



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: 50 Years of Marriage: Our Success Story – Part 2

Guest(s): Jon and Marylois Gibson

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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: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Today's program is part two of an insightful and valuable conversation between Dr. James Dobson and his good friends Jon and Marylois Gibson on the topic of marriage. Jon and Marylois have been married for over 50 years. Today on the broadcast, they'll share critical advice for new couples who are dating or are newly married. This conversation was originally recorded this past May and is featured in our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection.

We'll jump back into the conversation, but first I want to mention that all month long here at Family Talk we have a matching grant in place here at the ministry. Any gift that you make to us in this month of December will be doubled. This is thanks to some very special friends of Family Talk. If you'd like to make a tax deductible donation, visit us online at drjamesdobson.org or give us a call at 877-732-6825. Let's listen now to part two of Dr. Dobson's conversation with the Gibsons right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: If I've learned anything about the human personality, that individuals not only represent a personhood but also a temperament and the temperament is not something that you learn. That temperament is something that you are. It comes out of the genetic code somehow. A child is born different from every other child that's ever been born, that we're all unique. And sometimes marriage requires the melding of two very different people, two very different temperaments with their own desires and inclinations and things that irritate and somehow make it work. And people who don't understand that get married and all of a sudden they're agitated by the other person. Successful early marriage requires you to come to terms with that individual that you don't really know and sometimes don't really like. You guys apparently are very different from each other. Jon, you had to work your way through that, didn't you?

Jon Gibson: Oh, we absolutely did because we are very different, and fortunately my wife is willing to embrace the difference.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you, Jon?

Jon Gibson: I cherish this woman because she is my rock. She is my steady rock.

Dr. James Dobson: When you talk about her, a change comes over your face. Your eyes get red and I see tears. You feel very passionately about her 50 years later, don't you?

Jon Gibson: She is still the joy of my life. She's my best friend. She's my confident. She covers my back, and she's there for me, and she knows me better than anybody else on earth.

Dr. James Dobson: And still loves you.

Jon Gibson: She loves me, yes, yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Talk about Jon and his temperaments. How's he different from you?

Marylois Gibson: Oh my goodness, how much time do we have? The list is pretty long. John is a ready, fire, aim kind of person, and I'm more got to think about it. He is a journeyer. He just likes to go, just go.

Dr. James Dobson: Good thing he's a pilot.

Marylois Gibson: And I am a destination person. I like to be there and experience what's there. So our travel sometimes become a source of difficulty. He can work in the midst of clutter and piles and loves to have lots of things going on all at the same time, which drives me crazy. I need to ...

Dr. James Dobson: You're a person of order.

Marylois Gibson: I need to focus on one thing and complete it. I got to be able to check it off the list. And I've learned that marriage, you can't check it off the list because you've never arrived. It's always in process because people are always in process. So there's those differences.

There's many more little ones, but we do find things that we enjoy together like bicycling and exploring and flying to snow ski places. But I think the main way that we've been able to do that is both of us yielding and submitting ourselves to the Lord because that gives us, that commitment to God is what gives us the ability to commit to each other. It gives us that strength and that desire when we might naturally not feel like it, and to appreciate and understand and go, "Wow, that's really a different way to look at it," and just kind of see it with a lighthearted humor rather than say, "That is really bothering me."

Dr. James Dobson: You know, Marylois, I've observed sadly that many people who go together for a long time and they are passionate about each other, get married. And on the honeymoon or the first few days of marriage, they discovered things they did

not know and they don't like that other person very much, at least not for a period of time. And that's why premarital counseling is so important, to open the lid and let the other person show. Courting relationship is designed to conceal information.

Marylois Gibson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: It's not designed to reveal it. If you got a flaw, you don't want anybody to know about it, so you don't talk about it. And then it is glaring just a few weeks after marriage. Did that happen to you guys?

Marylois Gibson: Well, yes. I always said it was a good thing we had a really long honeymoon. We had about a five week honeymoon. There were two times ...

Dr. James Dobson: That's dangerous. A lot of things can go wrong in five weeks.

Marylois Gibson: There were two times in that honeymoon that I thought I might come home a widow. And there were multiple times during that honeymoon that I kind of wanted to come home single, because he had just finished his military training, was wound up tighter than I could imagine. And I'm like, "Who is this angry person that I never saw before?" I think you're right, the courtship, I tell kids when they're courting, I said, "This is the time to be selfish. See if you really like everything about that person. Does that little habit bother you? Now's the time to think about it." I also encourage couples even while they're early dating and then on, don't let it get physical because that will cloud your thinking. You need to keep that relationship on an intellectual level until you get that part figured out.

