



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: No Substitute for Daddy's Love – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. David Jeremiah

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Dr. 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: Welcome everyone to this Monday edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and I'm joined by our host, Dr. James Dobson. And, Dr., with Father's Day coming up on Sunday, we've decided to spend this entire week celebrating dads. We'll begin by focusing on the father/daughter relationship, which we know is very, very important.

Dr. Dobson: I mean, everybody knows that boys need their fathers. They need to teach them how to be a man, how to do things, how to think like a man and so on. But I want to tell you, the relationship between a father and his daughter is every bit as important as the relationship between a father and sons. A girl's self-esteem hangs precariously on that relationship between a father and a daughter. He's the first male to kiss her, the first one to tell her that she's pretty, the first one to hold her in his arms. And if he doesn't see her, and looks past her, and doesn't realize that relationship is important, something is missing in her concept of herself. The relationship is so crucial to a girl's understanding of herself and who she grows up to be. In fact, my guest today calls it the most important relationship in the family with the exception of the husband/wife relationship.

Those words come from Dr. David Jeremiah, a name that I know many of you are very familiar with, and many of you love. Dr. Jeremiah is founder of Turning Point radio and television ministries, and senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in California. Turning Point radio is heard on more than 2,200 stations worldwide. And his television ministry reaches an estimated 200 million homes weekly. He's a celebrated author and a much sought after speaker, and, most important for today's broadcast, Dr. Jeremiah has four grown children, including two grown daughters. And I love this man. I appreciate him more than I can tell you. And you're going to hear him talk about his relationship with his daughters in this message. Here now is Dr. David Jeremiah on today's edition of Family Talk. And I tell you, you're going to enjoy hearing this presentation.

Dr. Jeremiah:

She sat in my office that day, a very dejected, frightened, angry young lady. As she stared at the floor and poured out her story, it was one which obviously could have been duplicated many times across the country. Her trembling voice was almost a whisper as she told me, "I cannot remember one single time, when my father put his arms around me and told me that he loved me. So, I went out and I found the best kind of love I could find." Those tear choked words were from an unmarried, pregnant teenager. Was this troubled girl just dumping her problems on her father, or was she verbalizing for a generation of women, a real and significant truth?

That evening I went home with the insatiable desire to grab both of my daughters and hug them as long as I could and say to them over and over again, how much I loved them. I shared this little episode with some of my pastor friends and a couple of counselors I knew. And I found that there was consistent support for the discovery that I was making as a father. The discovery that many fathers do not have a close relationship with their daughters, and many of them don't really think it's important at all. For you see, dads are for sons and moms are for girls. She's mommy's girl. That's what we've always thought. And that's what I thought.

And yet I have come to believe, men and women, that the relationship between a father and his daughter is the most important relationship in the family, with the exception of the husband/wife relationship. Just as I was going through this experience, a man by the name of William Appleton, released a book, entitled "Fathers and Daughters," and I bought it in a secular bookstore and read it from cover to cover, I was so hungry to learn. One place in the book he wrote "for any woman, one very dominating influence is her father. He is the first man to whom she gives her heart, and how he reacts strongly affects her future with men." You see a girl's father is the first man in her life and probably the most influential. Whether he is absent or involved, whether he is loving or rejecting, whether he is a good father or a bad father, he leaves a lasting impression upon the life of his daughter.

Most women have not taken time to analyze their relationships with their fathers. And frankly, until recently that relationship got very little attention in family studies. But today, it is being discovered again and again, that that relationship is critical. I suppose, one of the problems we have in our generation is the problem of identifying the roles of any parent. The terms for parenthood have become rather androgynous in our day. We mix them up together. It used to be that it was clearly understood that dad brought home the bacon and mom cooked it. It's not that easy anymore, is it? The roles have been confused.

And sometimes because of that, if we are not careful, we lose sight of the important relationships that extend to the individual members of the parenting team. In a two parent family, normally speaking, it is the father's responsibility to take the financial support of his family as his one focus in the workplace. It is a scriptural concept that is supported from 1 Timothy 5:8, where we are told,

"That if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

A father has a first responsibility to care for the needs of his family. Fathers are for financial support, but they have other roles as well. Fathers also provide a sense of comfort and security in the family. One woman told me that her first childhood memory was of her father holding her and walking the floor after she had had a bad fall. And she said, "I can still feel his big shoulder and smell the cigars on his clothes. To this day, every time I smell a cigar, I think of my father's comforting love." I hope you have a better way of remembering that than she did. But what she was saying was that her father was a comfort to her in a time of need.

Fathers are also for understanding. And that's a tough one because more often we dad's say, especially with regard to our daughters, "I just don't understand her." Perhaps it's because we haven't tried to understand. I admit that a girl isn't easy to figure out, she's a miniature woman. And no man alive would ever dare say that he understood women. Fathers are for comfort and for security and for financial wherewithal, but you know something else, fathers are for fun. And sometimes I think we've forgotten that dad's usually, if there's going to be entertainment and fun in the family, they have to take the responsibility for it.

