



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The War on Men – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Owen Strachan

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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. Few would argue that there's a war on men in our culture. And over the next couple of days here on Family Talk, we're going to hear from our co-host Gary Bauer and his special guest, Dr. Owen Strachan, discussing Dr. Strachan's newest book entitled, *The War on Men: Why Society Hates Them and Why We Need Them*. As you know, in our culture today, men and masculinity are under attack like at no time in our nation's history and manliness in general is oftentimes associated with being dangerous or destructive, but God does have a divine place for men in today's world.

Our guest today is Dr. Owen Strachan, who is the Provost and Research professor of Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary. He's also a senior fellow with the Family Research Council as well. Dr. Strachan also served for six years at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He earned his PhD from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and has authored several books including *Reenchanting Humanity, Christianity and Wokeness* and *Risky Gospel*. Dr. Strachan is married to his lovely wife, Bethany, and together they are raising three children. So let's join our guest, Dr. Owen Strachan and co-host Gary Bauer for today's special edition of Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Well, hello everyone and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Gary Bauer, the Senior Vice President of Public Policy at the James Dobson Family Institute, and also the host of Defending Faith, Family and Freedom Podcast here at JDFI. I'm honored to serve alongside of my good friend, Dr. James Dobson and the whole JDFI team. We got a great guest today with an important message. Our guest is Dr. Owen Strachan. He's written a new book. We'll nail this down in a second, but I think it might be number 20 or number 21. This gentleman has a lot to say and the country needs to hear what he's saying. This book is called *The War on Men: Why Society Hates Them and Why We Need Them*.

Dr. Strachan, welcome back to Family Talk and I guess I'd like to start with having you explain what is it that you see happening to American men that led

you to write this book? Could you share with us what you see as the danger and the problem American men are facing right now?

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, I appreciate that very much. Fundamentally, we just need to understand that men are said to be toxic today. So that's the term that is attached now to manhood in so many respects and usually it's not even qualified. It's not that some men are toxic or that these brand of men are toxic. It's that manhood and traditional masculinity is toxic.

The American Psychological Association, for example, released a report in 2019 that labeled the following behaviors associated with traditional masculinity as problematic, even deeply problematic. Assertiveness, aggressiveness, taking risks and focusing on tasks in an unemotional way. So what you realize, Gary, is that if these kind of behaviors and mindsets are being labeled as toxic, what our woke leftist, feminist culture is doing is it is leaving us no room as men to be strong. And that's a huge problem because as we can talk about here, the Bible, which is our inerrant and authoritative guide for all of life, sufficient for everything we face in godliness, tells men in a text like 1 Kings 2:2, David to his son Solomon on David's deathbed, "Be strong and show yourself a man." So what 1 Kings 2:2 is saying? The American Psychological Association and many other voices are saying is toxic masculinity.

Gary Bauer: Dr. Dobson has talked about this a great deal, Owen, and I've used the theme too, that we're living in a blizzard of lies. I mean lies about everything, about God, about the Bible, about men and women, lies about American history and a lot of the lies are aimed at our children at little boys and little girls, and I don't think you can come up with a worse lie than this idea that masculinity, just masculinity is toxic. That message is being delivered in so many places from the classroom to the popular culture. We kind of see with boys some really strange things happening. Talk about that a little bit, about how they're presenting themselves and what they are trying to do with how they act in order to satisfy the demands of the culture.

Dr. Owen Strachan: We absolutely are seeing those things. You're dead right. And fundamentally boys are trying to adapt without a lot of help or guidance from fathers and mothers or guidance the wrong way that is no guidance at all to this new gender order. In the new gender order according to our woke tropes, there really isn't such a thing as fixed manhood and fixed womanhood. Those are stereotypes, but the stereotypes need to be dynamited. Instead of believing in what is called sex, believing in manhood or womanhood, man and woman is made by God, Genesis 1:27, our culture is saying, don't believe in male and female as made by God. Believe in gender, believe in the view that your feelings drive your identity. You may have the body of a boy, little boys, young men, but that doesn't mean anything. That's just biology.

Your true identity is found in your feelings and your desires and your inmost self, and we want to help you in this school setting or this cultural setting or this entertainment media forum. We want to help you discern and discover who you

truly are. And if you need to altogether change your body to that of a girl so to speak, then we're here to help you.

