



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Enough is Enough: Making the Internet Safer – Part 1

Guest(s): Donna Rice Hughes

Air Date: March 5, 2024

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, welcome everybody to the Family Talk, the radio division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm your host, Dr. James Dobson, and I am going to share something with you that I think you're going to appreciate. One of my favorite ministers in the whole world is Dr. Ed Young, who is a senior pastor at Second Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. About 15 years ago, he built his sermon, which was videotaped, and I have a copy of it. He built that around the story of a young woman who is in the studio with us today, and I'm going to let Dr. Young introduce her to you by way of audio tape. I appreciate you listening. I think you're going to be captivated by what you're about to hear.

Dr. Ed Young: Donna Rice was beautiful and brilliant. I was their pastor in Columbia, South Carolina. She was as gifted as any teenager as I have ever known. She came to church, she went to Bible study, blonde, dynamic, cheerleader, straight A student in high school. She brought other teenagers to church, gave them Bibles, led them to faith in Jesus Christ. Here's someone who was beautiful, and brilliant, and totally committed to Jesus Christ. I mean, she was a magnificent teenager, a leader in every sense of the word.

When she graduated from high school, she went to the University of South Carolina. She was a pre-med student. Upon her graduation, she was magna cum laude, a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She became Miss South Carolina, entered the Miss World pageant. She became an executive right out of the chute with a pharmaceutical company, and also she began to be in commercials, one after another. She was successful, beautiful and brilliant. What more can you have? Little bit parts and television drama, and she was moving into the movies, and here was a young lady that I would've thought, and everybody who knew her would've thought, the sky was the limit. She could do anything she wanted to do.

But how shocked I was to hear on the news how Gary Hart, who at time was leading in the polls to get the Democratic nomination and most people believed would've become the next president of the United States, that a blonde bimbo had walked out of his townhouse in Washington as the reporters depicted it, and had spent the night with Senator Hart. You know the rest of the story. He dropped out of the presidential race and has moved into oblivion. But the thing that shocked me was the girl that he was with was Donna Rice, the girl who had

it all. How do you get from being brilliant, and committed, and beautiful, alive for God and Christ to being in the fastest of lanes, and being the centerfold attraction of a national sex scandal? How do you get from here to there?

By Donna's own words, she said, "I just began to make little choices." She dated only Christian guys at first, and one guy she dated for a period of time was a pastor on my staff in this church. She said, "I dated only Christian guys, but then I began to date non-Christians, and before long I was going to places I'd never been before." She said, "I read my Bible. I went to church a little, but," she said, "I didn't listen to the Holy Spirit, and I moved faster and faster with just little bitty steps, little bitty steps. Until," she said, "I was way away from God."

That's the way life works. Little bitty, small baby steps, one choice after another choice. Take the excellent choice. Plunge the squeeze of making decisions that will enable you and me to be sincere and blameless, and have the fruit flowing through our lives. The juice is worth the squeeze. Let me tell you about somebody who made excellent choices that I know, a fabulous story of a young woman. Let me read you some of her accomplishments. This young woman is an internationally known internet safety expert and advocate. She is currently serving as volunteer president of Enough as Enough, a national nonprofit education organization whose mission is to make the internet safer for children and families. She's written a great book entitled Kids Online: Protecting Your Children in Cyberspace. It's been translated into Spanish and Korean, and her book has been endorsed by individual life to individual.

Listen to what she's done. She received a congressional appointment to the Child Online Protection Commission, COPA, to examine technological solutions to protect children online, and served as co-chair in the COPA hearings in July, 2000 on filtering ratings and labeling technologies. Also, she's currently being sought out by media, policy makers, law enforcement agencies, industry leaders for her expertise on solutions for ensuring that children have a safe and rewarding experience online.

In addition to that, she just received the National Law Center for Children and Families Annual Appreciation Award and the coveted Protector of Children's Award. She has given in the last few years, over 2,500 media interviews. You'll know her. Appeared on almost every national news program is a regular commentator on CNN Fox News, MSNBC. She's been a featured guest on Dateline, The Today Show, Oprah, and 20/20. She co-wrote the story for the season finale of the episode, Touched By An Angel, which won the Nielsen ratings for the highest show in that May sweeps period.

