



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Rise of the Servant Kings

Guest(s): Ken Harrison

Air Date: October 25, 2023

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello, everyone. I'm James Dobson and this is Family Talk, which is a radio division of the James Dobson Family Institute. We discuss every day various aspects of the family, from marriage to child-rearing and the culture around us and a whole lot of stuff, and we have a very important topic to talk to you about today. We're going to take a good, hard look at masculinity, which is embroiled now and has continued to be embroiled in a culture war. Everything manly is subjected to ridicule and resentment in some circles. Several months ago I had lunch with Ken Harrison. We had just met and we talked for more than an hour, and he struck me that day and does today as a man's man. He had a good understanding of what biblical masculinity is all about.

He began his career as a police officer with the Los Angeles Police Department working in Compton, California, and that is a tough area of the city, and he then became a successful businessman, had his own business, and he's now chairman of the board of a revitalized Promise Keepers organization, and he's written the *Rise of the Servant Kings: What the Bible Says About Being a Man*. Ken, you've been sitting there listening to all of this, and I want to talk about your book, but tell me what your thinking has been. What are you thinking about?

Ken Harrison: I can see why you're so passionate about the issue, as am I. Satan is the great liar, and what he wants to do is constantly change words, make words that are awesome mean something else. Masculinity is the definition of all of the positive aspects of being a man, just like femininity is all the positive aspects of being a woman. How silly would it be if we said toxic femininity when we were describing a woman who was behaving poorly? When a man is behaving not like a man, he's not being masculine in any sense of the word, and so to say toxic masculinity is to put a negative effect on a word that describes how God created us. When a man treats women for his own gratification, when he's disrespectful to women, when he's macho, violent, argumentative, prideful, there's nothing manly in any of those things. There is nothing masculine about that. He is acting like the enemy of our soul, Satan.

Dr. James Dobson: And we really ought to admit that there are an awful lot of men who live sinful lives, many of them involved in pornography and some of them abuse children. There are a lot of sinful men and a lot of outright jerks out there. So let's make it

clear, I'm not talking about those men when I say there's something wrong with the criticism of all men.

Ken Harrison: And I would venture to say, and I bet you we get into this, with the rise of pornography, I think there's a lot more jerks today than there were in the past, and I think a lot of women are angry and hurt and a lot of women have a reason to be angry and hurt.

Dr. James Dobson: It's at an epidemic level. David said, "Behold, I will set before mine eyes no unclean thing." It's all through the Scripture.

Ken Harrison: And in my experience in South Central LA, when I saw guys... Of course, pornography back in those days wasn't as prevalent as it is today. Back in the day, at least you had to schlep into a liquor store and buy a magazine. You couldn't just sit behind-

Dr. James Dobson: Come out with a paper bag around you.

Ken Harrison: Right, but when I saw perversion and promiscuity, I saw the effect on men was violence and cowardice and effeminism, not feminism, but effeminism. Men became unmasculine, they became cowardly and unwilling to stand up for the truth. And I think that's what's epidemic today with the pornography. It's a horrific thing and it's affecting our men to act counter to being masculine, not toxic masculine, they're acting like nothing masculine at all.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you intend with Promise Keepers to address that?

Ken Harrison: Yeah, absolutely. In fact, one of the things that we're going to bring out in Promise Keepers is men need to be men of action. That is what it means to be a leader, is to say there's a problem and I'm the one who's going to fix it. I don't look around for someone else to fix it. Besides pornography, which we're going to take on very bluntly, you hate to have to, but both of our friend Josh McDowell says that 70%, I think it is, of Christian men look at pornography more than twice a week. So you have to ask yourself-

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that breathtaking?

Ken Harrison: And who are our daughters supposed to marry?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Ken Harrison: You think about a young woman who if she's been raised Christian and pure and she wants a man who's a godly representation of masculinity, how is she supposed to find a husband if he's looking at that stuff, how is he supposed to know how to respect her? Women want to be cherished and loved and provided for and protected by their husbands. If a man is looking at that stuff, he has no

concept of what it means to cherish a woman. He's looking at women as objects, not as human beings.

