



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Mothers and Daughters of the Bible Speak

**Guest(s):** Shannon Bream

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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.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Welcome into Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, your co-host for today's broadcast. I also serve as President of the American Association of Christian Counselors, as a licensed professional counselor and licensed marriage and family therapist. I'm honored to serve with the team here at JDFI. Thank you for joining us for today's broadcast.

Currently in Pensacola, Florida, we're in Extraordinary Women Conference, where my wife, Julie, hosts these uplifting conferences for women from all walks of life, denominations, age ranges, in cities all over the country. Lot of energy here. It's wild. Lot of fun. God's at work and there's a stirring going on. Just about a hundred feet or so from us is a packed sold out crowd at the Marcus Point Baptist Church, worshipping God and being encouraged by the way, by amazing godly women's speakers.

In fact, one of those speakers is here with us right now, across the microphone from me. Her name is Shannon Bream, kind enough to give us a little time, so we could get to know her better. Shannon, thank you for joining us here on Family Talk.

Shannon Bream: It is a privilege to be with you. Thank you so much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, Dr. Dobson wishes he could be with us. He wanted me to make sure and say hello to you. He's so appreciates the work that God's doing in and through you.

Shannon Bream: Well, God bless him. Listen, he was a constant fixture in our home growing up and it still is now. My mom says her favorite book was *The Strong-Willed Child*, so we have known and appreciated Dr. Dobson's work, forever.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Before we go much further. I'd like our listeners to know a little bit more about you. Shannon joined *Fox News Channel* in 2007. Currently serves as host of *Fox*

*News @ Night* and Chief Legal Correspondent. She's a honors grad out of Liberty, earned her Juris Doctorate with Honors from Florida State University College of Law. Shannon's a former Miss America finalist. I didn't know that.

Shannon Bream:

That's last century. It was a long time ago.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

She also spends her days now covering politics, especially things like the United States Supreme Court and more. She started her career as a sexual harassment attorney. Talk a little bit about that in just a moment. Wasn't an easy journey, I don't think going from attorney to journalists, but matter of fact, I read Shannon in here that you got fired from your first reporting job or something.

Shannon Bream:

I did from my very first TV job. I got called in. When a new boss took over this station, I had just started reporting on camera and he said, "You're the worst person I've ever seen on TV and you will never make it in this business and I hope you're a better lawyer than you are a reporter because you need to go back to that." It was very humbling and crushing at the time. It really was tough.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Shannon, I interviewed Tony Dungy one time and we were talking together and he told me about an interview he had with the Jacksonville Jaguars and walked in there and walked out and basically what they told him was, "Dude, you're not cut out for this kind of stuff."

Shannon Bream:

Oh, he's amazing.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

The rest is history. Shannon observes and reports on troubling news in our nation, around the world, but her faith is what I love about you, is her greatest comfort and hope. And when she is away from work, she enjoys running, fly fishing, reading, traveling around the world with her lover and friend. Who by the way, is just outside here, her husband, Sheldon, who's quite an influence himself.

Shannon, you got quite a resume. I like to go back. Everybody has a little back water that drives them, that wires them. Tell us a little bit about your upbringing and how you really believe that influenced your worldview, that lens you look through life.

Shannon Bream:

Like millions of people across the country, my parents divorced when I was very young and they were very young. They'd gotten married super early in their twenties and by my mom's mid-twenties, she was divorced and with a child. So we grew up together in a lot of ways, but she was a baby Christian then and really her faith exploded.

She was a teacher, ended up taking a job at a Christian school and it became our family. I mean the church body. We were there probably four or five nights a week, in visitation and AWANA, and all of those things that were just constantly feeding into me and going to a K through 12 Christian school and just having my

mom's influence, constantly learning Scripture, but seeing her model it. I mean, she really is the kind of hands and feet of Christ kind of person. That she shows up in your worst or your best time, she is there. You can call her 24/7 if you need bail money. If you need a babysitter, my mom is just truly Christ in action.

So even though we didn't have much growing up, there was always this idea that there would be others who were in need of Christ's help and His love even more. And so, she's just got a servant's heart and I think everything that she poured into me and invested into me, gave me a really solid foundation in Christ and our identity in Him, and what life is really all about.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You joked about being a strong willed child, but there's something behind all that, that comes together, that kind of pushes back against the grain. Shannon, tell us a little bit about that part of you.