She has been featured in publications, in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She has been published widely in McCall's magazines, over and over it goes. She's spoken extensively on the subject in educational and professional forums across the country, including Johns Hopkins University, MIT, American University, University of Houston Law School, the Freedom Forum, and the National Press

Club. She has testified before the United States Congress, both House and Senate, on issues surrounding internet dangers and safety solutions. From July 1999, she served as communications director and vice president of Enough is Enough, and it goes on and on with her biographical sketch. She recently had adopted and approved by the White House and by the Congress zero tolerance policy for child pornography.

Now, there's somebody who made a lot of tremendously excellent choices, wouldn't you say? Her name is Donna Rice. Donna Rice. I talked to Donna this past Thursday. I watched her grow up. I never knew how she got from dynamic Christian to the centerpiece in a national sex scandal. I asked, I said, "Donna, what happened? You shut off communication with everybody." She said, "I went underground for seven years." She was offered numerous six figures, seven figures, Playboy, Penthouse. But she said, "I didn't go the way of all the other sex bimbos who exploited what happened to them." I don't have to call any names, do I?

She said, "When it happened, I was desperate. I thought my life was over. I knew I'd never have credibility." She said, "I was hounded by the press for over a year and a half everywhere I went." I said, "What was the turnaround, Donna? What brought you back? I know what God starts, God finishes, but what brought you back?" She said, "I had taken a girl to Columbia, South Carolina when you were pastor, and I gave her their first Bible, and I saw her come to Christ, and I had baptized her," and said girl's now in seminary and said, "She sent me an audio tape, and on that tape she said to me, 'Donna, God loves you. Jesus Christ is in your life. He'll give you a fresh start. He'll let you begin again.'" She said, "On that tape were all the songs we used to sing in church, and beach retreats, and youth gatherings." She said, "I heard those tapes. I heard those choruses," said, "In tears, I would sing along with them."

She said, "When I went to Miami, a group of Christians rallied around me, and loved me, and supported me." She said, when I went to New York, they called ahead and says, "Donna's coming," said, "They had a group of Christians rally around me." She said, "When I went to LA, they had a group of Christians rally around me." She said, "My mother and my grandmother said, 'Donna, don't you sign anything. Don't you do anything until you get right with Jesus Christ.'" She said, "I was underground for seven years, until finally," she said, "Oh God, I want to feel your arms around me. That's what will heal me." She said God said to her, "You remember that phone call you got when someone prayed with you?" "Yes." "Remember that friend who sent you that tape?" "Yes." "Remember that little Bible study you got in and those other girls rallied around you?" "Yes." God says, "All of that and all the rest, that was me. That was me." She said, "I was forgiven and I was healed."

Ladies and gentlemen, Donna Rice today is one of the most beautiful dynamic young women. She is married. Her last name is Hughes. She does all of these things. She has two children that she loves, by her husband. What a story. What

is that all about? It's about excellent choices, and a life that comes from excellent choices, that is powerful in any arena of endeavor.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that was Dr. Ed Young, telling us a compelling story about a young woman. In fact, that young woman is here in the studio with us today. Her name is Donna Rice Hughes. I've known her for 20 years. I regard her and respect her very highly. She's been fighting obscenity and filth online, and righteousness in the culture for all these years. Donna Hughes is president and CEO of Enough is Enough. We're going to talk a whole lot about that tomorrow, because that's a story in and of itself, going to talk about the fight against obscenity, and the impact that it's having on our children.

Donna is here with us today. You were there in that audience when Dr. Young was talking. Thank you for being with us today. You flew here from Washington, DC with your husband Jack. I knew you many years ago. It is such a thrill to see what God has done in your life and continues to do that. Thank you for opening the most painful era of your life. As a matter of fact, it continues. You've just recently been on television. Tell us what you've been doing.

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, first of all, it's great to be here, Dr. Dobson. I'm just honored to be with you and your team, so thank you. Yes, we did come in from Washington, and just recently, in fact, there's been a major motion picture made about that season in 1987-

Dr. James Dobson: With Gary Hart.

Donna Rice Hughes: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Who was running for president.

Donna Rice Hughes: He was then, exactly. I have said on some recent TV shows that I've done that the movie ends where the trauma of my life is just beginning, when the Hart campaign released my name and identity to the National Media Corps. I was actually thrown to a feeding frenzy, and really eaten alive for about-

Dr. James Dobson: How old were you?