Dr. James Dobson: Marylois, you are really talking there about premarital sex.

Marylois Gibson: I'm talking about getting physically intimate before you really understand who that personality is. Because if you let the physical relationship, even if it's not sexual yet, if you go there first, you will not be thinking clearly to understand who each of you is and what that dynamic would work like.

Dr. James Dobson: It's one of the biggest mistakes you can make. I have seen research that shows that if you allow little indiscretions sexually, even if it is a first kiss on the first date and you start going down that road, our bodies and our minds are made for that to grow and continue. And if you have not put a stop to it someplace and really exercise discipline with each other, then you will be in bed with each other. Even if you are a deeply committed Christian and you don't want to go there, it grows. It's progressive. It happens.

Marylois Gibson: Yeah, because it will change your ability to process is this the right person or not?

Jon Gibson: Yeah, this is critical. And it's critical because I see a game that's going on now that goes beyond this. And my words are, "Men stop it," and "Women, don't fall for it." Because what often happens is the guy gives her a ring and he says, "Let's get engaged." "When are we going to get married?" "We'll get married" and they move in together. And that's a game. And gentlemen, don't do that to the woman. And woman, don't allow that to happen to you. Because you make a commitment to that woman. Until you make that commitment, then everything is off and you stand up like a man and be a man to honor that woman.

Dr. James Dobson: You got to have determination to do that because everything inside of you, estrogen and testosterone are working on you.

Jon Gibson: Go for a run, take a cold shower, but honor that woman.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, let's turn a sharp corner here. And Marylois, you've given me permission to ask you about your breast cancer. What was that experience like and what did it do for the two of you?

Marylois Gibson: It was a surprise. Our daughter was in kind of the final phases of her medicine training. So when I got the diagnosis, we were in shock. But I felt Jon's support of my ability to make good choices with the help of our daughter in terms of the physicians that I went to and the treatment protocols that I chose, I felt like he was very supportive of my ability to make those kind of choices. And the fact that he didn't have to second guess and say, "Well, let's get another opinion over here," and "Let's get another opinion over there." That was really helpful to me. He was very patient as the fatigue level from my treatment took me down more often than I think either of us were expecting. And so that support was really helpful in my journey.

Dr. James Dobson: Sometimes a diagnosis like that'll drive you apart. In this instance, it brought you together. Is that right?

Marylois Gibson: I think so. It was just like, "Well, this is our problem. We're going to solve it together with the Lord."

Dr. James Dobson: We should hasten to say that you're cancer free now.

Marylois Gibson: Yes, 16 years this month.

Dr. James Dobson: Praise the Lord.

Marylois Gibson: Yep.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes. You and I have both have a lot to be thankful for.

Marylois Gibson: Indeed, indeed.

Dr. James Dobson: And Jon, you have a lot to be thankful for too because you had a problem with your pancreas and that can bring you down.

Jon Gibson: I'm praising God that I survived that. But I was diagnosed with what was called insulinoma, an insulin producing tumor of the pancreas. Fortunately, it was a benign tumor or I wouldn't be here speaking to you. And this woman stood with me, we took turns. It was less than a year after her ...

Dr. James Dobson: So, the tables turned.

Jon Gibson: Tables turned.

Marylois Gibson: Very quickly.

Jon Gibson: And this woman stood by me while I was going through all the tests at Mayo in Rochester. She stood beside me even before that when I had some horrible symptoms that were not fun for her to live with. I thought maybe I was going crazy. I would have times that I'd ridden realized I'd been up for a while and I understand I was doing some fairly foolish things because my blood sugar was so low. But then we went to have the surgery. She stood by me while I was in the hospital for over 10 days and it took a long time to recover.

Dr. James Dobson: Every couple goes through some form of that if you live together long enough.

Marylois Gibson: Oh yes.

Jon Gibson: And it's a time to either say, "I don't want to deal with you," or "It's a time that we said we love you." Marylois said it so well, "This is not your problem. This is our problem and we're going to deal with it together."

Dr. James Dobson: But the beauty of it is it drew you together.

Jon Gibson: Absolutely drew us together.

