



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Men and Marriage – Part 1

Guest(s): George Gilder

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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 back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. We hope and pray that you are healthy, happy, and remaining connected to God, anchored in your faith and in fact practicing your faith in the public square, as well as in your community. We pray that you can do this in the midst of an ever-changing culture and serve as a godly model for others. In that spirit, we present to you part one of a classic conversation between our host and founder, Dr. James Dobson, and his guest, renowned author and economist, George Gilder. We have entitled today's and tomorrow's programs "Men and Marriage," and that my friends is exactly what they will be discussing. Together, these two men unpack some long-term hot button issues, such as the downside of the 1970s feminist movement, and the assault on biblical truths. That assault includes the attack by culture on masculinity, and a beat down on traditional roles inside and outside of the home.

George Gilder will also explain to Dr. Dobson some of the economic factors at play for both men and women that affect the institutions of marriage and the family. They also examined the misconceptions and disappointments women experience with the career first and family second notions of today's society. There is so much to cover, but first allow me to tell you a little bit more about George Gilder. He was born in 1939. He grew up in New York and Massachusetts. Tragically, his father was killed flying in the service in the United States Armed Forces during World War II when Gilder was only two years old. George Gilder attended Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard University, graduating in 1962.

He later returned to Harvard as a fellow at the Harvard Institute of Politics, and edited The Ripon Forum, the newspaper of the liberal Republican Ripon Society. Gilder also served in the United States Marine Corps. He has lectured internationally on economics, technology, education, and social theory. He has also addressed audiences everywhere, from Washington, D.C. to the Vatican, and he has appeared at conferences, public policy events, and on media outlets. He's the author of several seminal books, including *Men and Marriage*, first

published in 1986, also *Wealth and Poverty*, released in 2012. Now, let's listen to part one of this classic Dr. Dobson conversation. I think you'll find it fascinating, right here on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: There are a few writers in this country that I think stand head and shoulders above the rest of us, and one of the most brilliant is with us today. I'm not trying to patronize him, but I tell you, I have read his works for years, and have been so impressed with his ability to analyze the family in the context of society, among other subjects that he writes about. It is indeed an honor to have with us today George Gilder. Welcome, George.

George Gilder: It's exciting to be here.

Dr. James Dobson: Back in the early 1970s, my father used to do a lot of research for me. I was on the faculty of USC School of Medicine at the time, and was extremely busy, had my hands full, and this whole subject of the family was so important to me, but I was in a research responsibility and a teaching responsibility, and I used to call my dad and ask him to read books that had come out for me that were important to me, but I didn't have time to get to. And your book, *Sexual Suicide*, was one of those books. I made a phone call to him and I said, "Dad, there's a book out you got to help me with," and he read *Sexual Suicide*, and he sent me a complete analysis of the book, an outline of the whole book with the most glowing comments. He said, "You must read this book." That was my introduction to you back in, I guess, 1973. Is that when the book came out?

George Gilder: About that, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And I have quoted you and talked about your perspectives ever since then. For the benefit of those in our listening audience who are not that familiar with George Gilder, let me go on with his introduction. He wrote other books entitled *Naked Nomads*, *Visible Man*, *The Spirit of Enterprise*, and perhaps his most well-known book, *Wealth and Poverty*. He's a graduate of Harvard University.

On August 15th, 1986, Mr. Gilder was one of 11 persons honored at the White House by President Reagan for their entrepreneurial excellence. George Gilder is married to the former Cornelia Brooke. They and their four children live on a farm in Tyringham... Is that correct, Tyringham?

George Gilder: That's correct.

Dr. James Dobson: That's the easier half, here comes this word, Massachusetts. Hey, I did it. I have great trouble-

George Gilder: Incredible.

Dr. James Dobson: ... Saying that word. George, I am delighted to have you here. Now, I want to go back to 1973 and your book *Sexual Suicide*, because your new book, *Men and*

Marriage, is kind of an update or a more recent analysis of the same material that you talked about then. That was a very controversial book in 1973, wasn't it?

George Gilder: Right, it was introduced in *Harper's Magazine* and provoked more letters than virtually any other article ever in the magazine.

Dr. James Dobson: A lot of anger, too.

