



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Managing Your Home and Time – Part 1

Guest(s): Emilie Barnes

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Every mom knows that parenting is a full-time job, which demands a great deal of attention, too. In addition to caring for the kids, moms are tasked with maintaining a welcoming home, too. The constant busyness of this life can be overwhelming and stressful to women. Well today's broadcast will speak directly to those moms struggling to accomplish every task in their lives. Welcome everyone to this Monday edition of Family Talk, part of the James Dobson Family Institute.

I'm Roger Marsh with your host psychologist and best-selling author, Dr. James Dobson. On this replay of this classic interview, you're going to hear Dr. Dobson talking with best-selling author and speaker Emilie Barnes. Emilie went home to be with the Lord in 2016 but her teachings are timeless. She authored over 80 books, which sold over 6 million copies worldwide. Today she explains how moms can better use their time throughout the day to get more done. Here now is Dr. James Dobson to further introduce Emilie Barnes on this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you mind being introduced as an expert on efficient management? Do you see yourself that way?

Emilie Barnes: Well, you can introduce me any way you wish. That's fine.

Dr. James Dobson: You and your husband, Bob, conduct seminars called, More Hours In My Day, all across the United States and Canada. And you've written a book that we're going to be talking about today and probably tomorrow called, *Survival for Busy Women*, establishing efficient home management. You also, I believe, are on the editorial staff for VIRTUE Magazine. Is that right?

Emilie Barnes: Yes. I do a column for VIRTUE Magazine on organizational ideas and all the new things that come into my life I like to share with all the gals out there.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you get all that done? I mean, you must be living what you're preaching or you wouldn't be able to get it done.

Emilie Barnes: I have more hours in my day.

Dr. James Dobson: Literally.

Emilie Barnes: Right. It takes a plan and we just have to schedule and decide that this is so much time I'm going to spend in writing those articles and teaching. Bob and I have a full-time ministry and it's just the two of us. So we really have to be efficient in the way in which we work our ministry out of our home.

Dr. James Dobson: Emilie, one does not just become an expert in efficient management in home organization. Where does that originate for you? Does it go back to your childhood? Have you always had a knack for organization? What are the roots? What are the antecedents?

Emilie Barnes: I was raised in a Jewish home and I was a young girl who had lost her father at 11-years-old. And my mother opened a little dress shop and I grew up in three rooms behind that dress shop but that was really where more hours than my day began. My mother was a Proverbs woman and she really didn't even know it. She was energetic and a hard worker, she watched for bargains. And believe me, she worked far into the night as Proverbs 31 says.

Dr. James Dobson: Emily, by the time you were twenty-one years of age, you had five children, two of your own, three of your brother's children and all of them were under five years of age. How in the world did you cope with that?

Emilie Barnes: Well, that's when really more hours in my day had to come into focus in my life because I found that I was really frustrated. I was overwhelmed. The house would be a total mess. I'd finally get the children in bed at night and I would say, "Where has my day gone? I've been working hard all day. Why haven't I gotten any further than I've gotten?" And so it was at that point that I began to take God's word into my life and my heart in a very real way, where Proverbs says that we are to commit our works unto the Lord and our plans will be established.

So I began to say, "How can I commit this day, these children, this house, my husband, all the things that are in my life unto the Lord and then how is God going to establish all of these things and work it together for me?" And so I began, first of all, from that time when I had those five little babies under five years old, I began to get up before dawn as Proverbs 31 says and I spent that little time with the Lord and I committed my day, my works unto him. The days that I really committed my life and my works were the days that I found success at the end of the day.

Dr. James Dobson: You really did find some of the principles that you've now written about and apply in your own life in terms of time management in the word of God.

Emilie Barnes: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: This is an area that is a great problem in the home today, isn't it? I don't know anything that unravels families more than basic disorganization. Do you recognize that also as a major threat to family life?