We have gotten so stodgy and stiff in our families, that we've forgotten what it's like to have a good time. We just returned from four days in San Felipe, Mexico with our family. I wasn't sure what I was getting into when I went down there and all of my fears were realized. But I want to tell you something, we had the most fun we have ever had as a family. And we did some of the craziest things. Some of it has been recorded on film and I am being blackmailed, I want you to know. But having fun is part of dad's responsibility, to make sure that family life is not all just serious business. Fathers should also be confidence builders.

It's very important to understand that one of the things we provide for our families, whether it's to our daughters or to our sons, is the sense of wellbeing. One successful young businesswoman told me that after her father and mother divorced, she lived with her father from the time she was six until she was 15. And she said her father was so strict. And in his anxiety to be a good father, he tried to mold her into his concept of the perfect little lady. He consistently and constantly criticized her without ever offering any encouragement. And she said, "All I ever wanted to hear from him was, 'I'm really proud of you.'" She added fuel to her father's disapproval by dating men who were much older than she was. When she was 16, she was going with a guy who was 28. And by the time she was 20, her steady boyfriend was a man of 38, only two years younger than her father. Guess what she was looking for? She was looking for someone to take her father's role of encouragement and love in her life.

Not only are father's confidence builders, but we have to understand too, men, that part of our job is to be role models. That's probably one of the hardest. There's something very conclusive about being a role model. You have to take

the whole package as it is. I remember reading an article on How Fathers Influence their Daughters, written by Dr. Alexandra Simons, who is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at New York University. She made a study of women who had high commitments to work, and you know what she discovered? She discovered through most of her studies, that the highest percentage of women who aspire to careers have been influenced by men, normally their fathers. In other words, when you look at a woman who has risen to the top, in her chosen career, she has usually been promoted in that direction, by the example, and by the leadership of her own father.

So, as a role model, he sets the stage and goes before her to show her the way, even in the area of industry. I want you to know that as fathers, we're very important to our daughters. And I think when we see what a good father means to a girl, it will help us to be one, and give us the desire to work at that relationship even more. I was reading and studying, and I came across some information about the daughters of some famous men. For instance, I read a story about Winston Churchill and his daughter. She wrote on one occasion, she said, "The greatest and the most powerful influence in my life was of course my father. Although I had talked with him so seldom and never for a moment on equal terms, I conceived an intense admiration and affection for him, and after his death, an affection for his memory. I read industriously almost every word that he had ever spoken. And I learned by heart, large portions of his speeches. He seemed to own the key to everything or almost everything worth having," end of quote.

Here was a young lady who saw in her father everything worth having. What a role model he was for her. Another story that comes out of world history is the story of Nehru. His daughter is as you know, was Indira Gandhi. And she became the prime minister of India. The world's largest democracy and the country with the second largest population, and Indira Gandhi has been regarded as one of the outstanding women of this century. Let me tell you what affected her life. She said, "Although both parents were strong examples of intense loyalty to their motherland, it was her father's influence that formed the pattern for her life as a leader. He took a keen interest in her education and encouraged her to read and think for herself. While he was away, he carried on a great dialogue with her through the mail. He wrote long letters to her and she wrote back."

One of the most poignant stories about Indira Gandhi was related after she married and had a son. Her father had been arrested and was to be transferred from one prison to another. Indira's baby was only a few months old and his grandfather had never seen him. So, she learned the route that the car was taking bearing her father. And she learned it would go over a certain bridge. And so at dusk, wearing a sari, which her father had woven for her, she stood in a visible spot near the bridge and lifted the baby high above her head so that Nehru could catch a glimpse of his grandchild. A picture of her love and affection for the man who had made such an impact upon her life. And when India became independent and Nehru was elected as Prime Minister, Indira served as his hostess and later participated in policymaking and vital decisions.

Her father wove more than a sari for her, he designed the very fabric of her life. He had a tremendous impact upon her and her future.

I must confess to you men and women, that I am deeply concerned over the role of the father in our American culture today. The attempts on the part of the media to downgrade his influence along with the feminist attack on his importance and worth, are the ingredients which are contributing to the weakening of our country. Name one program that you can think of where a father is held in respect instead of ridicule. Where he is lifted up in honor, instead of put down as a joke. There's a consistent conspiracy throughout our culture to hold a father in disrespect, because those who would destroy what we have as Americans understand that he is the most important ingredient in holding the family structure together. And if he is gone, families dissipate quickly.