Dr. James Dobson: And sooner or later you're going to go through the latter stages of life, and that can be quite a journey for the one that's least affected where all the giving's on one side.

Jon Gibson: And we have to be prepared for that because again, it's not about me, it's about us reaching out. And you see the people that are lovingly taking care of the other spouse and they're a whole lot happier than the one that walked away.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me ask you Marylois about another delicate matter, and that's the empty nest. You have experienced that. How have you coped with it?

Marylois Gibson: I had lots of plans of things that I was going to do as an empty nester, but I never had the time to do it because we've been so involved with kids our whole

existence, that there are just more kids filling the nest. And so I'm back in the little kid divisions at the church working there. We have been mentors. So I don't feel like our nest really emptied out because God kept supplying young people who we could wrap our arms around.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we are in the same boat, speaking of Shirley and me. But there was a transition, and for me it was a hard one. It was harder for me than Shirley. Shirley was preparing herself for the departure of our second child, the last child, Ryan. And I was blithely going along thinking that it wasn't going to change. And we were on the way to the airport. We were about two miles from the airport where we were going to send him off to college. And I knew Ryan would never be back because that's the go for it guy that he is. And it hit me and I started weeping and I couldn't stop. And we got to the airport and I walked with him to the gate and I couldn't stay there. I went down the gate and wept the whole way. It hit me hard. I had written about the empty nest. I had counseled about the empty nest. I had spoken about it. And when it got there, I was not ready for it. And we got in the car and drove home. I cried on the way home.

We got to our house and there in the driveway was his little car that he was not going to be coming back to very quickly. I went in the house, went into the room where his little crib had been, and I could see images of him at two years of age and three and four running through the house. And I knew that was over. And I had gone from being a father. I still was a father, but it is a change for me realizing that that precious era of my life was over. It was going to be different, and I wasn't ready to let it happen. And I cried for three days. And finally I gave it to the Lord, and then I realized that it's a pretty good thing. The house was a lot quieter, a lot cleaner. And we went on to the new stage, which was wonderful and is today. But I had a journey to go through. There's a tunnel to go through. I don't know if other people go through that, but I think women very frequently do because it is the loss of something that you cherished. It was part of your identity. Jon, did you go through that?

Jon Gibson: Well I did. I did early on because I loved driving my children to school.

Dr. James Dobson: Me, too.

Jon Gibson: I would drive our daughter to school and then later I drove our son to school. And I was pretty jealous about the fact that they then started driving themselves because those were journeys of 20 or 30 minutes each way and that was a time that we could bond and talk together, so I guess I had that early separation. But then when they went off to school, that was hard too because they're part of your life and they're suddenly gone. And it changes.

Dr. James Dobson: But it's God's plan.

Jon Gibson: It's God plan.

Dr. James Dobson: I wouldn't have wanted him to stay there.

Jon Gibson: No, us too.

Dr. James Dobson: He has to grow and you have to allow him to be his own man. And I didn't oppose that, I was for it. It was a good thing. But I was losing something inside of me.

Jon Gibson: I understand that. Here's the beauty that we've all experienced, that is the relationship changes and now they're close friends. They're not our kids. They're still our kids, but it's a different relationship.

Dr. James Dobson: And it's God's plan.

Jon Gibson: It's God's plan. And we have to then measure what we say to them because they don't necessarily want our advice. They want a listener and maybe some questions. But I praise God for the relationship we have with our kids.

Dr. James Dobson: Jon, you and I were talking a while back about putting fun into your marriage. How did you do that?

Jon Gibson: Oh, that's so critical. And I just want to encourage everybody that's listening that you have an opportunity. You know we're involved with this Grace Marriage, a wonderful ministry, and it's a reminder. You spent a lot of time preparing for your business. You spent a lot of time dealing with your business. All of us in business do that. If we just invest a small portion of that same kind of energy into our marriage, it can go from a lackluster marriage to an awesome marriage by having fun. And the fun doesn't have to be expensive. It's bringing the flowers home. It's by saying, "Hey, don't cook tonight. Let's go out to dinner." Or better yet, "I prepared a picnic dinner, let's go out." It doesn't require a lot of money, but it requires cherishing that person and investing. Can you imagine if you invest just a fraction of what you invest in making your business successful? And I'm finding that it just turns everything around.

Dr. James Dobson: Your children enjoy being in a fun marriage.