Dr. James Dobson: And what men don't know is that involvement in pornography completely undermines the sexual relationship between a man and a woman because there is absolutely nothing a woman can do to herself to compete with airbrushed nudity and all the things that go on in hardcore pornography. And people who are not into it have no idea how wretched it all is. And I spent 18 months learning about it on a commission on pornography, and I never want to ever look at anything like that again. It's just breathtaking, as I said.

Ken Harrison: It's so sad. And there's hope, you've got sin and you have addiction, and pornography can be in both of those camps. There's a lot of men out there listening to this right now who suffer from that. There are a lot of women, probably a lot more women, who have suffered because of men who are into that sort of thing. But again, as we talked about, Jesus said, if you're sinning with lust, stop now. And I did ask Josh McDowell... Well, he's very big on the fact that men have to be released from this powerful addiction and they need counseling and they need this. And I asked him, "Well, what about Jesus's words about stop now?"

And because we had a long discussion about it, we really came to the understanding of what Jesus means by stop now is do whatever it takes to stop now. And if that means getting counseling, if it means picking up Stephen Arterburn's book, *Every Man's Battle*, if it means going to newlife.com and joining one of their conferences, do what you need to do to get help because a man is a leader, and if you have a problem with that, you need to stop and you need to be proactive in seeking a solution.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's talk about your book, the *Rise of the Servant Kings*. What is a servant king? I understand what a servant is. What is a servant king?

Ken Harrison: God tells us to love our wives like Christ loved the church, and how did Christ love the church? He was tortured to death for her. We need to lay down our lives for our wives, which is what the great Coach Bill McCartney used to say all the time.

Dr. James Dobson: Absolutely.

Ken Harrison: And so, a servant king is somebody who understands that as he's a leader, he's a leader there to serve. A king understands that he is accountable and responsible for what happens in his kingdom. And for a man, he's responsible at the most base for what happens in his own life if he's single, which means keeping himself pure, his mind pure, taking every thought captive as Paul said. And for his family, his kingdom is his family, his kids are his responsibility, his wife's happiness and joy are his responsibility, and he will do what it takes to meet those responsibilities. Kings don't say, "Well, there's an enemy at the door,

someone should do something." A king says, "There's an enemy at the door, I'm going to go conquer that enemy." So, a servant king is looking at his kids and saying, "Are they okay? Is something wrong? What do I need to do about it?" Looking at his wife, "What can I do to give her more joy? How can I lay down my rights to myself to live for Christ first and my family second?"

Dr. James Dobson: What is his kingdom? What does that consist of? What do you say to a woman who says, it's my kingdom too?

Ken Harrison: Well, it is her kingdom too. She's the queen. It's a partnership. We're both responsible for our kids, and one thing I do want to make clear, and I make clear in the book is just because you're accountable for something doesn't mean everything is your fault. And sometimes we need to be careful about what we mean by certain words. My wife is a very strong and very intelligent woman. I don't think I've ever made a decision by myself. In fact, I know I haven't. Everything we do is together. Submission is a submissive type of an attitude, but she's not submissive in the way she behaves. We're partners in every sense of the word.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I think we certainly agree on that. Shirley and I agree on all substantive issues. You take the spouse's desires and hopes and dreams and feelings and come to an agreement. You're really not talking about dominance.

Ken Harrison: Not at all.

Dr. James Dobson: And disrespect.

Ken Harrison: And talking about loving as Christ love the church. Always remembering of, how does Jesus love us? He's given us everything, and that's how we're supposed to love our wives and our kids.

Dr. James Dobson: In fact, your subtitle to your book, which is the *Rise of the Servant Kings*, the subtitle is *What the Bible Says About Being a Man*. What does the Bible say about masculinity?

Ken Harrison: This book is full of Scripture, and I was raised in the church. I was saved at five years old and really loved the Lord from five years old.

Dr. James Dobson: What'd your father do?

