



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Essential Role of Men's Ministry – Part 1

Guest(s): Patrick Morley, Vince D'Acchioli, Chris Van Brocklin and Rev. H.B. London

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, a radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. Thanks for making us a part of your day. I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and everyone here at the Dobson Institute, we want to express our gratitude to you for being a part of our family here on the radio program. This year in 2023, we are celebrating the 46th anniversary of Dr. Dobson being on the radio. Yes, 46 continuous years of faithful service by Jim Dobson and it all started back in 1977 in a small two room office in Arcadia, California. Through it all, he has loved every minute of it and we promised to continue the fight for righteousness in culture, sanctity of all human life, and of course for the institution of the family.

The influence men have on the spiritual health of their families is very significant. Yet sadly, there is a trend with men who are attending church less and less. When men neglect the responsibilities as godly heads of the household, the fallout can affect future generations. It's even leading to the disintegration of our communities. This problem will be discussed in today's classic edition of Family Talk featuring a panel of four men and our very own Dr. James Dobson.

Now, this program was recorded about 20 years ago, but their insights are still very valid even today. Let me introduce the panel of men who are experts and quite heavily involved in ministering to other men. First, Dr. Dobson's cousin Reverend H.B. London, who was pastor of Friendship Church in Sun City in Palm Desert, California. H.B. passed away in 2018 at the age of 81 after a courageous battle with cancer.

Next is Chris Van Brocklin, Chris is a founding member of the National Coalition of Men's Ministries, which was founded back in 2007 and has served on their executive leadership team for several years. Today he serves as a leadership specialist for No Regrets Men's Ministry.

Also, part of the panel is Vince D'Acchioli. Vince is the founder and president of On-Target Ministries. And the last guest joining Dr. Dobson for today's program is Patrick Morley. Patrick is the founder of Man in the Mirror Incorporated.

Today in part one of this conversation, Dr. Dobson and the panel will discuss why men have a negative view of Church and what can be done to encourage them to build a relationship with Jesus Christ and to lean into his love. Now, let's join the conversation on this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: We seem to be losing the battle for the hearts and minds of men, and I know you all have an absolute passion to minister to men and make them the individuals that God wants them to be. Is that a fair assessment? Pat, you were in my off... All of you were in my office a few minutes ago and you said you don't think that's a fair statement, that we're losing the battle.

Patrick Morley: Well, there is a battle. It's a battle from men's souls and it's raging all around us, but it's a battle that we can win. Not only that, it's a battle we have to win. So I would just say we cannot, we must not, and by God's grace, we're not going to lose this battle. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." And I think if we as the Church will get back to the core mission of making disciples and especially of men because that's where we're so weak right now, I do think that this is a battle that is a winnable one.

Dr. James Dobson: H, do you think we're losing the battle?

Rev. H.B. London: Well, I think that fewer men are attending church than ever before, and I think that in many ways the Church does not appear to be relevant to their specific needs. And I think part of that is there's a huge feminization in the Church that I think we're all dealing with. And I'm not sure that all the worship and all the songs and everything that goes in church that men just automatic relate to. If men don't have a relationship with their pastor or with somebody within the Church structure that they can identify our call upon, then they're looking for something to attract them and to attach them to the local church. And I don't think a lot of men have that, a lot of women have it because women's Bible studies are everywhere, but you announce a men's Bible studies and you'll have a hard time getting guys to attend.

Dr. James Dobson: H, you have been talking to me about this subject and this problem for a long, long time and you've had an influence on me and you were a pastor for 32 years, and it was back in the '70s when you first said to me that you considered the outreach to men to be the most important thing you were doing and that you had a meal with a different man one-on-one every day of the week. Explain what you were saying to me. You're impressed that I remember that.

