thing?

I can't remember one, not one that couldn't have waited five minutes while I finished the bedtime story. And so that light went off me that a lot of the busyness wasn't necessary anyway, and it just changed me. And of course that meant we had wonderful years of closeness with those two kids.

Dianne Parsons: I can remember Rob being away with the legal practice and him coming home late at nights and I leave a message on his pillow and say, "I'm really missing you. I need you. I need you." And I believe that communication obviously is the big issue here and it is hard for some men to not be able to put in any more time, but I think they need to know and understand what a difficult task motherhood is. When he comes home at night, she yearns for some conversation, and she just doesn't want to hear, "How's your day been?" "Fine." She needs to have the whole in-depth conversation of his day and I understand-

Dr. James Dobson: That is the last thing wants.

Dianne Parsons: I know, I know, and I understand that now, but when the children were small and at home, I needed that conversation because all I'd done all day was change diapers, feed, and pick up toys. And it was just so mundane at the time and I needed some adult conversation. That's why... Sorry.

Rob Parsons: Sorry darling.

Dianne Parsons: That's why mother and toddlers groups are brilliant. They are so brilliant.

Rob Parsons: I was only just going to say while I'm in the swing of being honest and I'll probably regret it when I leave the studio, but the truth is, for most of us, me especially, this is an ongoing battle. It wasn't finished when I left business and began care for the family. I remember my most embarrassing experience, I just run a marriage seminar to 500 people and I got home 1:00 in the morning. There was a note on my pillow from Dianne, "Darling, we haven't talked much recently and I'm missing it." I've just tried to help 500 people communicate, but for most of us, this is an ongoing battle, but at least the light is switched on. At least we know it's happening and we can recognize it and try to do something about it.

Dr. James Dobson: What turned the light on for you, Rob? How come you saw it? I mean, a lot of guys never see it, but you saw it and responded to it.

Rob Parsons: I often believe that it needs almost a crisis to make it happen in many men's lives, because they are so driven and so unable to lift their heads. I was speaking to a man recently in a business seminar and I said, "I've not seen you recently." He said, "No, I was in a car crash. I fought for my life for six months." And I said, "Anything good come of that period?" He said, "You know, Rob, two things. First of all, the partners in the legal practice told me I was more used on my back convalescing for six months than ever I was in the legal practice because for the first time in 25 years, somebody had time to think." But he said, "Secondly, I began to appreciate more my wife and kids." He said, "I used to carry photographs of them around to remind myself what they look like."

And there comes a time in your life when you say to yourself, "What's it all about? What really is it all about?" And what happened to me though was I

changed so radically that nothing could buy me my kid's time or time with Dianne, but it happened quite quickly and I like to talk about it because I think many men find it helpful to hear it.

Dr. James Dobson: I hope what we're doing today will turn the light on for some men and help some women who are at home feeling neglected, depressed, and somehow not useful. I hope that we have made a contribution through these two programs. We contribute to each other and neither of us make it very well without the other.

Dianne Parsons: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Now there are a lot of single mothers out there and single fathers, and we need to talk to them because they've got to deal with life as it is. And it's never ideal. It's never perfect. There is no perfect marriage. There's no perfect family. And so you take life where you find it, but the ideal situation, or at least the model is for husbands and wives to build each other up and encourage each other. I've talked many, many times about what Shirley has done for me. I wouldn't be sitting in this chair if it were not for what she has contributed to my confidence and my willingness to take a risk. A lot of the things I've done have been risky, leaving an academic position and starting a little ministry with no money and everything else, that's risky. Shirley gave me the confidence to do that.

Rob Parsons: And do you know Dr. Dobson? I believe that also with all my heart. We talked in the first program we did together about Dianne's period of a depressive illness, and I said a whole new woman came out of that. And often I'm at the back of an auditorium. There are 2000 women filling it and Dianne is on the stage talking to them about the principles in this book. And I mean what I'm about to say with all my heart, I would now carry Dianne's bags all over the world and just enable her to touch lives.

Dianne Parsons: I must remember that one.

Dr. James Dobson: You want to write that down?

Dianne Parsons: I've got that down now.

Dr. James Dobson: My goodness. We're out of time. Rob, a lot of single mothers come to hear you speak.