Donna Rice Hughes: I was 29 years old. This was a time that, it was the first time the mainstream media went tabloid. No one really knew what to do. There were no experts because it hadn't happened, and I was the young woman in the middle of this whole thing.

Dr. James Dobson: They vilified you about every way it's possible.

Donna Rice Hughes: Absolutely. There was a caricature that formed about me very early on. The first news stories, my mother actually liked. The New York Times said, "Beauty, brains, and talent. She had it all." Mom thought that was really nice, so she put

it on the refrigerator, and then by the next week it was, "Bimbo, homewrecker," and then it kept going on to even prostitute and things like that. I really didn't have any rights, and I lost my job. I had a lot of national commercials that were canceled.

To be perfectly honest, my entire world fell apart. As you heard Dr. Young say, I described my twenties up until that point as my prodigal twenties, when I began to take little left turns. The catalyst of that was when I lost my virginity when I was 22, when I was date raped. It wasn't until many years later when I met Dee Jepsen, who was the founder of Enough Is Enough, in 1994. She talked to me about the harms of pornography. One of the things she said is that it promotes the rape myth. I said, "What is that, Dee?" She said, "Well, that when a woman says no, she really means yes." I had heard those words from the man that took my virginity at that young age and I went, "Aha, now I know why God's called me to this effort," in 1994.

Dr. James Dobson: Donna, beauty is power. You had a lot of it. You had a lot of power, but it was captured and utilized for other purposes and you were the victim of it. Tell us about how you became acquainted with Gary Hart. How did that episode occur?

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, that is actually a very long section in a book that I'm writing.

Dr. James Dobson: We don't have that much time. Summarize it for us.

Donna Rice Hughes: I will just say it was a random by chance meeting, and he wasn't running for president at the time. I didn't know who he was. I called my parents. I certainly didn't know he was married. Then, that weekend became the Bimini trip. He announced he was running for president two weeks later. By then, I knew that obviously he was a married man, and I chose to see him one more time. That's when I was set up by two girls I thought were my friends who betrayed me, called the media, who then followed me and the whole scandal happened.

There was a lot of betrayal in my life by people that I trusted at the time. Like I said, I felt that I had lost everything that I had had up until that point. That's how God got my attention, because I did lose everything. My grandmother and my mother and others around me said, "Donna, don't make any decisions until you get your life straight with the Lord." I did, and I came back to the Lord. God used that devastation in my life to bring me back to him.

Dr. James Dobson: Are there any linkages or at least similarities between you and the story of Monica Lewinsky and her affair with Bill Clinton in the sense that she was exploited? She made some bad choices too, but she was taken advantage of and her life just came apart. Yours did too, didn't it?

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, it certainly did. In my situation, yes, there are some similarities, but there wasn't any woman who had come before me who had come out of a scandal of that magnitude with credibility. I was determined with God's help to be the first.

I chose to take the high road. I chose not to exploit my notoriety, even though I could have vindicated myself from all the things that were being said.

Dr. James Dobson: You were offered an awful lot of money.

Donna Rice Hughes: A lot of money. Good offers, many of them, and some exploitive ones that you heard Dr. Young talk about. But I chose to turn them all down, and I came back to the Lord, I went underground, and I chose to do unto others as I wanted them to do to me. I actually began to pray for my enemies. One of my Christian friends said, "Pray for the people who betrayed you, pray for the people in the media who were using you and exploiting you," and I did. It was an amazing thing. It didn't change them, it changed me. It changed me.

Dr. James Dobson: It could have destroyed you.

Donna Rice Hughes: It could have destroyed me. God protected me. I went underground for seven years, was discipled. I had a whole lot of healing. I suffered from PTSD, but by the grace of God, he put me back on the horse that threw me when I started working with Enough is Enough. Dr. Dobson, in God's sense of humor, I ended up working with the twin curses that almost destroyed me, the national political machine and the National Media Corps, when we launched the internet safety effort in 1995, and I became front and center working with the media, and working with people in politics. I was Donna Rice Hughes and they didn't even know I was the same Donna Rice initially. It was this great thing that God did, but I hope that the choices that I made carved a path for other women to know that they didn't have to cave, and give in, and exploit. That they too could take the high road, and choose a dignified path, and come out with credibility and opportunity on the other end.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you land on your feet, Donna?