Ken Harrison: My dad got saved when I was five years old. He had just been shot. He was a Los Angeles police officer and walked into the First Baptist Church and he walked down the aisle to get saved, and I was running up the aisle behind him and I truly got saved that day. I put on my little patent leather white shoes and my little clip-on tie on Saturdays and go handout tracks as good Baptists did in the '60s.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you kneel at an altar?

Ken Harrison: I did, knelt an altar, got baptized in the big baptismal. They would put the portable thing up at the front of the church and dunk you. And I tell a story in the book about how I saw Ricky Nelson when I was six years old in the airport, and my mother started to scream. Ricky Nelson, he was a famous rockstar, and so I chased him down in the airport and I witnessed to him for five minutes.

Dr. James Dobson: You're kidding.

Ken Harrison: No, handed him a track and told him we'd see him at Tri-City Baptist Temple on Sunday.

Dr. James Dobson: How old were you?

Ken Harrison: Six.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that a fact?

Ken Harrison: And he graciously sat and listened to the whole thing.

Dr. James Dobson: Did your father lead in your family?

Ken Harrison: Absolutely, he did.

Dr. James Dobson: Was he a servant king?

Ken Harrison: He was. He was a good man, my dad was, and we went to Stu Weber's church who wrote the forward to the book.

Dr. James Dobson: He sure did.

Ken Harrison: A great example of what a man is as well, so I was blessed by the Lord to have a lot of great examples.

Dr. James Dobson: Were you taught to be respectful of women?

Ken Harrison: Absolutely, I was. My father was a very strong man. He was a professional boxer before I was born. Again, a very macho LA cop, and to see the change in him... My dad was a heavy drinker. At five years old, you are forming your worldview and forming your opinion of your dad, and I do want to give hope out there because my dad was so utterly changed when he got saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Even at five, I saw what that meant. I actually was just talking to a young lady who was talking about her dad was changed at a Promise Keepers event. She was 19. Her father was an alcoholic, a workaholic.

She was terrified of her dad. When he came home from a Promise Keepers event, he had gotten saved at a Promise Keepers event, he was so utterly transformed, he started doing a Bible study and she broke up in tears as she talked about how shy he was and clumsy trying to open up a Bible and teach a family that he abused for their entire lives, but she says she is the woman she is today because of how transformed her dad was. So even at 19, because I know there's a lot of dads listening to this going, "Well, I've screwed up. My kids are grown." Your kids never stop idolizing you. No matter how much bitterness, no matter how much anger, no matter how much water under the bridge, if your kids are 20 or 50, they never stop wanting their dad's approval.

Dr. James Dobson: I hope we're talking to a lot of men who did not have godly fathers like you and I had. They have no idea what a servant king is, what he's supposed to be, and especially in a marital family context. They don't know how to treat a woman, they don't know how really to raise their kids properly. They start, I'm sure you would agree, by giving their heart to the Lord, that would be the first step. And beyond that, what?

Ken Harrison: How do you discern a godly man or woman? The Bible says that a godly man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one. We have to discern, not condemn, but discern, a form of judge, who is godly. Even if we're running churches, if we're putting people in leadership, who are godly people? And I have found that the one thing all godly people have in common is humility. And the outward expressions of those, especially in men, are courage and generosity. A man who doesn't think of himself as the most important person in the room will always stand up for the poor, the oppressed, the bullied. He'll always stand up for what's right, and that includes Scripture.

And right now we're having a lot more opportunities to stand up for what's right than maybe past generations, and in generosity means the generosity of spirit. It doesn't only mean being generous with money, although that's part of it. A generous person tips well, a generous person looks for needs and fills those needs, but it also means generosity of spirit and noticing when someone is struggling and taking an interest in their lives. It means listening instead of talking all the time, it means seeing someone broken down on the side of the road and stopping and saying, "Hey, how can I help?" Those are the outward expressions of being a man.

Dr. James Dobson: Does it also mean standing up for righteousness when you're the only person standing?

