



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: When Love Ends – Part 1

Guest(s): Jackie M. Johnson

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Greetings and welcome to this Wednesday edition of Family Talk. Family Talk is a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and is completely listener supported. To find out how you can support the ministry of Family Talk, visit drjamesdobson.org. Well, Valentine's day is over and the chocolate hearts are 80% off at the local grocery store. If you were able to listen to the program this past Monday and Tuesday, you know that we had Dr. Gary Chapman with us, the author of *The Five Love Languages*. Dr. Chapman has spent his life counseling married couples, giving them the tools they need to succeed in marriage, and then watching them thrive. However, not everyone looks forward to Valentine's day.

In fact, if you're single and have gone a painful breakup, Valentine's day can be a mocking reminder of that pain. And if that's you, well, you're going to want to listen closely to today's broadcast. Dr. Dobson will be talking with Jackie M. Johnson author of the book, *When Love Ends and the Ice Cream Carton Is Empty*. Jackie has had personal experiences with tough breakups, and she wrote this book to help people cope with and learn from their own experiences. Jackie M. Johnson is an author and blogger who has written three books, *When Love Ends and the Ice Cream Carton Is Empty*, *Praying With Power When Life Gets Tough* and *Power Prayers for Women*. Jackie has a bachelor of arts in English and communications from Trinity International University. In addition to being an author, Jackie is Dr. Dobson's executive assistant and a beloved member of the staff here at the James Dobson Family Institute. Let's listen now to part one of her conversation with Dr. Dobson on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Now today, we're going to be talking about a program that we are long overdue in discussing. It's one that I have cared about. I wrote about it in my book, *Love Must Be Tough*. But we have a guest here today who has experienced this single life. And she has written a book called *When Love Ends and the Ice Cream Carton Is Empty*. And we're going to have to have her explain that to us.

Now, the reason this topic is so important is because the United States census bureau says that the average age for women to get married is now 27. Boy, that's changed a lot. And the average age for men is 29. And the people who get married at the average age are already nearly halfway through the fertile years of life. And that changes a whole lot. Additionally, there are 110 million unmarried people in the United States alone.

Most of whom have remained single for their whole life. Why have we not dealt with this subject more in the past? If you are single and you've waited for us to talk about this subject, today is the day. And I'm sorry, we've taken a long time to get to it. With people putting off saying I do until later in life, a remaining single, the dating and breaking up experience that begins in the teen years can continue on until the early fifties.

And no matter how young or old you are, breaking up can be an extremely difficult and emotionally draining experience. Before we went on the air, we were recalling a song that was popular in 1962. In fact, it hit number one. And I'm not going to sing it to you. We'd go off the air. "Don't take your love away from me. Don't leave my heart in misery." Those of you who have lived a little longer in life may remember that because that was a very popular song.

Well, I mentioned the guest who is here and the books she's written. Let me tell you more about her. She is an executive assistant to me here at James Dobson Family Institute. Her name is Jackie Johnson. She is good at what she does, and she's done a lot of thinking about this subject because she's been there and we want to plum the depths of the topic with her today. She is an experienced writer. She's written three books.

She writes a blog called "Living Single," and she has a BA in English and communication from Trinity International University in Illinois. Jackie, Shirley and I love and appreciate you so much. And it's time that we had you in the studio. And thanks for joining us.

Jackie M. Johnson: Thank you. It's good to be here.

Dr. James Dobson: How long has this book been out?

Jackie M. Johnson: The book came out in 2010 with Moody Publishers, but the topic is timeless because people are always dating and breaking up and they can use some help and hope and encouragement.

Dr. James Dobson: I read in the prep for today that you've sold more than 500,000 books.

Jackie M. Johnson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that right?

Jackie M. Johnson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: My goodness. You're a big deal.

Jackie M. Johnson: Well, I'm just trying to help people.

Dr. James Dobson: Are most of those books on this subject?

Jackie M. Johnson: My other books are on the topic of prayer. And I think the overarching thing I write about is hope and encouragement. And that can take a lot of different forms, so I'm glad to be here today to talk about this.

Dr. James Dobson: Jackie, let's go by to Neil Sedaka's song, why is breaking up so very, very hard?

Jackie M. Johnson: It is hard. Letting go is never easy because you have to say goodbye to someone that you loved or you liked. And the thing is, you've been spending time with this person, you've grown attached to them, you probably might be in love with them, especially if it's a long term relationship. And now you're on your own again. It's a transition.

