



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** A Marriage That Can Go the Distance – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Rev. Bob Kraning

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**Dr. James 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 to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, when we think back to the Garden of Eden and the story of Adam and Eve, we read that God did not want for a man to be by himself, the Lord God says in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." As we were designed to have companionship, many of us seek to go through life with that special person by our side, a husband or a wife. So when the right young man and young woman do meet, they fall in love and then there is a proposal for marriage as the couple dreams and makes plans about their future together. And when a couple embarks on the journey to say I do, they want that love to stand the test of time. Chances are they are not planning for their marriages to turn sour and eventually to end.

But not everyone knows how to reach the destination of a lifelong marriage. So if you're engaged, single, or single again, you'll want to pay close attention to today's useful message here on Family Talk. And if you are married, whether it's only been a few days or several years, there's lots of wisdom here to help ensure your union is one that will last a lifetime. In today's classic program, we're going to hear a heartwarming and practical presentation given by Reverend Bob Kraning from 1982 at Forest Home Christian Conference Center. At that time, Bob had just celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary to his beloved wife Carol. Reverend Kraning was the associate pastor at Evangelical Free Church in California. He also served as executive director of Forest Home Christian Conference Center. Bob went home to be with the Lord in 2020. He is survived by his wife, his two grown sons and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. Let's listen now to Reverend Bob Kraning right now on Family Talk.

**Rev. Bob Kraning:** Carol and I have just celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary in May. The last weekend of May 24th was our anniversary and we have put in 25 years. And our kids did a very special thing for us on that weekend and we went away for a couple of days and when we came home on Sunday afternoon, they had about 110 or 120 people in our backyard. And our backyard isn't big enough for that

many people, but they were all there dressed in costumes of the 50s. Everybody had their hair greased down and had Bobby socks and we just totally were shocked. We had no idea they were doing anything and we thought if we got to go to dinner with them, we'd be fortunate. And they just put on a very, very special day for us. Had a lot of people out of our past and out of our present and all dressed strange.

And prior to the celebration on Sunday, Carol and I had gone to Yosemite for a couple of days. We've lived in California for 25 years, and my wife had never seen Yosemite, so I thought maybe it was time. And we went up and spent a couple of days up there and one of the evenings we had dinner together and we sat and I asked Carol a question that night and we sat and talked about it for a long time. I said, "Tell me, why do you think we're still together after 25 years and why is it that we still have fun and why is it that we still love each other and that we still enjoy being together and we enjoy praying together?" And this year I had a sabbatical and we spent five weeks together, 24 hours a day literally for five weeks and kind of went into that with some apprehension.

I travel a lot and I'm gone a lot and suddenly be put together for five weeks, 24 hours a day every day, it probably was one of the best experiences of our whole lives. We just had an absolutely super five weeks together and it was very, very exciting. So we tried to just put together some things about 25 years and why are we together? What's made it good? And I thought maybe this morning that'd be a good way to begin. What has made our 25 years. And I don't really know. I can't give you great answers and say, "If you do these four things it'll be super." But I did write down five things why I don't think those are the issues. And I think sometimes from the exterior we look at a marriage or we look at somebody else. I know I get around certain marriages where I look at the two people and I spend some time with them and I in my mind tend to feel, "Gee, it's just those people."

I mean they got to make it. They got to get along well together. And yet I've counseled some people in my office who are in terrible trouble. So the five things I wrote down that are not the reasons. I put down number one, it's just because we're neat people and we have it all together and it's very simple. It's just because of the kind of people we are. It works. We found that's not true. Carol would tell you quickly that I don't have it all together and sometimes things aren't all that good. The second thing I wrote down is when we had marvelous counseling before we got married, our premarital counseling I think lasted about 10 or 12 minutes in total. I can only remember one thing he said and that was ingest. And I don't think I'll tell it this morning, but that's the only thing I remember out of what was said to us in about 10 or 12 minutes, that was the extent of the premarital counseling that we had.

I will say this, we have parents, my mom and dad had their 50th wedding anniversary two years ago and three weeks before my folks had their 50th, Carol's folks had their 50th. So we do have good examples behind us that I think have been very helpful, but it is not because we had good counseling. The third

thing I wrote down, "It is not because we are in the ministry at Forest Home." I think people sometimes say to me, "I'll bet you it just helps everything in including your marriage because you're at Forest Home." Forest Home can be a real drag on a marriage. I just want you to know that it's not all really neat to be at Forest Home. The hours you spend in the summer, the kind of time you put in, I'm normally up here by court at 8:00 in the morning and I usually don't go home before 11 at night.