Gary, what we need to say to this is that this is just straight up ideology and it's terrible, it's tragic, it's unbiblical. There are only two sexes as made by God. There is no possibility of a man becoming a woman or a boy becoming a girl or vice versa. God has made us who we are. There is all kinds of chaos that can happen in the human person as a result of sin and people need real compassionate care and love and help to work through all sorts of situations in life. And the church need to be there to help them do that through the gospel. But fundamentally we have to draw a line in the sand and say, "Boys, no, you're made a boy for the glory of God and we're not moving from that position."

Gary Bauer: I've noticed that normal boyhood behavior these days according to some people is actually evidence of an illness. Normal little boys are being diagnosed as being hyperactive when they're just showing the energy and the curiosity and the physicality that I think has always been associated with boys. Now look, there are problems with kids that are hyperactive, but at least it looks to me as a layman that all too often we're just labeling normal boyhood as somehow something that needs medication

Dr. Owen Strachan: That is completely right, and it's a symptom of a society that regards the female as the norm of our society. And so if girls on average have a much easier time sitting still and listening in a classroom, for example, as is true, that is typically the case, at least on average, if boys on average by contrast have 2000% to 3000% more testosterone than girls, this means that the way you set up society has to be very carefully constructed. And if you set it up again such that any wiggling around any desire for outside play, any interest in contact sports, whatever it may be, all boys aren't the same, not every boy's going to be the hometown hero quarterback, but if you set it up so that boys have no outlets for their innate aggression and wiring and they have no capacity to develop strength and they're told that their desire to be a hero or to be brave or courageous is toxic and they need to be like the little girls.

Well, Gary, that's exactly where we are. Those are the cues that boys and young men are getting, and that's a key part of why alongside our real sin so many boys and young men are struggling tremendously and our culture doesn't see that with compassion. Here's the last thing to say there. Our culture doesn't see the struggles of boys like you and I are talking about and agreeing on fully as a problem. It sees boys being outmoded and boys struggling and stepping back as success. And as Christians, we have to say again, this is not success. There's a better way.

Gary Bauer: This has been really disgusting to notice that a lot of the popular culture, a lot of the people that have their mugs on TV every day telling us what we ought to think about things will only support men that suddenly announce one morning that they've decided that they're women and want to whatever, compete against women in sports or do one thing or another. Those men are suddenly

elevated as heroes and anybody that question them or be critical of them are labeled as bigots or somehow not fit for polite society. I mean, the world is really upside down.

Dr. Owen Strachan: It is, and those men are called in my book, soft men. I think that there are four major types of deficient manhood that men are embracing today. Soft men, lost men, men who just drop out and disappear, angry men, school shooters, public shooters who hate this society and thus literally kill people or try to and exaggerated men like a Samson in the Book of Judges who puff their chests out and try to embrace this cultural vision of fame and money and strength and dominating women. And so there's all sorts of ways that men today are not doing well. One of the key ways is that form a manhood, deficient manhood you just mentioned. I think soft manhood, in other words, be passive, don't lead, don't mansplain. If you're in a social setting, don't be the leader. Boys, don't put your life on the line for girls. Chivalry is very much dead.

In all these ways and many others we could mention, men are urged and trained to be like women, and what we need to say is men absolutely need to grow in their emotional life and their communicational ability and listening well and being tender and gentle. I can say that as a father. The Lord has worked in me and has more work to do in me and all those fronts and more, but fundamentally, nowhere in the Bible does God call men to be women. Instead, you have a text like 1 Corinthians 16:13 in the New Testament where Paul tells an entire church in a very pagan culture I might add, "Corinth, act like men," which basically means you're not a boy and you're not a woman, you're supposed to be a mature man in how you live.

Gary Bauer: What a great point. You've actually touched on something that many of us have discussed in recent years and that is the feminization of the American church. I see a lot of women in church every Sunday. There's not as many men as I think there ought to be listening to the Sunday message, and I wonder to what extent that happens because the modern church all too often sort of presents us with a feminized Christ, a one dimensional Christ that doesn't point to the times he obviously as a man, a God becoming man displayed courage. And in the case of the temple, anger, when he drove the money changers out.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yes, you're exactly right. I talk about this as well. Jesus was tender. He called little children to himself. He healed people. He drew near to outcast. So he is a wonderfully kind man as found in scripture. Don't cross Jesus, don't mess with Jesus on the other hand. If you get on the wrong side of Jesus, meaning that you are living out your sin and opposing Him as the Pharisees do, for example throughout the gospels, as literal demons do throughout the gospels, you better watch out because Jesus does not use an inside voice when He needs to arm up and face down evil.