Rev. H.B. London: Sure. Well, my first two churches were pretty well dominated by women, and that's no big accusation except that the guys just let them dominate. And so when I got to Salem, Oregon, it dawned on me as a young pastor that my

greatest advantage would be to invest in men. And found later on in these statistics just a few weeks ago that where a man comes to know Christ, 97% of the time the whole family follows.

So it was an economy issue with me and every day I met at lunch with men, but then for the next two or three hours every afternoon Monday through Friday and some on Saturdays, I invested myself in men. And remember when Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, he said, "I want you to invest yourself in men, teach them reliable, trustworthy men so they in turn can invest themselves in others." And I found that to be their recipe for a very growing, thriving Church.

Dr. James Dobson: Vince, you have kind of redirected your life in the last 10 years to devote yourself to men. Why did you do that?

Vince D'Acchioli: Doctor, I came up in a family that it was pretty dysfunctional. I mean, I had a dad in the home, but my dad really didn't pay a lot of attention to me, never played with me as a boy. I had some pretty bad role models in my family. I say occasionally to audiences, coming from an Italian background, I actually had an Uncle Louie and my Uncle Louie was busted by Ed Meese personally when Ed Meese was Attorney General under Ronald Reagan. And those were the kind of role models that I tended to gravitate toward as I was growing up and really didn't recognize the need for anything more than that. And it wasn't until in my early years of marriage, all of that ugly background began to catch up with me. And I basically crashed and burned and was about to lose my wife and my two precious little girls at that time and began to realize that I needed to get some help and began attending a little church in Van Nuys, California, known as The Church on the Way, a mutual friend of ours-

Dr. James Dobson: No longer little, is it?

Vince D'Acchioli: I know, Pastor Jack Hayford, I was able to get underneath him and he mentored me. He's one of my dearest friends to this day. If it hadn't been for him, Dr. Dobson, I don't know where I would be today.

Dr. James Dobson: Did he reach out to you in the same way H.B. was reaching out to the men of his church?

Vince D'Acchioli: Yes, he did it and he did it in a more corporate way. And then later on we became closer and we had a close personal relationship. But I remember in fact, when you were just talking a moment ago, H.B., I remember Pastor Jack says even today to audiences of pastors, he says, "The two most important thing things that any pastor can do in their church is to one lead his congregation in worship." And he doesn't mean by that, of course, they necessarily have to get up and sing, but that worship is a key. And his idea is the reason why oftentimes we don't have a lot of power today is because we've lost the heart and oftentimes the art even of worship.

And then he said, and the other thing is, "To lead his men in spiritual growth and development." And that what has happened, the great expansion of his ministry has happened, and you can point to men all over the nation has been the result of him mentoring men and helping them come do an understanding of who Jesus really is.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, here are the statistics that make pretty clear what the need is. There are 108 million men in America, 15 or older. 66 million of them do not know Christ. Only 6 million men have had any kind of discipleship in their life at all. There's 72 million children under 18 and 33% of them will go to bed in a home without a biological father. In 1992, 42% of American men attended church regularly. Now, by 1997, just five years later, that number was only 28. What's going?

Chris Van Brocklin: It's rather ironic that these statistics spin out of that time where we saw a promise keeper's movement, a men's movement seemed to surface, at least in the media, it was on all the periodicals. And yet these statistics showing the fallout of the number of men seems to be opposite, going against each other. And yet that is what's been happening, I think-

Dr. James Dobson: Why do you think men stay home on Sunday?

Chris Van Brocklin: Well, the men's movement impressed me in the stadiums and so on as being something that created some great momentum, but the ability to be able to harness that and carry it over the long term has not happened. I respond back to those kinds of activities as kind of spiritual heart surgery without the rehab, meaning that if there isn't something as follow-up, if there aren't strategic things that are taking place for men in their lives to help them keep their promises on the backside, then that has a lot to do with it. And I think what that causes is some real disappointment. And when a man is disappointed once or twice, men do not like to fail, and I think that once they have had a couple of failure experiences connected with their own spirituality and then connecting that with what they see at their local church, they avoid those.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's key off what H.B. said. Do you all see church... Do you think men see church as a largely feminine dominated activity, something that a real man wouldn't want to be involved in?