Shannon Bream: I think my mom, realized it very early on and she was joking with you a little bit too saying that she always says, I came out of the womb and kind of looked at her and said, "I'm here. I'm ready. Let's go." So, I think that she did a really good job of sort of funneling and channeling that energy and that drive and that cantankerous, I guess, that I had. If somebody would tell me you can't accomplish something, I would find five different ways to try to get it done and I think about one of the very first verses that she taught me as in Philippians about, "Do nothing through strife for vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, esteem others better than yourself."

She was always like, "Listen, you've got all of this ambition and this drive and wanting to go tackle the world, but think about other people and how you can be serving people with these gifts and whatever you feel called to do." So she did a good job, I think, at harnessing the stubbornness and trying to channel it in a good way.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Julie said, make sure and ask her about competing in Miss America and maybe some of the lessons or takeaways from that. How'd that influence you?

Shannon Bream: I learned a lot of discipline. I mean, I was a 19 year old kid and the guy who cut my hair, ran a local pageant. I knew about Miss America, because I would watch it on TV with my mom and my grandma. I thought it was very glamorous but when I found out about all this scholarship money that I could win from it too, I didn't grow up with a lot, so I thought, well, that sounds really exciting.

The first year I was going to go enter and I'd chickened out. I was too afraid. But the next year, ripe old age of 19, I thought, "Okay, I'll try this for a couple years, see if I can win some money for school and we'll see where it goes." And six months later I had won my local pageant, Miss Virginia, and was standing on the stage in the finals of Miss America, kind of shell shocked how I got there.

I had to learn a lot about different audiences. I might be speaking to a dairy farmer's group one day and then speaking to the education department and a bunch of teachers another day. I mean, Miss Virginia was great at putting me on the road and putting me in all those situations, so it made me learn how to travel by myself, speak publicly, meet all different kinds of people and I have terrible stage fright when it comes to piano and singing, which is my talent was classical piano. So, it forced me as tough things do, to rely on the Lord.

I can remember in a hotel room, being so terrified the night I was supposed to go perform. People always say, "Don't just flip over in the Bible and say, 'God, show me a verse.' It's not theologically sound. But I remember opening my Bible in that hotel room to Psalm 34 and there's so much good in there and that's what I sign with a lot of books that I sign. I'll sign Psalm 34 under it.

But the verse there, verse four about, "I sought the Lord and he heard me. He heard my cry and delivered me from all my fears." So, it was a real lesson in leaning on Him like, "Okay, I want to pursue this exciting, fun thing, but there's this terrifying part of it. I cannot do this on my own. If I'm going to do what it needs to be for God's glory and that means I'm going to have to rely on Him." And so I learned a lot through the process.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We share a common bond in Liberty University. Both of us went to school there. Shannon, the messaging from Dr. Falwell about being a champion for Christ and influencing culture and more, certainly went deep into my heart and drives a lot of what I do.

You, business major at Liberty, right? Went on from there, with that kind of vision and went into law school. I mean, what called you? How did you wind up going to law school?

Shannon Bream: Well, like many people, I changed my major undergrad many times trying to figure out what I was supposed to do with my life. I loved the business major that I did at Liberty because I had awesome professors, but I specialized in management and so there was a lot there about the psychology of what motivates people, in the context of workers and employees and companies, so I was really interested in that.

My dad, I joke about it. My late father had said, "You're going to law school or med school, so just pick one." I don't think he was joking. He was half joking. There's no way I was going to med school. I'm not cut out for that but I am fascinated about politics and law and the intersection of all of those things, so law school seemed like a fun thing to do and it wasn't fun in practice but it was good for me though.

I learned a lot about researching and you're constantly writing, so it honed a lot of skills in me. But yeah, Dr. Falwell's message of being a champion for Christ and I love that the school is still, that message is there. Every time you walk on campus, is that whatever you're going to do, whether you're going to be a homemaker or an astronaut or something in between, whatever field you feel called into, you can be a champion right there and be a light for Christ. You don't have to be a missionary. If you want to go on the mission field, in a traditional sense or be in ministry, a million ways you can do that through Liberty but if you have other fields that you want to go into or things you want to do, you can be equipped to just be a light where you are.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sheldon enters the picture. You guys are on your way. God's doing some amazing things in there and there's a lot to the story, but I want to pivot just for a second because probably what people don't know about the two of you both have been through some pretty deep waters, tough times. I know for you personally, and for Sheldon. You mind sharing some of that, because that shaped a lot of who you are in this moment.