And I think it's hard to recover from a breakup because I think God designed us for attachment and connection, not for detachment and disconnection. And as singles, sometimes we go through these series of hello, goodbye, dating and breaking up, relationship after relationship. And sadly, nobody teaches us how to get over a breakup or how to deal with endings.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. I've not seen another book on this subject.

Jackie M. Johnson: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Let's name some of the emotions that go along with it. There is rejection and there is loneliness and there is pain and hurt and sorrow.

Jackie M. Johnson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And there are many, many other emotions that accompany it. Describe some of them?

Jackie M. Johnson: Right. Hurt and sadness are really the most common. You could be angry. You could feel betrayed. They could have found somebody else and put you by the wayside.

Dr. James Dobson: Sometimes the breakup is not very kind either. Isn't it?

Jackie M. Johnson: That's true. That's true. I've gone through a number of relationships. One guy moved halfway across the country and wouldn't return my phone calls. That's not-.

Dr. James Dobson: And this is somebody you had a relationship established?

Jackie M. Johnson: Yes. Yes. For over a year. For over a year.

Dr. James Dobson: And he didn't return your phone call?

Jackie M. Johnson: No. So he was a coward and he would not even talk to me. I had someone break up with me over email after two years.

Dr. James Dobson: Sent you an.

Jackie M. Johnson: Yeah, email.

Dr. James Dobson: You got to be kidding.

Jackie M. Johnson: No, we did talk the next day or two in person, but the information came to me by email. So I think that if you do break up with someone, you want to be kind, you want to be respectful, you want to speak the truth in love. That's what the Bible says, speak the truth in love.

Dr. James Dobson: You call them cowards to do that.

Jackie M. Johnson: I did. Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And would you agree that the women are more likely to suffer from the breakup of a relationship?

Jackie M. Johnson: That's an interesting question, Dr. Dobson, because I've heard the phrase that women bend, but men break. And sometimes I think women do feel that emotion strongly, but maybe we have better coping mechanisms because we have our friends to lean on.

We have the Bible to lean on. We're looking for answers of how to get over it. And maybe, not to generalize, but sometimes men tough it out and try to have figure it out on their own or stuff their emotions.

Dr. James Dobson: You mentioned cowardice. I think that's one reason people do such a bad job of letting the other person know that it's not going to work. They had rather write an email. I mean, that's about the worst thing I've heard.

Jackie M. Johnson: Right? And it's hard to believe that someone who once said they liked you or loved you would treat you in this fashion and say nothing or not speak with you face to face. I think as believers, that we are to be respectful and be gentle. And here we are trying to speak the truth in love.

I know I just said that, but there's a way to do it and a way not to do it. Because the thing is, if you don't deal with your breakup pain, then you carry it from one

relationship to the next, to the next to the next, and that can affect your dating life and possibly your future marriage.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk. And that was our host, Dr. James Dobson with his guest, Jackie M. Johnson. Jackie is the author of the book, *When Love Ends and the Ice Cream Carton Is Empty*. She and Dr. Dobson have been talking about the pain of breakups and what to do when a relationship doesn't work out the way you planned.

We're actually giving away copies of Jackie's book. If you'd like to request one, just visit drjamesdobson.org/whenloveends, or give us a call at (877) 732-6825. Again, the title of her book is *When Love Ends and the Ice Cream Carton Is Empty: What You Need to Know About Your New Beginning*. Let's return now to Dr. Dobson's conversation with Jackie Johnson right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's talk about how, what changes when you have established a relationship and you have the assumption that that's leading to marriage. And you've built your future around that relationship because you foresee marriage and children. I think at that point, women do suffer more than men typically because they hear Big Ben gonging in the background. The time is passing.

And I mentioned earlier, the fertility periods only about 27, 28 years, maybe 30. And the latter end of that, it's sometimes not easy for a pregnancy to occur. And as the time goes on another year, another Christmas, another Easter, another summer, and you get closer and closer to that time when the dream of having a baby and raising a child and pouring your life into him, or her is becoming less and less likely. So when a breakup occurs all that, it looms before you, I got to start over now.

Jackie M. Johnson: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: With somebody else. And this is getting away from me. There's a panic that is associated with that experience, isn't there?

Jackie M. Johnson: There can be, definitely. If, especially if you're a woman who wants to have children and have a family. Let me give you an all situation from my own life. I was dating someone for two years, which is a pretty long time.