And so the biblical Jesus is a multidimensional man like we are called to be. He's the perfect man and He shows us very clearly that there is an absolute need for masculine strength. In the face of evil, you have to stand up. In a fallen world,

you have to clear your throat and speak and preach the gospel. You have to draw lines in the sand. In love for others, you have to seek their rescue through Christ himself. I'm thankful for your voice over the years because you've been that kind of strong man in the public square. And neither of us is a perfect man like Jesus is, but I'm thankful for strong men who have spoken up in days past and I pray God will raise up many more in days ahead.

Gary Bauer:

The need for strong, virtuous men in a world where evil men are more and more apparent to us all over the world. I mean, we have a quickening of evil. We have a number of nations that are clearly preparing their men for war. And we see in our own urban areas a type of daily war. I don't think it's an accent that in those urban areas we're conducting an incredible experiment that's never been done before, which is raising incredible percentages of our children without a father in the home. In fact, in a lot of these city zones, as you know, there are whole blocks where a young boy or a young girl will not see a man getting up every morning and going to a job and coming home and providing for them and their mother, and that experiment doesn't seem to be turning out very well. You have some thoughts on that?

Dr. Owen Strachan:

I couldn't agree more. It's going absolutely terribly. If you want to destroy a society, if you want to destroy people's lives, if you want to destroy the church, the best way to do it, the single most efficient way to wreak havoc is to take men out of the picture. And then with the men who remain, penalize and marginalize them for being strong, for being courageous, for being principled, for speaking up, for trying to be leaders. So Satan's strategy honestly, is a very effective strategy. I hate to say that, but it's true and it's having massive effects in America. It should be a bipartisan issue in terms of DC. It should be a matter that the left and the right, maybe I guess I'm being a little bit rosy eyed here, but in days past might've come together on and forged good legislation to help keep men, incentivize men to stay in the home and love their wife and love their kids.

But anyway, that's probably a bygone desire. The reality is one out of three children in America are in a fatherless home and 80% of those fatherless homes, according to The Atlantic's data are headed by single mothers. And so that fills us with tremendous compassion because we recognize that this is causing untold suffering for the mother who remains in that home. I'm a father, I can scarcely imagine trying to do this alone without my wife. And then for the children who are raised without a dad. God has already written the code for the family. We don't need to revise that code. God wrote in that he wanted a father and a mother, a husband and a wife for life in ideal terms, covenanted together, and our society has ripped that apart. And the ones who typically leave when that marriage crumbles in a no-fault divorce age, for example, are men. And then the ones who suffer, as you said at the beginning of the program, are the women and children. Everyone's affected by it.

Gary Bauer:

I remember when the feminism movement really was hitting the popular culture and one of the leaders of the movement said, sarcastically, "Women need men like a fish needs a bicycle." Meaning, they don't need them at all.

Well, clearly we're seeing that women need men just like men need women. I was struck, Owen, about the, it was an important debate, but the fact that we had a national debate for a number of years and literally votes in a number of states on whether it was a good or bad idea for men to marry men and women to marry women. But on the issue of the need for more men and women to marry because children need mothers and fathers, we not only don't have any states voting on that. There's no debate about it. And if you actually bring it up as an important public policy concern that ought to be debated in the Congress and elsewhere, you're pictured as some sort of neanderthal.

Dr. Owen Strachan: You absolutely are. And again, that's part of why I'm so grateful to God for raising up strong men, Dr. Dobson, you, many others who have paid in blood in the public square for 40, 50, 60 years on these issues in some cases. And yeah, nowadays, the rising generation, the younger generation that I'm trying to reach out to on my podcast, Grace and Truth, and write books toward and be on social media and engage, they don't even think about this stuff. They don't even think that there's a really big need in terms of the broader generation out there to articulate much of anything about marriage, manhood, womanhood, and the definition God has given of the family. But this is actually the greatest social need of our age to restore the home. If you restore the home, you really restore everything else, or at least you lay the groundwork for that.