Emilie Barnes: Absolutely. I had a woman come to one of the seminars before we even started and she came up to me and she said, "Emily, if this seminar doesn't work for me, I'm throwing in the towel." And I said to her, "What do you mean by that?" And she said, "I mean that I'm leaving my house, my husband, my children, my career because I can't handle it anymore." And that was one of the reasons why we wrote, *Survival for Busy Women*, because the woman out there is struggling.

She's juggling all these balls in her life that are representing all of the things that we become overwhelmed and frustrated with. And that includes our time with the Lord, our time with husband and family and career and church and all the things that are being thrown into our lives. And how do we juggle that? How do we catch these balls?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you have to be a superwoman, right?

Emilie Barnes: And that's the other problem that today's woman-

Dr. James Dobson: There's no such thing, is there?

Emilie Barnes: Right. The woman is struggling with, is she's trying to be supermom so she becomes overwhelmed and she wants to throw in the towel.

Dr. James Dobson: Is there a lot of discouragement out there in regard to trying to keep up with all the demands that are made? Are women despairing of getting organized and really getting their families under control?

Emilie Barnes: I think they are, but I also sense something really wonderful that's happening. I sense and I feel in the next couple of years we're going to see some real progress on the values. Our coming back into focus with the traditional home and family.

And even though some of the women out there are working, they really want to make their priority their home and their family because career has been real important as we know in the last several years. But now I believe they're going to see that a lot of that that they thought they were striving for hasn't been real successful in their family and they've lost it, so there is despair.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you think that's really being recognized? I have seen the ads by Good Housekeeping and some of the New Traditionalists. Is that what they're calling it? Is there really a shift back in the other direction? Are you really seeing that?

Emilie Barnes: I am and I'll tell you why I am. Because in our seminars ... And I share real practical things. And I see that the women are really hungry for these and they want to now get back into the kitchen, so to speak. We've been at fast food stores now for a long time and I think the woman today wants to get back into the kitchen, but she's going to do it in a little different way. She's going to do it in a more organized way.

In fact, I share a great program where they can take an hour, say on an evening or a Sunday afternoon, put together five casseroles, put them in their freezer and have dinner ready the rest of the week. Those are the kind of things I'm talking about.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, your book is filled with those kind of very practical concrete examples and tips. I think that's what makes it so usable.

Emilie Barnes: The other thing that we're really stressing, too, that is real exciting for the woman that's struggling is that I can really share with them in 15 minutes a day how they can totally clean their home and maintain it. And then they are going to have time to do the things that they want to do and not feel guilty and stressed out because they have all these things they feel they have to do.

Dr. James Dobson: I believe you start with the phrases, "Give away, throw away and put away." Is that where that 15 minute a day thing starts? I mean they begin right there.

Emilie Barnes: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: Describe that.

Emilie Barnes: Okay. What I really suggest, first of all, I think one of the reasons why some of the women have difficulty and men getting organized is because we don't have the proper tools to work with. We haven't realized that as a homemaker, which is a full-time profession and I believe that is my profession regardless of whatever else I do and I can have another full career. But I have a full career as a homemaker, so I need the right tools to work with.

And the first thing I'm going to suggest is three trash bags and we label them, one giveaway, one throw away and one put away. And we take those three trash bags in our hand and walk out the front door and ring our doorbell. And that's where we're going to begin, right at our front door. And then we walk in, open up that hall closet, whatever hits us first and that's where we begin. And we're going to take 15 minutes, let's say on Monday and we're going to clean that closet for 15 minutes or however long. It might take us five minutes.

Dr. James Dobson: But Emilie, I might need that old coat. You're going to tell me to take that and give it away or get rid of it?

Emilie Barnes: Well, our rule is this, Dr. Dobson. If you have not used it in the past year, then we have to make a decision. Does it go in the throw away, the give away or are we going to store it away for another time?

Dr. James Dobson: What if I'm a dyed-in-the-wool pack rat, I collect junk?