Ken Harrison: Absolutely, the dangers of pornography and standing up against that in this tide. Another thing that a man does is stand up against abortion, and I'm not trying to bring up politics, I don't care about politics, but there is nobody more vulnerable, more poor and oppressed as God calls the vulnerable, than the unborn. And so, just because two political parties have decided to take two different stances on it, that doesn't make us political. It means that we're standing standing up for righteousness. So for me and my family, we will do

whatever it takes to help the unborn, make sure that they see the light of day, and I don't care who hates us for it, and I don't care who calls me political for it.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it's not political, it's moral. It's really right and wrong. Ken, I'm sure you had many opportunities in your career to take a stance for righteousness, but let's kind of walk through where you've been. I find it really interesting, especially being a man's man, and I think you qualify in that. You were a police officer in the Los Angeles Police Department for three years. Talk about that experience. What did that do to you? What did you see there? How were you changed by it and what would you say to the people who are listening?

Ken Harrison: I found that one of the most important things about walking with Christ is living in the moment. Each moment brings its own stuff, and there's no better training than being a cop in an extremely violent area because you literally never know what's going to happen moment to moment to moment, and you make decisions that will affect your life forever. See, when we're walking with the Lord and we have a clean conscience, you make decisions in the moment that may affect things, but the fall out of that is something you can be totally comfortable with, the words that come out of your mouth, the actions that you take.

Dr. James Dobson: What did the overall impact of that responsibility in a very violent world, what'd that do to you personally?

Ken Harrison: It made me angry and bitter. The Holy Spirit really helped to keep me up, and my wife, who is a very strong and godly and wise woman, also really helped to keep me up, but the lack of justice that you see day in and day out begins to grind on your soul. When you see the people, the street cops who are standing up for right and wrong and you see the brass, the people who have been promoted up, the politicians who care about their careers more than they care about the poor, who are doing things, putting processes in place, or persecuting police officers who are really keeping the streets safe, that I think was the hard part. It wasn't the bad guys, it was the well-paid people who took advantage of and exploited their own people.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you were in that responsibility for three years, and I have heard from many sources that the impact on the men and women who are in that role suffer from it. When did you decide to get out and for what reason?

Ken Harrison: One of the most impactful moments for me was we went to roll call, which is where you go before you go out on the street and they showed a video. It was three teenagers who'd been shot and killed and a bunch of police tape around it. It was from the news the night before, and there were four policemen in the tape who were all cutting up and laughing. There was one who was obviously telling a bunch of jokes and the three others were laughing. And then outside the tape you could see a bunch of women, probably mothers who were crying and bawling, and it was an appalling sight. It was four cops totally oblivious, three dead teenagers, and a bunch of mourning mothers. And I looked at that

officer who was telling all the jokes, and it was me, and I was mortified at... I suddenly realized, it was a mirror into my soul and I'd realized I just didn't care anymore, and it only took three years.

The entirety of what we saw in South Central Los Angeles, you had a whole bunch of really good people and they were held hostage by a handful of violent thugs. People had often said, "Did you guys become racist on the LAPD? It was all Black people." And I said, "You have to understand, everybody was Black, the victims were Black." 95% of those people were great people and we loved them and felt like we were part of the community and we were righteously indignant about the 5% who held them hostage by their violence, and those 5% I came to realize as I got older and grew in maturity and wisdom, were young boys who had no fathers.

So, they carried out the desires of their flesh, violence, promiscuity, and drugs, and that's what you get. And my concern is that that's we see permeating throughout our society today. We see fatherless boys who haven't been taught how to be men who are carrying out the desires of their flesh. We, the church, need to stand up and do what we can do to teach these boys, "This is what a man of God looks like," boldly, and we're going to get mocked, we're going to be told that we're toxic masculine guys. It doesn't matter, we're going to declare God's word. Let's make sure we stay on Scripture and not our opinion.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, is there a link between that experience early on and you're now being chairman of the new Promise Keepers? They're not calling it that, but it's Promise Keepers, right?