Yes, you are important dads, not just to your sons, you touch the life of your daughter in many ways. And I'd like to suggest to you some of those ways that are very important. First of all, you as a father affect greatly the self-esteem of your daughter. I've had to learn that the hard way through mistakes that I have made. And I'd like to suggest to you that what a young lady thinks about herself is in a great respect, a mirror of what she perceives her father to think of her. Maybe the best way I can communicate that to you is to illustrate it from a true story.

A story that was written by Phyllis Thoreau and Phyllis tells about herself as a preteen. She had just moved into a new neighborhood that was as lonely as the adolescence she was entering. The story caught my attention because I remembered that when we moved here to California, Jan, our oldest daughter, was in the seventh grade. She was entering the most difficult time in her life while she was making a major geographical and cultural change as well. Well, according to the story, this young lady in Phyllis Thoreau's article, compensated for her misery by eating ice cream cones and candy bars in hidden binges. And her father called her his "fat fairy," an endearment that was not very dear to her.

So, she would stage hunger strikes, locking herself in her room during the day, and sneaking down to the kitchen to devour a whole loaf of wonder bread at one time. As the fat accumulated, so did her misery. When she was in the sixth grade, invitations were sent out for a formal father/daughter dance at the school she attended. Now obviously this is a secular story. Her mother got a special dress, worn only twice, from her cousin Mimi. As Phyllis looked at this limp uninspiring dress, which accentuated her pudgy frame, she decided she didn't want to go to the dance at all. However, her father had realized what he had done to destroy her self-esteem. And as a wise and repentant father, he presented her with something she never forgot. He took the day off and he traipsed in and out of unfamiliar department stores to find two dresses he thought might be right.

And Phyllis said, "I cannot think about what those boxes contained without feeling the same disbelief that overcame me then. I opened the first and out sprang a pink net formal covered with tiny stars. Out of the second box, came a pale blue net dress with white daisies embroidered all over the full skirt. Suddenly the room was full of white tissue and hope." Years later, Phyllis wrote a tender story called, "The Father Daughter Dance." It's a full length book, and I have it. It's a tribute to what a father can do to a little girl's self-esteem with one simple gesture.

And she wrote in the book these words about her dad. "He was of course the handsomest without doubt, and the first Prince in my life to come through, unwittingly setting me up for every other Prince who was delayed in transit until later on. One night does not melt away adolescence, but I am glad I have it to look back to. It confirms my deepest feelings about my father, who confirmed my deepest hopes for myself. That night was full of light, contentment and store bought stars. And I don't know how to repay my father for it, except to tell the story and let it stand on its own, like a new dress." End of quote.

What that father did in the beginning was to tear down his daughter's self-esteem. But what he did in the end was to put it back together. Men, our girls weigh our words way out of proportion to what they really are. And what we say to them makes the difference. One of the challenges we face as men, if we're honest, and maybe I should just speak for myself, is that if you have sons, it's hard to keep it in balance. Let me just give you an illustration from my own family. I have two boys and both of them are very caught up in athletics, and I'm very caught up in athletics. We're kind of sports nuts. And I have a little girl by the name of Jennifer, who is a very good athlete and she loves athletics. But then we have Jan. Jan is just a whole different personality. She is the melancholy in our family. She's an artist, she's a poet, she's a writer, she's creative, she's gifted, she's beautiful, but she's not into sports.

Now, what am I supposed to do with that? I mean, I'm not into poetry. I can't even draw flies. And you know something men and women? I need to confess to you, for several years as a father, I blew it badly, just because I didn't understand how important it was that I go the extra mile to reach into that young lady's life and get excited about what she was excited about.

Dr. Dobson:

Well, you've been listening to the first half of the presentation by Dr. David Jeremiah talking about his daughters and especially little Jan. Some of you fathers listening and now remember those days like they were yesterday. And some of you are still in that stage right now. Let me tell you from this side of the journey, because my kids, both my son and daughter are grown. But your relationship with those precious little girls is worth every minute, the boys too, but we're speaking about girls today. You've been listening again to Family Talk and I'm Dr. James Dobson. Our guest speaker today was Dr. David Jeremiah. And Roger, why don't you tell our listeners how they can find out more about the importance of a father's love in the life of his daughter and how they can find out more about what we've heard today.

Roger Marsh: Well, doctor, we have a great library of resources at drjamesdobson.org, including your book, "Bringing up Girls." I know this book is full of so much great information for fathers raising daughters. There's even a chapter dedicated to practical parenting advice, just for dads. You can request a copy of this timeless resource by visiting today's broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Or you can call 877-732-6825. Also, be sure to check out the resources tab on our website for additional parenting materials that you'll find there as well. You'll find all this and more, when you go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, or by calling 877-732-6825. Well that's all the time we have for today. Be sure to listen in again tomorrow for the conclusion of Dr. David Jeremiah's meaningful presentation regarding the crucial father and daughter relationship. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. For Dr. Dobson and the rest of our team, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening.

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

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