Emilie Barnes: Well, I always say it's okay to be a pack rat as long as you're an organized one. Okay, so we'll take those things out of the closet and we delegate them into one of these three bags. Now obviously, if it's broken or torn or ripped, we can throw it away. So that isn't a question. And then things that you're going to give away because we all have these in our house, things that we look at and we say, "Well, someday I'm going to use that."

But as you say, you don't use it. So why don't we recycle and give it away? There are people out there who can't afford it, so let's give it to them and let them enjoy it and use it when we're just storing it. So we'll give those things away. And then you have a bag where you're going to put things away. So the next tool we need are some nice boxes that we can use as storage boxes and this is the simple way of doing this. We've spent 15 minutes on Monday, maybe we didn't get through with the closet, that's fine. Tuesday we'll spend another 15 minutes and we do all this as we go through the room, the closets, the drawers, under the beds.

Dr. James Dobson: Now you mean that literally, 15 minutes a day?

Emilie Barnes: Right. You can set a timer if you want to.

Dr. James Dobson: For the person that hates housework and hates that kind of task, if they can just get up enough self-discipline to invest 15 minutes a day, they will eventually get it done.

Emilie Barnes: Exactly. Or for the busy person who says ... I have women tell me all the time, "I don't have time to go through and clean a whole room." And I say, "Do you have 15 minutes that you'd like to invest in organization?" Well, everyone wants to do that. And we waste 15 minutes a day. So by the end of the week, what have you done? You've invested an hour and 30 minutes in room number one. You still have a day off on Sunday to do with family and whatever else. All right, so we've done that.

Then we're going to take the things from the put away bags, those things that we feel are memorabilia, things we want to keep and we begin to store them in our boxes. Now, this is the secret to the program. The boxes are numbered. So you might have six boxes and you number them 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Then you take a three by five card and you number that. And the card number one goes with

box number one. Now, everything that you store into box number one will be cataloged on card number one, which goes into a little file box so that when we want to retrieve anything-

Dr. James Dobson: You know where to find it.

Emilie Barnes: And you can be across the world and if I have my little list or my little cards, I can tell you what I have in those boxes, in a garage or an attic or a basement, somewhere in Ohio or Kentucky or Boston, wherever I happen to be.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. You know what my experience has been, though, once you put it in a box, you aren't ever going to see it again because that box goes out of sight, out of mind and rarely ever do I go dig that stuff out again. Five years later, I may get that box down and give it away or throw it away or do something else with it. But I rarely ever get it out again once I file it away.

Emilie Barnes: Well, here's a good idea for you because these things you will retrieve at some point. You have income tax and papers and all these things that we have to keep for so many years and this is what we recommend in the program. You've numbered your boxes, say one through six or 12, all right? We're going to number all of our income tax things, put them in a box that is numbered 15 for the 15th of April because that's in the United States.

Anyway, that's when we need to get all our income tax things in. And then you may have three boxes that have income tax. So we go 15A, 15B, 15C. Now in two years, if they should come to you and the IRS says, "We're going to audit you and I need papers from 1987," then what are you going to do? It's so easy. You go to your box.

Dr. James Dobson: Just go right to it.

Emilie Barnes: So I really feel that 15 minutes a day we can be on our way to having more hours in our day. We have another cute saying that says, "File it, don't pile it."

Dr. James Dobson: So getting it organized and in a place where you could retrieve it but you're not stumbling over it?

Emilie Barnes: That's right. And we have another cute little saying that says, "Don't put it down, put it away." So every time you pick up that piece of paper, instead of putting it down on a pile that we may not get to, then let's put it away. Let's put it in a file folder. Let's put it somewhere where we're going to get it in an organized fashion.

Dr. James Dobson: Is this the essence of the approach that you talk about in your book where you, I believe, titled it, *Total Mess to Total Rest*?

Emilie Barnes: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that the category?