Rob Parsons: They do. Let me just tell a little story about a single parent mum. I was finishing a seminar. Her son was a 23-year-old punk rocker. He had a pin in his eye, a pin in his lower lip. He wore black leather gear and she was there at the checkout in the supermarket with him and he went off to get something else and the second she'd gone, the woman at the checkout said, "How can you bear to be seen out with him when he looks like that?" She said, "My dear, it's very easy. I brought him up all these years. I love him. He's my son." And we spent ages with single

parent mums saying it is tougher for you because you are alone, because you've got the pain perhaps from broken relationship, because money's hard. But every family ministry that says a kid should have a mum and a dad must also stand by the single parent mum. That's why we've dedicated a chapter of the book to that person.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes, you have offered some wonderful advice here for the single mother, single mum. I've got to work on you guys, single mom. Mom, say it together.

Dianne Parsons: Mom.

Dr. James Dobson: And there is advice for mothers on many fronts. We're just flat out of time. A good little book, *The Sixty Minute Mother: An Hour of Reading for a Lifetime of Love*. Rob and Dianne Parsons, my great friends. It's been good to have you all here. Whenever you finish a book, you ring us up as you say and let us know because we'd love to have you back. It's been a joy to be with you.

Dianne Parsons: Thank you so much.

Dr. James Dobson: I love the British people and it is good to be here. I've got a big painting of Winston Churchill in my office as a way of expressing that heritage, which I appreciate so much. Thanks again for being with us.

Dianne Parsons: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: And God's blessings to you.

Rob Parsons: Thank you so much.

Dianne Parsons: Bless you. Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what an encouraging conversation with words that every mom needs to hear here on Family Talk. Mom, please know that you are appreciated, needed, and loved by your family. And this brings to a close our classic two-part conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Rob and Dianne Parsons here on Family Talk. We've been talking about help for busy moms. Of course, the Parsons founded the ministry, Care for the Family, in the UK at the urging of Dr. Dobson. That took place over 30 years ago, and at the time this recording took place, Rob and Dianne had written a book called *The Sixty Minute Mother: An Hour of Reading for a Lifetime of Love*. Isn't that a great title? To find out more about the Parsons, their ministry, or that book, you can visit us at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, speaking of great resources for moms and for parents, we highly recommend Dr. Dobson's book that he co-authored with his wife Shirley called *Night Light for Parents*. This is an inspiring devotional book, so if this program has been uplifting to you, we want to make sure that you get a copy of *Night*

Light for Parents, and we'll be happy to send it to you. It's our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the JDFI today. To reserve your copy, simply go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk and then click the link for the book *Nightlight for Parents* at the bottom of the page. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. If you've been receiving truth and encouragement and value from our daily program each and every day here on Family Talk, would you please consider making a financial contribution to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute?

We are completely listener supported, and right now during the month of May, we have been blessed by some special friends of the ministry with a matching grant. Every dollar we receive this month will be doubled automatically, but you hold the key to unlocking those funds. Think about it, every dollar you donate will go twice as far to equip parents, educate kids, and strengthen marriages. Now, the grant only goes up to \$300,000, so please consider making a gift today to double your impact right now. You can give a gift online at drjamesdobson.org. It's absolutely secure to make a donation on our homepage, drjamesdobson.org. You can also give a gift using your phone. If you've got the JDFI app, you can donate there, or you can call 877-732-6825. And always, you can donate by mail as well. Send your financial contribution to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Again, you can send your tax-deductible donation to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute or the JDFI for short P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. And by the way, Dr. Dobson loves to receive your letters of encouragement and your feedback as well. Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of the entire team here at the JDFI, I want to wish every mom a Happy Mother's Day, especially want to give a Mother's Day greeting to my wife Lisa, my daughter Emily, and her two sons, my daughter Kaylee, who just became a mother for the first time a couple of weeks ago, and our daughter Taylor, and her two rambunctious little kids, Zipporah and Nazareth. They sure are a lot of fun. One of the ways that my mom had a big impact on me when I was a child is by modeling faith and devotion to God.

She was up every morning at 5:00 AM, rain or shine, sitting at the coffee table near our kitchen with a cup of coffee and her Bible and her prayer journal, praying silently petitioning God for the things that her family needed and her friends were looking for answers for. She still continues that practice even to this day now that she's in her nineties. And Mom, I love you and I hope you have a wonderful Mother's Day as well. Moms, our prayer for you is that you know that God loves you and the work you do each and every day is blessed as you raise your children to know and serve the Lord. Amen. Happy Mother's Day and have a blessed weekend from all of us here at Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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