We met in our church singles group and we did everything together. We went on mission trips, we were in a prayer group together, we were in leadership. We spent a lot of time together. And then I went away on a trip, came back and he was the one who sent me the email that said he had found somebody else. And this person-

Dr. James Dobson: Did you know the person he found?

Jackie M. Johnson: I did.

Dr. James Dobson: You got to be kidding.

Jackie M. Johnson: No, she was in our singles group as well. And he told me by email that he felt led to now be with her. So it kind of felt like a double betrayal because.

Dr. James Dobson: Felt led. I mean, that is a cowardly statement in itself. Blame it on God. I haven't done this to you. God told me not to continue the relationship. I don't believe that's likely to be true in most cases.

Jackie M. Johnson: Well, it was really difficult, Dr. Dobson, because we had talked about marriage. We had talked about, should we have children or not? We had talked about a future. And I was stunned. I was shocked. I was... I think I was in shock because I didn't see it coming.

I had no idea. And this person was a friend of mine. So I felt like there was a double betrayal in that he never said anything. She never said anything. I felt rejected. Why did he pick her over me?

Dr. James Dobson: There is also a certain assault on self-worth that occurs at a time like this, isn't there? There's this ache that says, what's wrong with me? Why did this happen to me? There's also a spiritual dimension to it.

You and I talked before about the fact that the people blame God in speaking of him and say, "Why would you let this happen to me? Didn't you hear my prayers? Was there something wrong with my prayers that you didn't hear it?" And now this has occurred. Are those things you talk about in your book?

Jackie M. Johnson: Absolutely. I thought a lot about what I wanted to include in this book. Because like you said, I couldn't find another book that would help me. Where were the Bible verses? Where was the comfort? Where was the hope and the encouragement? Where is God in all of this? What do I do with forgiveness? I mean, a lot of things were swirling in my head.

Dr. James Dobson: Anger is one of them, isn't it?

Jackie M. Johnson: Absolutely. Definitely.

Dr. James Dobson: Jackie, did anybody help you? Did anybody come alongside, put an arm around you? Any girlfriend, anybody, pastor, who said, "Jackie, you're going to get over this. You're going to deal with this. This is very painful, but you are a worthy person and God has not abandoned you." Did anybody talk to you that way?

Jackie M. Johnson: Yes. I am really blessed to have a good group of friends. And my friends are very comforting and nurturing and supportive. They prayed for me. They prayed with me. There was even a class at our church about getting over loss. So it wasn't specifically for a breakup, but I thought, well, I guess, that's the closest thing that I could find to it.

But you talked about my relationship with God and how that plays into all this. Sure, I had a ton of questions. Why did this happen? Why am I not enough? Why is God keeping me from lasting love? And it took me a really long time. I would search the Scriptures. I would sit on my bed with a pen and paper and look for every single word about hope, about encouragement, about getting over a loss.

And as a Christian, I can look to the one who loves me most, which is Jesus Christ and have a new perspective. And that new perspective is God's truth. And God's truth doesn't change. And one of the main things I learned was that God is not withholding from me something good, He's protecting me and saving me for His best. And I can trust Him even when I do not understand. That was huge.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. You can trust Him even when you can't track him is one of my phrases.

Jackie M. Johnson: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: I also wrote a book similar to this. It's not specifically about singles, but it's about the breakup of a marriage and what happens. But I believe what I wrote there is very much relevant to the breakup of a couple that's not married. And I don't know anybody else that's written this Jackie, but I believe it's absolutely true.

Dr. James Dobson: And I've gotten thousands of letters from people saying this was helpful to them. When you begin to sense that the other person doesn't feel about you, the way you feel about them. In your case, you were blindsided. But usually, you are seeing the other person drift. The natural tendency in that situation is to grab and hold.

Jackie M. Johnson: Mm-hmm.

Dr. James Dobson: To plead, to beg, to say, "You can't do this to me. What will I do without you?" To build a cage around them. You know what that does to the other person? It sends them the other way. It's the quickest way to end a relationship. When you begin to show that you're in a state of panic, which is the usual way, because the whole world falls apart. Everything you had hoped for, everything you look forward to in the future, a life together as a family, and now it's gone.

And if what I just said is true, the best thing you can do in a moment like that is to move the other way. Sometimes the person who is moving away will turn around and come back. And I can tell you that happened with Shirley and me. Because I graduated from college before she did. And I went off to the army and I came back one Christmas. She had assumed the relationship was going to continue.