Emilie Barnes: That's the whole chapter in the book, *Total Mess to Total Rest*. How to totally clean your house, how to maintain it. Any other, if you have an office, at work, wherever you may be, we can get those things cleaned up, organized, find a place for them. And then the exciting thing about it is it frees us up mentally to be able to do the things that we want to do. Maybe things that we've always wanted to do, but most of all to really be able to glorify God.

Dr. James Dobson: How do you maintain then, that organization? That's how to approach a messy house and get it under control, but how do you keep it that way?

Emilie Barnes: Okay, then what I suggest that we do is we're going to continue that 15 minutes a day. We've done the Total Mess Program, now we're going to keep with the 15 minutes a day.

Dr. James Dobson: The Total Mess Program, that sounds familiar.

Emilie Barnes: And then we're going to list, all right, on Monday, what do I need to do in order to maintain my home? Well, I need to see that the children have their chore charts all up so that they know what they have to do, getting their beds made, putting their toys away, maybe setting the table for dinner, vacuuming if it happens to be that day.

And then what do I need to do weekly on Monday? Maybe I need to do my washing on Monday. The traditional woman washes on Monday, irons on Tuesday. But even at that 15 minutes a day, now a woman might say to me, "Well, I have ironing that would take me three hours to do." And do you know why she hasn't done it?

Dr. James Dobson: It looks overwhelming to her.

Emilie Barnes: Exactly. And she's saying, "I don't have three hours to do it." But do you have 15 minutes to do it? Sure. So we'll do 15 minutes and then by the end of the week, she still invested an hour and 30 minutes in that pile of ironing and she's an hour and 30 minutes into it. Where on Monday it still would've been three hours worth.

Dr. James Dobson: The key is getting started, isn't it? There's that inertia. It just looks like an impossible, overwhelming, depressing task.

Emilie Barnes: And I hope that the woman out there through listening to today will be motivated to just get started.

Dr. James Dobson: What does she feel like, Emilie? Being a man, I'm not sure I know. What does the mother feel like? Who's listening to us right now? And you had five children under five. Let's suppose she has three in diapers and all around her house is

chaos. There are newspapers, there's shoes, there's debris, there's dust, the closets are all a mess. Everything is out of control. What is she thinking? What does she feel at this moment? We're talking to a lot of people like that.

Emilie Barnes: Yes. And 70% of our stresses are caused by disorganization and that's what she's feeling. She's feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, tired, with no hope. But see, there is hope.

Dr. James Dobson: What does her husband feel when he walks through the front door?

Emilie Barnes: He's feeling the same way because she is. Because you see, I believe that the woman is setting the thermostat of the home. And if we can really get to that woman to set a loving, warm atmosphere that doesn't have to be perfect. But if we can have some kind of a feeling of organization that at least maybe the dinner is in the oven, something smelling. And the toys don't have to be necessarily in neat little cubby holes, but that the children have a plan as well as mom has a plan.

I think that's probably one of the answers, too, for the frustration is that, that woman can have a plan and that she delegates jobs, responsibilities to children. And with those children that we raised, you see, we wanted something. We had a goal and that was to raise responsible children. Well, there's only one way to do that and that's by giving them responsibilities. So I needed help. And that woman out there feels that she needs help.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, was this ingrained in you? I think I read that your own mother taught you a lot of this. So you weren't a messy, we've heard that term used before. You weren't inherently a messy, you were a cleanie, right?

Emilie Barnes: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: So you didn't have to fight yourself on this. Can you really empathize with the women who are not made that way?

Emilie Barnes: I can because I see them and I'm feeling their heartbeat and I see that they really want hope. And the thing is, I believe that women can be taught to be organized. Now organize is kind of a strong word in that they feel it has to be perfect and I'm not teaching perfection. I just want to give them hope.