Shannon Bream: Yeah, it wasn't long after we were out of Liberty, we had gotten engaged and I was in law school that he started to have some real health struggles, spent months trying to get diagnosed. He was a kid fresh out of school, didn't have insurance, so that was kind of tricky trying to navigate the financial nightmare of just even I remember him getting an MRI at one point to try to diagnose what was going on with him. He was having trouble with his hearing. We spent years paying that thing off, because it's like \$10, \$20 at a time when you don't have insurance.

But what ultimately we discovered several months in is that he had a brain tumor and that it was rather large and so here we were months away from our wedding. Your whole world just comes to a complete grinding halt and you think you're on top of the world and you get to a situation where the Lord is all you have in your deepest, darkest times. We saw so much about the body of Christ in that period of our lives, during his surgery and recovery, that people showed up for us. People wrote us notes from churches we'd never been to who said, "We heard through the grapevine. We put you on our prayer list." It was a beautiful thing and I think Sheldon would say his faith deepened. Mine certainly did.

When I had my own physical problems and years of living in chronic pain, he was incredibly supportive. We've been there for each other and our faith has been the lifeboat that has kept us with our heads above water at the darkest times.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Shannon in the midst of all that, fast forward, you wind up at Fox. You're pretty tough and no doubt, you faced a lot of challenges, but you're persistent. You're a fighter. You're going to stay the course. One of the biggest messages and we're going to talk about your books and your writing career that's just exploding right now. But that persistent element inside of you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Take us there. What was it like for you to make this transition? You're late at night, so you're probably getting home, what, two, three in the morning, what have you. And it's unique life. You guys are figuring this thing out. But what was it like going there and fighting your way through that whole system?

Shannon Bream: Yeah. I took for years, I got fired from that first TV job. It took me months and months to get another interview. I landed at a wonderful station in Charlotte, North Carolina, which is amazing. I made lifelong friends and people who really taught me the business. John Carter, who I co-anchored with there, amazing guy, who really knew I had a lot to learn and I learned from him.

End of those three years, I got a call from the NBC affiliate in Washington and was there for three years and this whole time I'm trying to get my stuff into *Fox*, is just exploding on the scene and they get all kinds of resumes and things every day. And so I just wasn't making any headway.

Finally, my husband who represents professional speakers was doing an event with Brit Hume and he said, "You got to get up and come to this event and you can like have a captive audience with Brit who was doing our 6:00 PM news at the time on *Fox*." And I said, "That's a little stalkerish, but I'll do it." So I went and he was in the green room. The program was running behind. He was sort of trapped and so I made my pitch to him and he was very nice and sort of like, "Oh, send your stuff over," but kind of blew me off. So I went for a walk. I was a little embarrassed.

While I was gone, he has this conversation with my husband and says, "You know, does she like covering politics? What's her thing?" My husband said, "Well, when she was in law school at Florida State, she worked in the Florida House of Representatives." And Brit said, "She went to law school. Did you graduate?" And Sheldon said, "Yeah, she graduated with honors." And Brit says, "I need somebody to cover the US Supreme Court." Megyn Kelly had moved to New York to do a show with Bill Hemmer. "Do you think she'd want to do that?" After I'd sort of been blown off and had left the room and Sheldon said, "Well, I don't want to speak for her, but I think she'd be very interested."

I literally came back in the room, maybe five, 10 minutes later and Brit greeted me and said, "When can you start?" So it was just this crazy connection that clearly I believe the Lord authored for me. It was several months. I still had my contract with NBC, but several months later I wound up at *Fox*. I can't believe it's been 15 years, but yeah, it's interesting. We're very tight knit as a family internally because we do take a lot of external criticism and abuse.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sure.

Shannon Bream: And listen, if I get something wrong, if there's valid criticism, there's something to sift through and take from that and learn.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Shannon, everybody knows that there were some issues at *Fox*, Roger Ailes and more. Your training, an attorney, sexual harassment kind of area of expertise. How'd you process all that? And how did all this thing land for you in particular?

Shannon Bream: It was a really tricky time because you never want to be the story as a journalist and we really were at that time and it happened in the midst of the political conventions. I will say it was really tough in that there were a lot of things that came to light that were very difficult, but it was in the midst of having these conversations about the workplace and about sex harassment and about power structures and relationships and *Fox* was very bold in stepping up and saying, "This is how we're going to fix things. We're going to make it much easier for people to come to us with trouble. We want to have transparency."

I think it was a really painful, difficult time for us internally. But I think on the other side, we're a much stronger company and like I said, we're a very tight family internally. And so I think we all kind of processed it in different ways. I certainly had a very specific perspective because of my work, in my years as a sexual harassment attorney, but I'm so glad that on the other side, we have strong leadership that has taken a very specific position about openness and transparency and making sure that we don't have a repeat of that situation ever again.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Shannon, I wanted to ask you about the news. I mean, people largely don't trust the news anymore. They see it as bias people with agendas. No one's really reporting what just the unbiased truth is. What's your approach? What's your thoughts about where it's at and does it recover?