And those can be very hard things on a marriage if you don't have a good feel about where you're trying to go in your marriage. So it is not that. The fourth thing I wrote down is because we have two neat kids, I'm prejudiced. I feel we do have two neat kids and I'm very grateful to God for our 23 and our 17-year-olds. They're good guys and they're great to have around, but they also at points in our lives have been a drag on our marriage. Fifth thing I wrote down is that it's just because we have good personalities and we're always up. My wife has many people, I ask Carol, "Is Bob really like what we see on the platform?" And my wife, it really only takes her a very brief amount of time to say, "No." I have days when I'm down.

I have days when I get up and I don't want to come here and do my thing. My wife prays for me every now and then, "Lord get him up. He is flat." And I'm like that. And that happens to me. So it isn't that. It isn't that just we're kind of neat and laid back and it just works and I tend to be up a lot and I am, but I tend to crash when I walk out of here. So Carol has to put up with the downs that come out of walking off of this platform I put down at the bottom. If we have had conflicts in our marriage, we have had times of grief in our marriage. We have had some major arguments in our marriage. We've had a couple of big feasts that stand out vividly in my mind. We have had disappointments.

There's been stress in our marriage, we have had illness. I have had two major surgeries, we have had debts. I look at all the things we've had in our marriage and I think it's pretty normal. I think it's the things that other people have in their marriages. And somehow within the thrust of that, we've been able to put together 25 years and we're still excited about another 25 if God should give it to us. And I think it's important that somewhere in there maybe some things have fallen together and I am sure there are a number of people sitting in here. Let me just ask for fun as we start this morning.

How many of you have been married less than five years? Anybody? Okay, we've got several less than five years. How many less than 10? Lots of hands. Less than 10. Okay. How many less than 15? Not including the fives and the tens. Okay, less than 15. Okay. How about less than 20? Okay. How about over 30? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. How about over 40? Got 1, 2, 3. 3 couples over 40. Anybody hit 50? No 50s yet.

Speaker 4: 36 if we make until Thursday.

Rev. Bob Kraning: If you make it till Thursday. Little shaky. 36.

Speaker 5: 39.

Rev. Bob Kraning: 39. How long have you been married?

Speaker 6: 46.

Rev. Bob Kraning: 46. Isn't it interesting? How about the other couple back here? How long have you been married?

Speaker 7: 46.

Rev. Bob Kraning: 46. Oh, got two 46s. You folks need to have lunch together. It's intriguing to me that in recent months, over the past, well like two years, two or three places where I've been doing couples conferences, I've asked this question and the thing that intrigues me is somebody's been married 25 years or longer gets standing ovations. It's like it's so rare that when people hear that somebody's been married a long time, it's like, "All right." And they start cheering. I mean, there's a giant thing where I am convinced in my own mind 20 years ago that was not true. It was much more normal to have long-term marriage. It was the short-term marriage that people kind of went, "Oh wow."

Where now we've got so many short-term marriages that when people hear somebody's been married 46 years, that's eternity. People are going, "46 years." It's like, "Nobody does that anymore." And yet it's true. There are people like that who have been married that long. So my 25 seems a little insignificant at this point, but I'm excited that we have 25. And I want to try to share a couple of things with you. Something that was pointed out to me about a year ago that really turned my head and got me thinking. And I... If you have a Bible this morning, turn to a passage that I have preached on at least seven occasions that I can think of, but never in the context that came to my attention, which really started me thinking. And I took this passage of scripture and tried to tie some things to it.

And we're going to chew this passage up just with one word this morning just a little bit. Ephesians 4:25. I want to begin at verse 23, "That you be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Then in verse 25 will begin here, and we're going to work through 25-32. "Therefore laying aside falsehood speak truth, each one of you with his neighbor." Let's just take the word neighbor this morning and insert the word spouse or husband or wife. "Laying aside falsehood speak truth each one of you with his or her spouse. For we are members of one another. Be angry and yet do not sin. Do not let the sun go down upon your anger and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Let him who steals steal no longer but rather let him labor performing with his own hands what is good in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only

such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment that it may give grace to those who hear and do not grieve the holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed. For the day of redemption, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Now, I just took this and worked with it and a friend of mine gave me the idea and got me really turning necessary. And I just want to kind of put these out in front of you and talk a little bit about where we are in this.