And because my father passed away when I was 11, my mother became a single working parent. So in order for things to function halfway well in our home, she needed to delegate to my brother and myself. And so I kind of grabbed onto it and I began to take care of the laundry and the meals and those type of things to free her up for what she needed to do, make a living for us.

Dr. James Dobson: We passed over rather quickly in the beginning of the program that you are Jewish and obviously raised by a Jewish mother. How did you come to know the Lord?

Emilie Barnes: Well, when I was 15, I had a blind date and that was my Bob. He says I was the date and he was blind. At 16-years-old, I was young. Bob's almost five years older than I am. And he had been raised in a Christian home in the country on the farm. I had been raised in a Jewish home in the city and we couldn't come-

Dr. James Dobson: The perfect couple, right?

Emilie Barnes: We come from different backgrounds.

Dr. James Dobson: One Christian, one Jewish.

Emilie Barnes: Such differences. And Bob shared his love with me when I was 16-years-old. He told me that he loved me, he wanted me to be his wife, but he said, "I'm a Christian and I believe in God's word and I believe that God says we are not to go into a relationship unequally yoked." I did not even know what a Christian was. I hadn't even really heard the word. And he lovingly and tenderly shared Jesus Christ with me. And he told me that God had a son and his name is Jesus and that he is our Messiah.

He shared Christian principles and God's word with me. And then I saw it being lived in the home. I saw his mother and his father and the three boys, the three brothers and they never said anything to me of being a different faith. They loved me, they were concerned for me. And you know today that they were praying for me. And so it was through that as Bob shared the Lord with me, that I opened the door of my heart and invited the Lord Jesus to come in.

Dr. James Dobson: And you've been a believer for how long now?

Emilie Barnes: Well, it's been about 35 years.

Dr. James Dobson: And you've been married for how long?

Emilie Barnes: Almost 34 years.

Dr. James Dobson: That's an exciting testimony.

Emilie Barnes: In fact, Dr. Dobson, we were married when I was 17. I was starting my senior year in high school. Bob was starting his first year of teaching.

Dr. James Dobson: I can tell you guys have something going with each other after all these years.

Emilie Barnes: It's wonderful. It's getting better all the time, as you know.

Dr. James Dobson: You all are conducting these seminars around the country and people are coming not only on time management, but other aspects of the family.

Emilie Barnes: Yes. In fact, we do actually five different seminars. We do a holiday organizational seminar, which is organizing for Thanksgiving and Christmas and gift giving and gift wrapping and building memories. And then coming from a Jewish background, I share Hanukkah and a Festival of Light. So that's a fun seminar. Bob and I do, growing a great marriage seminar, which is based on a very personal life that we have both had coming from our differences and our different backgrounds. And then the more hours in my day seminars that we do.

Roger Marsh: Well, those were some helpful tips that are still practical in today's ever busy world. Today here on Family Talk, we revisited a classic conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and Emilie Barnes. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for part two of this discussion. And if you'd like to share this program, just visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

We all have difficulties to deal with from time to time, like a flat tire on the way to work or struggling to get enough sleep. And then there are the major life changing suddenlies as well, such as an unexpected loss or a tragic circumstance that we may never understand why God would allow. Well, here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we want to walk with you through those difficult times and offer some encouragement with our free 10-day email series we called, When God Doesn't Make Sense. It's based on Dr. Dobson's, best-selling book of that same title.

Once you sign up, you'll receive messages that explore the depths of hardship and also examine its purpose. Our prayer for you is that after you spend a couple of minutes every day reading the wisdom of Dr. Dobson on this subject, you'll be strengthened in your faith as you learn why dark valleys can often bring life's greatest blessings and a closer walk with the Lord.

Now to sign up, all you have to do is visit drjamesdobson.org/when-god-doesnt-make-sense-series. And remember, you can also order a copy of Dr. Dobson's book by the same title when you go to our website as well, drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of all of us here at the JDFI, thanks so much for making family talk a part of your day.

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