Shannon Bream: I sure hope so, but I feel a great privilege, but an obligation with my show, as part of the news division.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Julie and I love to watch you by the way.

Shannon Bream: Thank you. And you know what? We have people on from different positions and I don't want them screaming over each other. Nobody gets anything at home from that. The viewers don't glean from that. I really try to make sure that we have a conversation where both sides say their piece and we hear their positions. Our viewers are smart enough to figure out how they feel about issues. I want to get them facts.

So, for us in the news division, that's very important to play it down the middle. We all have personal opinions and biases. All of us and my duty is to check that at the door and make sure that people are getting factual information and accurate information. So, I just encourage people if they're skeptical, check out Martha MacCallum or Bret Baier, Bill Hemmer or Dana Perino, or any number of people who are in our news division. And listen, I love our opinion division folks. They are fun and they stir things up and they have enormous audiences and we

just do two different jobs and they're very supportive and respectful of what we do and we feel the same about them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Shannon, in the midst of all this, fighting time here real quick. It's such a delight to have you. You have given yourself now to a writing career that's exploding. Matter of fact, you're at the Extraordinary Women Conference speaking this weekend, but you've got a special book out called, *The Mothers and Daughters of the Bible Speak: Lessons on Faith From Nine Biblical Families*.

I'm going to go back. I'm just thinking about you and your mother and the relationship you talked about early on there. I see you empowering or giving a voice to women, for such a time as this. I really believe that a lot of the strength and hope for the future is going to come through women. Talk to us about this journey, what you're trying to accomplish, what you want to speak into the hearts of women, like my wife, Julie, or my daughter, Megan.

Shannon Bream: It's been such a joy for me. I grew up knowing these stories about these women. This book and the previous one, *Women of the Bible Speak*. But when I really sat down to study and research to get ready for these books, I learned so much more and I felt like what a gift, especially when I started writing in the midst of the worst of the pandemic, what a gift to be reminded that there has been pain that is universal, struggle is universal over time. Widowhood and infertility, financial ruin, dysfunctional families, physical issues, it's all there in the Bible and to see how God worked through each of those stories and when women made terrible decisions and got wildly off track and made messes of their lives, that God still used them. Some of those women ended up in the lineage of Christ.

I love the idea that God uses flawed people. If not, Jesus would be the one character in the Bible, so I'm glad that He works through all of these women, whether they're faithful or they're flawed. That He is working. He sees them. He knows their stories. He sees their suffering. I hope by looking back over time at these stories that women who pick up this book, or men, because I've had some men tell me they've read it too, that they'll say, "I can relate to that person and I can see how God worked in their life and be reminded He is aware and working in mine too."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Julie said, "Tim, I mean, she goes deeper. She presents things in a way that really challenges you to think and to interact with the Scriptures." You look at personalities, Jochebed, Miriam, Naomi, Ruth, Elizabeth, Mary, Esther, Hannah, so many more. The issue of faith really is a theme there for a moment. That we're challenged to have faith. It's pretty tough. You know that, especially in the trauma, I think that we've been through. People wonder of God's goodness. They wonder of His grace and mercy. They want it. They want it more now than ever.

I know when you're going to walk out there in just a few moments, you're going to see eyes filled with sorrow. You'll see eyes with sadness, hurt, anger, hope.



Shannon, what do you want to tell them? What do you want them to leave here with?

Shannon Bream: I've been all those places and I'll share with them very openly about some of the darkest parts of my life. I think when we're vulnerable and transparent, then we can draw others in with love, with healing, with Christ healing.

What I want them to leave here with is the hope that good ultimately triumphs over evil. We know that. I think the toughest question is you mentioned, that we face as people of faith, that why do bad things happen? Why does God allow these things? I think we struggle with that. I'm not sure I'll fully get that before we get to Heaven and I got a long list of questions and that's definitely near the top of the list. But I know in my worst pain, in my worst brokenness and struggle, God was closer than ever. I got to know Him better. I matured in Him and He was faithful to His promise not that life would be easy, but that He would walk through every bit of it with me. I have seen that again and again in my life and I want these women to remember and know that is true.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know Shannon and I've been in the room. I've been to a number of these events with Julie leading them, and I've seen God move in a special way. When I see the Spirit move among them and women start to pray, you know where I grew up, it like puts the dogs up under the bed, if you will. There's something that happens when women come together and when you see their heart press in to the one who loves them, who is there for them, who is faithful.