Vince D'Acchioli: My personal sense is that they may not necessarily articulate it that way, but the sense that they have when they go to church is that it oftentimes is not relevant for them. Promise Keepers had something, I don't know where this quote came from, but I first heard it from Promise Keepers' leadership and they said that with men, distance equals safety. We tend to not want to be known for who we really are. And relationships, even though we need them and desire them are hard for us.

And when men come to Church, I read this in a book not too long ago, that oftentimes men are suffering from what we call moral schizophrenia. So they

come to Church on Sunday and they tend to do the head nod, "Yes, pastor, great sermon. That's wonderful stuff." And then when they go to work Monday, that truth may call for them to be uncompromising in ways that could cause them to lose their job, could cause them to not get that promotion. And so they're intimidated, they're not sure what to do, and oftentimes they're not deeply enough rooted in the things of the Lord, disciplined in a way that can cause them to have the confidence and faith to step out, so...

Patrick Morley:

Well, so I've got a little different approach on this. I agree with this, but what we see happening a lot, and I know this happened in my own family, my father grew up in a home with a single mom and she did a great job, but there were tremendous sacrifices. They grew up in poverty. So when dad came up, he went to work when he is six years old on a bread... Six years old, had to go to work at six years old on a bread truck, got up at three o'clock with his older brother, and then they had a paper route and then they had a permanent tardy slip to school. And so my dad went to work when he was six years of age.

Well, when he became a man, he had to decide whether he would break the cycle or repeat the cycle. And I thank God that he had the passion, the desire to break the cycle. So I'm the oldest of four boys. Well, mom and dad decided they should put us into a church for religious and moral instruction. Now, my dad had an incredible work ethic because of growing up in this environment and when the Church found out that he was a worker, they put him to work. They had a vision... Our church had a vision to put my dad to work, but our church did not also have a vision to help my dad to become a godly man, a godly husband and a godly father. He wanted to, but our church didn't have the vision to equip him to do that. And so the bottom line is that he really worked very hard, but when he worked so hard, by the time he was 40 years of age, my dad was the top layman in our church, but he just burned out and we left the church.

I was in the 10th grade, my youngest brother was in the 3rd grade. The wheels sort of fell off the wagon after that. If my dad was here today, he died a couple of years ago, he would tell you that he made the decision and he's responsible. I appreciate and respect that, but nevertheless, I quit high school. My next brother quit high school. He eventually died of a heroin overdose. My next brother has had employment problems all of his life. And my youngest brother is a recovering drug addict and recovering alcoholic and is divorced.

And I would just say that I believe... I don't want to be in delicate, but I believe that the Church is culpable. I wish the audience could see a picture of my dad. He's just the sweetest man you've ever known. He didn't want to fail, but the Church used him to do the work, but they did not help him become a disciple.

Dr. James Dobson:

Disciple him. And there was no men's ministry at that time.

Patrick Morley:

There was no men's ministry.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk and I'm Roger Marsh. Just jumping in for a brief moment here. If you're just joining us. Today's program is a classic episode that was recorded actually about 20 years ago. Our own Dr. James Dobson is joined by a panel discussing why men are not going to Church. This panel includes Dr. Dobson's first cousin, Reverend H.B. London, who passed away in 2018 after battling cancer. He was 81 years old and he was like a brother to Jim.

Next up, Chris Van Brocklin, who is currently leadership specialist for No Regrets Men's Ministries. Then we have Vince D'Acchioli, founder and president of On-Target Ministries. And last is Patrick Morley, the founder of Man in the Mirror Incorporated. Okay, let's rejoin the conversation right now, right here on Family Talk.