And we don't have these things all together. I wish we did. If we had them all together, we'd have the perfect marriage and it'd be a marvelous thing. But we don't. But we're working on them and I think we've learned some things. First of all in verse 25, "Therefore laying aside falsehood speak truth, each one of you with his spouse." And this says with neighbors, and we're just tightening it up a little bit, "For we are members one of another." And I just wrote down, I put lay aside falsehood and speak the truth. Probably one of the things that Carol and I have done reasonably well. I said to Carol this morning, we were sitting at the table at the house this morning and I said, "Honey..." And I was going over the outline and I said, "Do we really tell each other the truth?"

And Carol kind of looked up at a little smile and she said, "Well, almost." I said, "What does that mean?" I thought she was going to tell me something. "Well," she said, "sometimes it's like we tell about 90% of it, but the other 10% might hurt more than we wish. So we hold that for a day or two." And she gave me a couple of little examples, but I said, "Do you feel we are really truthful with one another? When I come home in the afternoon and you ask me where I've been, do you feel I tell you where I've been?" And she said, "There's no question in my mind that you tell me where you've been." There's an essence of truth within the structure of a marriage that is absolutely critical to survival. I'm intrigued with people who just get habitual lying patterns within a marriage.

They just simply don't tell each other the truth. They don't tell horrible things, but they keep an air of falsehood in the center of their marriage constantly. And I think if there's anything we've done in 25 years, it's try to speak the truth honestly and lay aside falsehood to be honest people with one another. Let me read you just a little bit equipped. Incidentally, I just read this book. I had read this book a long, long time ago, and I just reread this book. It's kind of funny with all the marriage manuals out now that give us all the juicy things, people have tended to walk away from some of the better things that have ever been written. And I think this little book, I don't care whether you've been married a month or whether you've been married 40 years, this little book has some marvelous things to say.

And it's the little book, the Art of Understanding Your Mate by Cecil Osborne. And it just has some great, great things in it, and it's all to deal with relationships. And it's just a lovely book. Listen to this little bitty clip in here that so well says this. And in this, he says, "Until one night when she revealed to our

very small intimate group that she had discovered her husband Tom had been supporting and living with another woman on and off for several years. Suddenly her anger knew no bounds. She vented it in yelling and tears for several minutes. Tom sat and listened in total shock and suddenly for the first time, probably in many years, became personal. All right. He blurted out, I'll get down to brass tacks. I have lived most of our marriage as a pack of lies, and I have done it so long that I am just glad to unload it off of my chest.

I started by telling one lie to cover one other lie. Then I told five lies to cover those two lies. And then I told 10 to cover the five, and now I've told thousands to cover the whole sorry mess." And he began to cry. And then he goes on and talks about a man in the group who walked over and put his arms around him and he said, "Honesty could salvage your problem." And then he goes on for three pages and tells about what's happened to the marriage of a couple that looked hopeless that have really put it back together. But isn't it interesting, have you ever discovered in your life when you tell a lie, if you just don't quite tell it all the way true, you've always got to remember what you said because somewhere you're going to have to say something else to cover up what was not right.

And a man told me many years ago, he said, Kraning, just remember this, "If you told the truth, you never have to think about what you said because if you're ever asked again, you're going to tell it exactly the same." And I guess if there's anything we've done in our marriage, it's been try to speak the truth and have a real honesty in our relationship. There's a little saying that I picked up out of college that I have taped in my desk drawer, and I've kept this around for years. It's had a great influence on my thinking. It's this, and maybe some of you've heard me give it, "Never sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate." I cannot believe people that I've counseled over the last year, guys who have gotten involved, Christian men who've gotten involved in some little way with some woman that's gotten them in all kinds of trouble because they did a little sudden immediate thing that absolutely blasted the whole permanent experience, 20 years invested, and they go out and in a few minutes do something awful that some of them never recover from.

And all out of kind of sacrificing the permanent on the altar of the immediate giving up a momentary pleasure for the truth and for the permanent seems critical to a good marriage that we really look at our marriages long-term, that we really look at it down the road. And I think sometimes we look and we say, "Well, I've been married five years, or I've been married 10 years," and that seems long. I look at 25 and golly 25 seems short. I look back and it seems like in one way we've always been married and in another way, it seems like it's been so short. It's been such a brief amount of time that we've had together to put in 25 years. So the first thing that I put down was just speak the truth. Chuck Swindoll made this statement, and boy, it's a great statement, "Lying and true intimacy in a marriage can never coexist."

That is a great statement. Lying and true intimacy in a marriage can never coexist. See, if things are not true within the structure of your relationship, you cannot have true intimacy. Now, you may have intimate moments, but you can never have true intimacy if there are untruths that are weaving in and out and around that marriage. So speak the truth, lay aside falsehood. Then the second thing he says in here is, "Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down upon your anger and do not give the devil an opportunity." Carol, I think a year ago last summer, some of you were here when she did that little seminar, we did a seminar together and one of the things she talked about was when we got married, we made a little covenant with one another that we would never go to bed angry at each other.