What do you hope as you speak to the issue of mothers and daughters for a moment, that happens between this generational flow because families tend to reproduce themselves. In psychology and counseling, we call it multi-generational flow. So important that we don't lose the narrative, isn't it?

Shannon Bream: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That we hold on.

Shannon Bream: I think about that with my mom. I talked about what a faithful example. I joke. I mean, I'm in my fifties now but I joke when I grow up, I want to be like my mom because she modeled faith so well and in such a concrete way for me. I love these stories in the Bible too, that you see that these mothers and daughters learn from each other, they grow in their faith through tragedy and through triumph.

I wanted to highlight too, a number of groups in the Bible and other pairings of women in the Bible, where they weren't blood mother and daughter, but maybe they were spiritual mother and daughter, or they came together through marriage, in other ways.

I think female relationships are so important because we're all going to have different stages of our maturity in our Christian walk and it's not even about our age, but that we can be there and encourage each other and lift each other up and walk each other through the really tough stuff.

I think our pain is never wasted because for me, it's made me more empathetic to other people and I'm able to just talk through with them when they're in that dark terrible pit. I think as mothers and daughters, whether it's spiritually or by blood or by marriage, those bonds are incredibly important and special and I think they're a gift from God to us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As you travel the country, as you do the program and more you interact with so many people. Are you hopeful, Shannon? Do you think there are better days ahead?

Shannon Bream: I am and I'm so encouraged by the younger generation. I feel like when I go back to Liberty where I went and I see these young people, or there's a church sometimes will go to, it's a lot of young people in Passion, DC, where everybody is like 25. I can be their mom, some of them pretty soon, I'll be their grandmother, but they are raising their voices and rocking the house for Jesus. I'm like, these people are working all over DC.

Dr. Tim Clinton: They're showing up at school boards. They're going everywhere.

Shannon Bream: Yeah. I mean shining a light. I think the next generation is really, there is a good core that is on fire for God and wants to do His work.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, Shannon, we really do appreciate you and the work you're doing. I know on behalf of Dr. Dobson, again, his wife, Shirley, the team at Family Talk, we salute you. Want to pray that God continues to work in and through you and for your voice, for such a time as this. God be with you. God strengthen your heart. Thank you so much for joining us.

Shannon Bream: Thank you and God bless all of you in your work too.

Roger Marsh: While you've been listening to Family Talk and that was Dr. Tim Clinton's recent conversation with journalist, lawyer and host of *Fox At Night*, Shannon Bream. As you heard, Shannon is a graceful, compassionate woman and I hope that you've been encouraged by her personal stories and experiences as well.

Now to listen to Dr. Tim Clinton's interview with Shannon Bream once again, or to share it with a friend, be sure to visit us online at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk), or give us a call at (877) 732-6825.

Now for the past few days, I've been sharing about the 30-day Kindness Challenge that the JDFI is providing for all listeners of Family Talk. I hope that you've already signed up and are learning new things about yourself and

kindness. We have more than 5,000 people participating in the Kindest Challenge so far, but if you haven't signed up, all you have to do is go to [drjamesdobson.org/kindnesschallenge](http://drjamesdobson.org/kindnesschallenge).

Now- I've been participating in this 30 day challenge since the 1st of July and I have to admit, I've been pleasantly surprised at what kind of difference it's making in my life. First of all, when I first started doing this, I realized that I wasn't as kind a person as I originally thought I was. But over the past couple of weeks, I've seen how kindness has become really more natural for me and for the person for whom I'm doing the kindness challenge.

Now, if you like me, have already signed up for the Kindness Challenge earlier this month, give us a call at (877) 732-6825 and share how it's going, what you've learned. Maybe you've got a success story to share or a failure. Has this challenge been difficult for you or maybe it's been relatively easy. What kind of response are you seeing from the person for whom you're taking the Kindness Challenge? And how do you feel about that person after doing the Kindness Challenge for them for a couple of weeks? Remember, we would love to hear your insights, your thoughts, and your stories about the Kindness Challenge, when you give us a call at (877) 732-6825.

As I mentioned, we have over 5,000 people nationwide taking the Kindness Challenge right now. I'd love to be able to report to you next week that number has hit 7,500 or possibly even 10,000.

Well, that's all the time we have for today. Thanks for joining us here on Family Talk and be sure to join us again next time. Till then, may God continue to richly bless you and your family.

Announcer:

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