Ken Harrison: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: And you're chairman of the board, and that is really an outreach to men and to fathers and to husbands. Is there a link between your desire to be all you could be to herding people, men especially in that environment, and what you're now called to do?

Ken Harrison: Yeah, absolutely. After I left the LAPD and I got into business and God really blessed me tremendously and I got to be an executive in a global company, and what that taught me was that wickedness just doesn't come in the form of gangsters on the street. It also comes in the form of men and women who wear suits and ties and expensive dresses, greed and all those things. They don't change, they just change how they show themselves. And I see that same lack of godliness that's bringing all of our society down a road that's going to look like South Central Los Angeles someday if we don't start teaching our young men. We have got to give men permission to be men again.

Dr. James Dobson: I pray that this will be the beginning of the revival.

Ken Harrison: What are the big messages are going to be? Start acting like a man, and part of it is a lot of people don't know what that means. Well, how do I act like a man? And I believe a lot of fathers don't know how to teach their sons how to act like a man. What we're hoping we can do is be that place where dads can take their sons and we're going to tell you how to be a man, and we're going to tell your sons how to be a man. I was asked in an interview, I always say, sometimes you find out the greatest truths about yourself when you respond to something when you weren't prepared, what came out of your mouth or what did you do without thinking? Someone said, "Why are you so concerned for men that you're bringing back Promise Keepers?"

And my answer was, "I'm not concerned for men. I'm concerned for women and children." When we talk about bringing Promise Keepers back and teaching men how to be men, it's not about men, it's partially about men, but it's a whole lot more about women and children because when men are screwed up, it's women and children who suffer. We're forcing our women to become incredibly strong because so many men are becoming so weak and they're cowardly and they don't stand up for their responsibilities. That's what we need to change. Only Jesus Christ can change a man. So, men struggle with two things desperately, identity and hope. Men have to have hope and their hope is in Jesus Christ, and the same with their identity. Their identity comes from Jesus Christ. So, what we want to do is talk to men about sin and how God in his graciousness forgives sin, but you're not going to get better by trying hard not to sin, you're going to get better by giving your life to Jesus.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Ken, my prayer is that the Lord will bless this movement, not just in the setting or the arena of Promise Keepers, but that it'll start a revival that will spread across the country.

Ken Harrison: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: I really don't believe there's anything else that's going to save us as a country. We're in such a mess. We have sunk into a sewer of sin. Only a return to Christ... There've been two great awakenings said to have occurred in history, it's time for another one, and what better place to start than with a Promise Keepers event. Thank you for being with us, Ken. God be with you as you endeavor to reignite this dream, and again, the title of your book, with the forward by Stu Weber is a *Rise of the Servant Kings*, having to do with manhood and servanthood, serving your family, serving God's people, and God's cause. Thanks for being with us. I love you as a brother in Christ.

Ken Harrison: It is an honor to know you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a powerful conversation about manhood and being a servant for God's kingdom here on Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and you've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's conversation with the CEO of Promise Keepers, Ken Harrison. If you want to share today's program with a friend or loved one, remember you can do so very easily using the official Family Talk JDFI app, or

visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Once you're there, you'll find links for Promise Keepers and their upcoming conference. We've also got a link there for Ken Harrison's book called *Rise of the Servant Kings* as well, all that, and much, much more. Again, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Now, after listening to today's broadcast, perhaps you were thinking of a man in your life who could use some encouragement and support as he leans closer to God and desires to step more firmly into the roles he's been called to as a man. Perhaps that man is you, by the way. If so, you will definitely enjoy the brand new two-disc CD set from Dr. James Dobson called "Biblical Manhood: What It Means to Be a Godly Man."

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That's right, all you have to do is select the amount that you would like to donate, and we will send you a copy of this valuable resource as our way of thanking you for your gift. I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of Dr. James Dobson and everyone here at Family Talk, thanks so much for your prayers and your ongoing support. Have a blessed day, and be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Family Talk.

Announcer:

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