Jon Gibson: Absolutely, adventures and surprises. "Hey, we're going to do something different tonight," and they love it. My son is absolutely excellent at that. He is an adventure seeker. I think he's still a 12 year old kid at heart, but the kids love it.

Marylois Gibson: Well and fun doesn't have to be just an event. We have plugged in lots of fun events and we like to be active outdoors, and so we try to plug a lot of that kind of stuff in. But it can just be doing something silly at home together spontaneously or get out the old photo album. Remember when we used to do photo albums and they fade and everything and just laugh together. The thing I

like about Grace Marriage is that it's a coaching system, so it provides ideas of things to do on a whim or on a date night.

Dr. James Dobson: Marylois, you just introduced a new topic that our listeners don't know about Grace Marriage. You are involved in that ministry and Jon, you're on the board.

Jon Gibson: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: Grace Marriage, what is it?

Jon Gibson: Grace Marriage is different. There's so many good marriage ministries where you go for a weekend and you come out just charged up. But where are you three months later? Grace Marriage gives you the tools. There's Grace Marriage at home. There's Grace Marriage you can do with your church. But it gives you the tools as to how you can, number one, give grace to your partner. And when they are doing something that upsets you, instead of getting upset back, try to love on them. But it also is ongoing to teach you how you can share with a partner and how you can grow together. It's kind of like a tune-up for your marriage that just keeps going on rather than ... because we've been to those marriage weekends, they're wonderful. But where are you three months later?

Dr. James Dobson: Let's give some publicity to them. Where are they? How do people find Grace Marriage?

Jon Gibson: Good question. It's gracemarriage.com. You can encourage your church to get involved with it. You can go to gracemarriage.com and you'll see Grace Marriage at home. You can do a ministry just by yourselves. And it is a phenomenal ministry with people who really care. This is a team of a husband and wife team. He walked away from a phenomenally successful law practice because he had had so many kids that came to them and said, "Would you coach us because you have a marriage that's different than we see with our own parents." And they took that, they grew it and it's just, it's wonderful. We love it.

Dr. James Dobson: The leaders' names are ...

Jon Gibson: The leader's names are Brad and Marilyn Rhodes. They're fine, fine folks. And you can learn more just by going to gracemarriage.com.

Dr. James Dobson: It's so good to have the two of you on the program here. I've enjoyed this conversation. Jon, I didn't say at the top of the program what I should is that this ministry probably would not be on this site doing this work if it were not for you. You came in here as a real estate man. You negotiated a lease for our building. We didn't have much money. And then you served on the board for many years, and you have been my friend. And I can't tell you how much I appreciate the two of you and what you've done. You really do try to serve the Lord every place you find the need, don't you?

Marylois Gibson: That's the joy.

Jon Gibson: That's the joy. And He gives us opportunities. And if we walk through those opportunities and embrace them, it's an exciting adventure, much more than we could ever design ourselves. And Jim, you and Shirley are a big part of what's been a joy to us. We love you dearly. You are the real deal. God bless you.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you, brother.

Jon Gibson: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you, Marylois.

Marylois Gibson: Pleasure, thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Stay in touch with us.

Roger Marsh: What wonderful advice and stories from Jon and Marylois Gibson here on Family Talk. This year, the Gibsons celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. And their marriage, although filled with joy, has not been without its share of hardships and trials as well. Jon and Marylois are a great example of how a marriage can last a lifetime with Jesus at the center. Now, today's and yesterday's inspiring programs, parts one and two, are from our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection. This six CD set contains 18 powerful and insightful conversations on a variety of topics that were the most popular in 2022. For a suggested donation of \$50, you can own your very own copy. Just visit drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. That's drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. And new this year, we have a digital download version available as well, to make listing to family talk from your favorite device even easier. The digital download link is featured right on our website on the best of 2022 page. There you'll see the link in bold and it's shaded in festive holiday green.

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Remember, we still have a matching grant in place as well. However, there are only a few days left to take advantage of this opportunity that will double your donation and impact. Please consider a gift to the JDFI and most importantly, please keep us in your prayers. Your kindness and generosity will bring hope and encouragement to even more families in 2023. And remember, if you want to donate, please be sure to do so by midnight on December 31st.

I'm Roger Marsh. Thank you so much for making us a part of your day today and a part of your life. We hope you'll join us again tomorrow and we'll finish out this last week of 2022 together right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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