Rev. H.B. London: Jim, as Pat and Vince and Chris talk, takes me back to my pastoring days because I'd ask a lot of these guys who would be coming a church and all of a sudden, they'd drop out a church and I'd invested big time in them and it just broke my heart a lot of times. And I'd go to them and I'd ask them, I said, "Why aren't you coming?" And they would say to me two things nearly every time. One, "It doesn't seem relevant to me." And two, "I don't have time." They'd use those two excuses.

And as I think about that... See, I know that we're in this big worship experience, Vince talked about it, but I look out at audiences and places where I go to preach nearly every Sunday and where you're having standing up worshiping for 30 to 40 minutes. I watch a lot of guys drop out of the singing thing because they just get tired of the singing. They want to get on with it. And then if they can't apply what they receive to their day-to-day activities and if their wives are more spiritually mature and if the children go to their wives for spiritual guidance. But then the other thing that I see is that a lot of these dads have had a terrible relationship with their father and the Church represents an authority figure and it makes them tough because they've got to deal with these feelings that they have toward their dad or are someone else.

Dr. James Dobson: Are those solvable problems, H?

Rev. H.B. London: Well-

Dr. James Dobson: I mean, how do you make Sunday morning, all church services, relevant to a guy who doesn't perceive the gospel as somehow relevant to you?

Rev. H.B. London: I remember an old retired pastor who just gave me fits. I could never ever satisfy him. And I preached this one mighty message one Sunday thinking that this was it, man, he had to come out just glowing over this. And he walked out and looked me in the face, didn't even shake my hand or anything, and just uttered two words that changed my ministry. He said, "So what?"

Dr. James Dobson: You're kidding me.

Rev. H.B. London: And I wanted to punch him out right there in the foyer, but I knew that wouldn't look very good. And I sat there and I said, "You know, Lord? He made sense. What if I took 30 minutes of 2,000 people's time this morning? What if other people are saying, 'So what?'" And I begin to put the so what template to everything I did as a pastor. And I really do think that pastors have got to look at men through this filter of the "so what" template, what are we teaching them? What are we saying? What are we requiring of them? Are we really answering any of their questions? And if we're not, then we've got to make some alterations.

Chris Van Brocklin: Can I respond to that and just say that painting a picture of a church that you walk into where you see men who are engaged. That's what's been intriguing to me, and I have discovered at least two or three, I'm sure there are plenty more, but just in the last few months, I have developed relationships with churches where the men are very engaged. In fact, if you took a look statistically they're working in the same numbers in the nurseries and the Sunday schools and the youth ministries as the women, it's pretty evenly divided. And I also notice as I approach those churches that those are the guys who are there greeting and just laying down their lives to help the Church and make the Church work. These churches have discovered not just how to help men learn how to work as was described by Pat, but the reason for that and what they've done is they've disciplined these men effectively and now these men are responding to that, I would say the word in gratitude for what's happened in their lives.

Rev. H.B. London: But what those churches have done for them, Chris, they've given them meaningful work to do.

Chris Van Brocklin: Sure.

Rev. H.B. London: There's significance to them standing in the foyer or working with the children. They feel a part of it. There's ownership. If a man doesn't find ownership in the body of Christ, he'll stand in the background. He'll stand in the shadows.

Dr. James Dobson: You're right.

Patrick Morley: Here's a whole new way too of thinking about ministry to men that needs to take place here, listeners, we're here representing the National Coalition Men's Ministries and all of the 80 different organizations representing over 50% of all the churches in the United States. So this is a very huge movement that we're representing here today.

And we're here to tell you that we need a new paradigm, a new model for ministry to men in the Church and we call it "All-Inclusive Men's Ministry." If you have a hundred men in your church, what is the size of your men's ministry? If you have six guys meeting on Wednesday morning at 6:30, is that your men's ministry? If you have 14 white-haired men eating burnt pancakes once a month,

is that your men's ministry? Let me tell you, if you have a hundred men in your church, the size of your men's ministry is a hundred men.