Donna Rice Hughes: I did.

Dr. James Dobson: It looks today like you've done a marvelous thing here.

Donna Rice Hughes: I did. I did, but only by the grace of God, a lot of prayer, the support of family and friends, and really everyone that rallied behind me, but I stood on Biblical promises. Many of them were, God will cause all things to work together for good to those who love him, and what others meant for evil, God meant for good, and I know the plans I have for you, plans for good and not for evil. I was like, "If God's promises are true, then they're going to be true in this most unusual said of circumstances."

Dr. James Dobson: Only the Lord could have rescued you, Donna. You were hounded.

Donna Rice Hughes: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: There are many people listening to us right now who don't remember that era. I do. All of the folderol that accompanies a presidential campaign was focused on you, and somehow you survived it. I admire you for that. You are still out there fighting for righteousness. That's an incredible story. I hope somebody will allow you to tell that story. It really ought to be published. If you do choose to publish it, I'll do everything I can to tell everybody about it.

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, thank you Dr. Dobson, and you know what? We're sharing it now. I just pray that people whose lives have fallen apart, they feel like they're at the end of their rope. They could be a child that's been cyber bullied. They could be somebody whose husband dumped them. It could be anybody. God can turn the most dreadful, broken situation into something wonderful if you let Him.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you angry today?

Donna Rice Hughes.: I am not angry, but I do have to tell you that from time to time, this film that's just come out, it did bring up-

Dr. James Dobson: What's the name of it by the way?

Donna Rice Hughes: It's called *The Front Runner*.

Dr. James Dobson: So you're going to be front and center again?

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, I have been front and center again, because it's up for some Academy Awards. I think the director did a good job and treated my character with dignity and respect. I appreciate that.

Dr. James Dobson: That's a miracle in itself.

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, it is. It is, indeed. But I hope that when people hear my story and that they look at what we're doing now, that they can see that sometimes it's the most difficult trials in your life that God uses to help other people, because he uses our pain in a way that counts for something, that has kingdom purposes.

Dr. James Dobson: Now you're happily married.

Donna Rice Hughes: I am.

Dr. James Dobson: You've got two children that are grown.

Donna Rice Hughes: Grown, and three grandchildren.

Dr. James Dobson: Three grandchildren.

Donna Rice Hughes: Yes. I'm a 60-year-old grandma.

Dr. James Dobson: You don't look like a wounded lady to me.

Donna Rice Hughes: Well, God has a wonderful way of restoring our lives on the inside and the outside.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, what we're going to do tomorrow is tell the other half of the story. That's what you have done with your life, and what you continue to do with it, because your passion is children, and protecting children from pornography and obscenity on the internet especially, but for people of all ages, because pornography is a cancer that has fixed itself on the soul of this nation, and your passion is to tell everybody about that. It's mine too. Let's work on it together.

Donna Rice Hughes: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: All right. Thank you Donna, for being with us.

Donna Rice Hughes: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: Well, we must be diligent in protecting our children from inappropriate content on all internet connected devices. You've been listening to a powerful conversation featuring Donna Rice Hughes and Dr. James Dobson today here on Family Talk. Be sure to join us again tomorrow to hear about the incredible work that the Lord has done in Donna's life.

If you'd like to learn more about her story, simply visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. There you'll find out more about Donna's organization called Enough is Enough. By the way, she'll be sharing more about that group on tomorrow's broadcast. Again, for more information about Donna Rice Hughes, simply go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

The role women play in our society is incredibly important. While you're on our broadcast page, you want to download our free PDF entitled, "What Is a Woman, According to God?" This uplifting document was created in partnership with the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute and our good friend Dr. Owen Strachan to help bring women an encouraging word, and affirm what God's design for women really is. Again, you can download this free PDF when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening to today's program, and be sure to join us again tomorrow when you'll hear part two of this classic Dr. Dobson interview featuring Donna Rice Hughes. They'll be discussing some of the victories the group Enough is Enough has won, and how they're fighting the spread of obscenity online. Join us again next time for another edition of Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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