But if you lose the home, you lose everything else. And that's what we're seeing. We're in the process really in America of losing everything today. So that's a strong thing to say. My prayer with *The War on Men*, this book, my prayer with just the church in general is that we will find our voice once more and speaking the truth in love, Ephesians 4:15. We will contend for these realities and we will help people see no, a father and a mother are not optional. A child without a father or mother in the home is already in a terrible situation contrary to what we've been told.

Gary Bauer: Oh, and you've seen all the figures. They're delaying marriage. When they do get married, they're delaying having children. I see a lot of stuff and even hear it from some young people about it's hard to find somebody they want to date. Well, if you don't date, you're not likely to get married and have children. I think you addressed this in the book and in spite of all the messages of modern day feminism, isn't there a lot of indications that women, young women instinctively are more attracted to a man that they see as being strong and maybe even its subconscious as somebody that would protect them if they were in danger or in trouble?

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yes. There was this remarkable TikTok video made a few months ago by a young self-professed leftist woman, and she said that she wanted a man who had traditional commitments to her, who would protect her and help her in the ways she wanted, but she didn't want his traditional ideology, his traditional worldview. And my heart went out to her because I know that she is emblematic of so many young women today who do instinctually, I keep using that word on purpose, want a strong man. I don't mean that they necessarily,

when they're not a Christian, know the fullness of biblical manhood and desire every particular of it. I'm not saying that. But again, just in a kind of core level, they want a protector. They want a man who goes out, and I'm from New England, so forgive the snow based metaphor here, but who shovels the driveway.

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Dr. Owen Strachan: You got to do it. They want a man who works hard and provides for them. They want a man who will love children that come along. Feminism and other voices have trained women, tried to out of these natural instincts and desires, but these ill ideologies, Gary, have not fully succeeded because you have to really go against the wiring of a woman to train her to not want these things.

So there's a generation of young women in some who I think are waking up and they are finding that they have been sold a mess of porridge and they want a strong man in their life in some form and they are right to. And so what we need to do is do our level best by God's grace to raise up those strong men and help the sexes understand that men aren't fundamentally in competition with women, and women aren't fundamentally in competition with men, and we don't need to pretend we're all the same. Actually, a marriage usually does best when the husband and wife know from the outset or hear this in counseling, "You two are not the same." Do not think that you're going to have the same instincts, desires, needs and wants. You actually need to learn each other and plate each other's strengths and value each other's differences as made by God.

Gary Bauer: Dr. Strachan, this has been fantastic. I got a lot more things I want to ask and I can tell you got a lot more things you'd like to say. Any chance you could come back and be with us tomorrow?

Dr. Owen Strachan: I would love to. Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Roger Marsh here reminding you that you're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and you've just heard part one of a special two-part conversation featuring co-host Gary Bauer and his special guest, Dr. Owen Strachan. Be sure to tune in again tomorrow for the conclusion of this powerful conversation as Dr. Strachan and Gary Bauer will discuss God's design for men and how that fits into current culture. By the way, Dr. Strachan is the author of the brand new book called *The War on Men: Why Society Hates Them and Why We Need Them*. For information on how you can receive a copy and support the ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute at the same time, simply go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

You know, guys, in the world today, you often receive more pressure than praise and so much as being asked of you these days, from managing finances to maintaining your home, and most importantly, to making every possible effort to raise a Godly family. It definitely is not easy and you are definitely not meant

to do this alone. That's why here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we are here for you with an abundance of resources, prayer, and encouragement like the book from Dr. Strachan, I mentioned just a moment ago. I encourage you to sign up for our special 10-day "Straight Talk to Men" email series. It's taken from Dr. Dobson's bestselling book with that same title, and it will help you sharpen the tools God has given you to live your life amidst today's confusing and sometimes broken culture. Now, the 10-day email series is free. All you have to do to get yours is go to drjamesdobson.org/straighttalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/straighttalk. And for information on how to order a copy of Dr. Dobson's book, *Straight Talk to Men*, go to drjamesdobson.org. You'll find that in our store.

I'm Roger Marsh, thanking you for joining us today and encouraging you to tune in again tomorrow as Gary Bauer will continue his fascinating conversation with Dr. Owen Strachan about *The War on Men*. That's coming up right here on the next edition of 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.