Dr. James Dobson: That's right.

Patrick Morley: You need to have an intentional plan to disciple every willing male in your church. That's what men's ministry is. It's not some... And a lot of times what the pastor does is he has this idea, "If I can get one small group going of six guys, then I can check men's ministry off my to-do list once. So check forever forgotten." Well, the bottom line is you still have 94 other men who are languishing, who are tired, they're exhausted, and they think the message that the Church is bringing... Jesus is bringing is, "Come unto me all you are weary and burdened and I'll give you more work to do."

Dr. James Dobson: What do you suppose drew men to Jesus? He went after the men. He was a man's man and He simply called them and said, "Follow me." And they came. What did He say to them that we don't say?

Vince D'Acchioli: One word. I can tell you it's one word. Dr. Dobson, what drew men to Jesus was love. And where I have seen the most effective ministry to men in our nation and churches, that is the key. It's where they feel love, they feel accepted, they feel special, and that draws them. And I can't tell you how many times I have not found that in many churches. It tends to distill down into mechanics and programs.

But I really believe that men are... The good news is I really believe that men today... And in studies that have been done with young men particularly, that they really are looking for truth and relevancy. But I believe the key is where there's love, where there are people reaching out to them. And I'd be very surprised, Chris, and in many of the cases that you mentioned earlier, if the senior pastor wasn't playing a key role...

Chris Van Brocklin: Absolutely.

Vince D'Acchioli: ... by the way in this area, and I find that to be very, very important. I'm sure H.B., in your ministry as well, that the senior pastor's intimate involvement with calling out to the men of his church saying, "I love you. You are special. You're special in Jesus eyes." And gathering them in. I have found that those are some of the most effective ministries to men.

Dr. James Dobson: We're really just getting going and there's so much here. This is such an important issue and we're going to have to deal with it on another day, and in fact, we'll deal with it on this day. We will continue to talk about this subject. We'll air it next time.

In the meantime, thank you all for what you're doing, for your passion for God's work, and I hear a certain optimism in your voices despite the difficulties that are going on. Is that accurate or is that...? Pat, that's kind of where we started.

Patrick Morley: Oh, I'm just so fired up about it. Do you know that in Martin Luther's reformation that 50% of all the churches in Europe became Protestant in just 40 years? Can you imagine what would happen in America if we could get our hands around a discipleship reformation in this generation? Oh, it's so exciting, and men is the place to focus.

Dr. James Dobson: All right, to our listeners, stay tuned till tomorrow. We're going to tell you how to do that. Okay. Thank you gentlemen for being with us. Don't go anywhere and we'll just pick up right where we left off.

Patrick Morley: Great. Thank you so much, Dr Dobson.

Vince D'Acchioli: Thank you so much.

Chris Van Brocklin: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: A candid discussion on spiritual leadership from men today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. This concludes part one of our two-part panel discussion. Be sure to join us again tomorrow here on the broadcast for the insightful conclusion or visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk to access the entire conversation in full.

Now, I just want to remind you that the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute is completely supported by friends just like you and only exists because of your support and your encouragement. It's because of your prayers and generosity that we are able to provide quality content to you and to especially young families everywhere, each and every day, audio programs, books by Dr. Dobson downloadable PDFs and instructional videos of encouragement and much, much more.

To find out more about how you can support the JDFI, visit us online at drjamesdobson.org, and while you're there, you'll see the many ways that we can support you as well. We'd love to connect with you to become your friend, to stay connected and to pray with and for you. If that's what you need.

By the way, to reach us by phone, simply call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. And to drop us a line through the U.S. Mail, make note of our ministry mailing address, it's the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, PO Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks again for making us a part of your day today, yesterday, and for the entire 46 years of Dr. Dobson's Radio Ministry. Please be sure to tune in

again tomorrow for part two of this special conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and our special panel of men. That's coming up next time on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Till then, have a blessed day.

Announcer:

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