What I was thinking is that as soon as I get out of the army, I'm going to University of Texas to get a PhD and I can't afford a wife. And I need to give my

attention to my studies. And I don't think that we were headed toward marriage. And how do I tell her this? Well, there ain't no easy way. So at the end of the Christmas vacation, we went out and we had an absolutely wonderful evening, we laughed, we had fun.

We came back about 12 o'clock at night to her dorm. And I said to myself, this is the moment. And I said, "Shirley, I've been doing a lot of thinking, and I just need to tell you, I don't think this is leading to marriage. And I've got plans of what I think the Lord wants me to do. And I think that we ought to see other people." You ever heard that one before?

Jackie M. Johnson: I've read your book. And Mrs. Shirley Dobson has inspired me.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, she did exactly the right thing. Instead of begging me and putting her arm around me and saying, "Don't do this to me." She said, "Well, I've been thinking the same thing. And I think we should see some other people. And I think we ought just kind of go our separate ways and we'll put it on hold for a while. We'll see what happens." I took her to the door, shock the daylight out of me. Because I thought that I was in for a very emotional ordeal.

Jackie M. Johnson: Sure.

Dr. James Dobson: And we stood at the door. I asked her if I could kiss her goodbye. And she said, "No, let's shake on it." And with no ado, she went into the dorm and she went in her room and cried all night. If I had seen that, I would have been gone forever. But the way she let me go, by the time I got back to where I was staying at one, two, three o'clock in the morning, I was lying there thinking about having hurt the best friend I ever had.

And I began to get this big lump in my throat. And I wondered if I could get her back. And I went on to the army, went to Fort Ord. I called her and I said, "I couldn't see the forest for the trees. And I've made a big mistake. And I think we ought to continue the relationship." She was very cool. And I wrote her big, long letter. And she didn't answer it for two weeks. She was dying inside.

Jackie M. Johnson: Oh my.

Dr. James Dobson: She never let me see it. And by the time I came out of that episode, I didn't want to repeat it. That's personal, but I've seen now in so many others who either break up as singles or they get married and then have a horrible ripping and tearing of flesh. That's what you're writing about, isn't it?

Jackie M. Johnson: Yeah. Thank you for sharing that. That's really important for people to know.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we're almost out of time, Jackie, but we're not out of content. We need to talk some more. And the name of the book is *When Love Ends*. Okay. We're going to take the end of the program, the last 30 seconds for you to tell what in

the world that has to do with the ice cream carton is empty. The subtitle of the book.

Jackie M. Johnson: Sure. Right. So many times in movies and TV, you see somebody breaking up. The girl sitting on her bed with an ice cream carton, a pint size and she's got the spoon and she's crying and eating ice cream. And it's a kind of a popular thing, especially women do to comfort themselves after a breakup. But what we're going to learn is that they are healthier and better ways to cope.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's talk about them next time.

Jackie M. Johnson: Okay. That'd be great. Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Jackie, thanks for writing this book, for your care for singles. And I think you're going to hear from some people out there who are going through this right now. We'll talk about it next time.

Roger Marsh: Well, we pray that you have been encouraged by today's program here on Family Talk, especially if you've experienced a rough breakup. If you want some prayer or just someone to talk to, you can call our offices anytime at (877) 732-6825. Again, that toll free number (877) 732-6825. Our staff is available 24/7 to take your call.

Now, if you found yourself relating to today's conversation or you know someone who would, you might be interested in getting a copy of Jackie Johnson's book *When Love Ends and the Ice Cream Carton Is Empty*. Well, we are giving away copies of that book while supplies last. So request your copy today. Visit drjamesdobson.org/whenloveends. That's drjamesdobson.org/whenloveends, or give us a call at (877) 732-6825.

Now, if you want to learn more about Jackie, to get connected with her or to read her latest blogs, visit drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. We have links to Jackie's website and her books are waiting there for you as well. Well, that's all the time we have for today, but make sure you join us again tomorrow, Dr. Dobson and Jackie Johnson will continue their conversation about losing love and providing more encouragement and practical steps for when love ends. That's tomorrow right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi, everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton here for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. The news comes in all kinds of shapes, sizes and formats these days. But how do you cut through the noise and get to the heart of the matters that affect your family? Come to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and sign up for Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter. You'll find clarity on tough issues, encouragement for your everyday life and trusted principles to help you build strong, healthy, connected families. Go to drjamesdobson.org. Sign up today. That's drjamesdobson.org.