Now, I wish I could say, "We kept that for 25 years." We did not. I think I could count on one hand the times we have gone to bed angry at one another, but we have, and I can remember two of them vividly. I can remember laying on my side of the bed thinking if I just turned and said "I'm sorry," or if I just turned and said, "Carol." I mean that's all I would've had to do. Have you ever had that experience? And in your mind you're saying, "I know I should do that. I mean, it's simple." But there's something in you that kind of goes, "No."

Now if she says something, I'll respond. If she says, "Bob, I'm real..." I'll be great. I'll just go, "Oh, honey, it's all right." I'll respond so fast, but no way am I going to say that first word. And I can think of three or four times. Not often have we done that. But you know what he says here? He says, "Be angry and do not sin." He does not say, "Don't get angry." I think it's probably very difficult for us to live in kind of close living situation that we live in a marriage, that intimate relationship of two imperfect people coming into an impossible situation.

They're just going to be times when we're going to get a little hostile. Things are not going to hit us exactly right. But he's saying there is a difference between getting angry and sinning and carrying that out to some major extent, lighting an effect, actions, and all of the things that we do. Be angry and sin not. Here's a little thing that comes out of this book that I wrote down that I just thought was so good. Remember this, wives are seeking a mature, strong, understanding, passionate, gentle husband.

And he says, "There are no such people." He said, "It's very difficult to find a person that has all of those characteristics and can put them together." You just talk about a husband being strong and gentle. Those are two very difficult things for a man. If a man is strong, he tends not to be terribly gentle. If he's gentle, he tends to be... It's hard for him at that point then to be strong. It's very hard for him to get those things into perspective. And yet that's what a wife is looking for. While a husband wants an all-forgiving, ever-loving, totally understanding, wife-mother-mistress, combination of mother-forgiving unconditionally, an unconditional love, a movie star housekeeper, a sounding board, an ego-builder, and one who thinks his utterances are either profound or at least very witty. See, and he's basically saying, folks, "There are not people like that." There are

people that fulfill some areas of that or at least attempt to, but we've come into a situation that is basically does not exist.

Roger Marsh:

Well, that is absolutely spot on. What great advice about marital expectations from our guest today here on Family Talk, Reverend Bob Kraning. And there is so much more to listen to. So, be sure to join us again tomorrow for part two of Bob's presentation as he'll be discussing conflict in marriage. It's so important to make sure small issues don't become bigger ones. And if you missed any part of today's program or if you'd like to share it with someone who needs to hear this presentation, just visit [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Well, we've heard a lot about marriage today here on Family Talk, and single ladies know it is certainly challenging to find a man whose heart and whose mind are prepared to eventually marry. We as Christians, recognize that culturally there is an attack on masculinity. So how do we combat this? Well, it starts with how boys are raised and what Godly values are instilled in them as they grow to become young men.

To help parents navigate the obstacles of raising their sons, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has developed a new free 10-day email series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book called *Bringing Up Boys*. It's designed to equip you to wisely lead your sons to become godly men. Now, to sign up and receive your free 10-day email series, simply click the link at the bottom of the broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Now, if you have not yet heard, I want to share the news of a brand new resource we've developed that is designed to reach the next generation. The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has remastered Dr. Dobson's sound, biblically based transforming truths into 60 second audio messages, or as we like to call them, the Dr. Dobson Minute. We pray that these will encourage young families and provide them with practical insights to strengthen marriages and help them to be the best parents they can be.

Now, if you'd like to listen to a sample, simply go to [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org). That's [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org). You'll be glad you did. And thanks for remembering that Family Talk is a listener-supported broadcast outreach. It's because of you and your faithful prayers and financial support that we are able to bring quality content to you and your family each and every day. Now, to find out more about how to support the JDFI, you can visit us online at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Or if you'd like to reach out using the phone call 877-732-6825. We would love to connect with you to pray with and for you if that's what you need. And also, feel free to share your comments, your questions, even those prayer requests.

Again, the number to call is 877-732-6825. Remember, you can also reach out to us through the mail. Our ministry mailing address is The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. Once again, that ministry mailing address is The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. I'm Roger Marsh inviting you to join us again tomorrow for part two of Reverend Bob Kraning's presentation on marital differences and resolving conflict in



marriage. Here at Family Talk, we are so glad you've joined us today, and we pray that God will continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow stronger and deeper in relationship with Him.

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

Roger Marsh: Hey everyone. Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) for helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.