George Gilder: A lot of anger, just rage was expressed. The feminist movement was riding high at the time. Every new major book that they introduced, from Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, to Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, immediately soared to the top of all the best-seller lists. It was a time when feminism was almost completely dominant in sort of intellectual circles in the United States. It was a pseudo religion, one of these manias that arise in a secular society when it loses contact with God, really. It's a secular religion.

Dr. James Dobson: I saw a review of *Men and Marriage* in the *LA Times*. It was written by a feminist and it began with the words, "Oh, George, you brute," so here we go again it looks like.

George Gilder: Yeah, here we go again. That's the kind of reviews I've been getting, sensitive reviews of that kind.

Dr. James Dobson: In 1973, the very title *Sexual Suicide* had ominous implications for the society, dire consequences that might fall upon us if we continued as we were going, especially for the family, and most of those predictions or those statements have been almost a prophecy now, haven't they?

George Gilder: Right, only about 52% of Americans are in families today, or families with children. There's been a real decline, and an outbreak of divorce and female headed families.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's quickly move to the theme of *Sexual Suicide* and now *Men and Marriage*, because the theme is the same. The explanation and the illustrations are updated in the new book, but the theme concerns what happens when a society denies or ignores male aggressiveness and the male temperament and attempts to suppress it and how that influences the family. Explain the basic concept.

George Gilder: One way of putting it is that every generation, the society suffers... All societies suffer an invasion by barbarians, and these barbarians are young men, single men, and young men have to be domesticated in some sense, channeled into constructive roles in order to contribute to the society. And the way young men get converted into productive citizens most of the time is through marriage. Through marriage, they get linked to specific children, and the responsibility for specific children through marriage ties men to the future and gives them the kind of long time horizons, those sense of that their role in the world is

important, and that their moral behavior is critical. It's marriage that really brings that home to men. And single men by contrast, commit virtually all the major violent crimes in the society. They're overwhelmingly prone to alcoholism, and mental diseases, and psychological disorders all afflict single men at a rate far above married men. As a matter of fact-

Dr. James Dobson: That's not to say that all single men have those problems.

George Gilder: Of course not.

Dr. James Dobson: But the incidence is much higher-

George Gilder: Oh, much higher.

Dr. James Dobson: ... Among single men.

George Gilder: That's right, but of course I'm talking in broad sociological generalities, but that's how a society works. There are of course exceptions and extraordinary people in all sorts of situations, but what determines whether a society is peaceful and productive is the extent to which the aggressiveness of young men is channeled into productive purposes, and by and large it's marriage and family that disciplines this natural aggressions of young men and turns them into the provider role.

Dr. James Dobson: There is another subject I wish we had time to deal with in greater depth, because it relates to the kind of ominous prophecy originally stated in *Sexual Suicide* in 1973. You were really talking about the possible death of a civilization, and a complete change of social order that might grow out of our attempts to contradict who we are biologically as men and women. We are now seeing the fulfillment of some of that, as I said a little earlier, in that we're below zero population growth in the United States, I believe in Canada, and seriously below it in Western Europe. By that I mean we're not producing enough babies to replace the people who die, and when you have a culture that's not at least replacing itself, you have a declining culture. We get used to everything growing. My business is bigger this year than last year. What does it do to a society when you get into that below ZPG, as they call it, and everything is declining instead of perpetuating itself?

George Gilder: Well, rather than a spiral of growth, you get a vicious circle of decline, and you get typically a steadily rising portion of the population being elderly beyond the workforce, and you get the burden of supporting those older people falling on an ever smaller group of working citizens. This means tax rates have to rise on the remaining workers. Workers tend to withdraw from the workforce, they tend to work less, so the remaining workers find themselves facing still greater burdens to support a steadily rising number of older people in their retirements. In the end, you get a real collapse of the society such as I'm afraid is coming in Western Europe whereas much as 50% below the replacement level, and of

course being 50% below the replacement level means that in four or five generations, you're virtually not reproducing the society at all, 50% times 50%, 25%, 12%, 6%, 3% of the replacement level within five generations, and it's sexual suicide, and that is what's happening in the welfare states of Europe.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, just jumping in here for a brief moment. The program has yet to conclude, we're at the midpoint, but I do want to take a moment on behalf of Dr. Dobson and all of us here at Family Talk to thank you for joining us today. We greatly appreciate that you listen into this program, either on the radio, on our website, or our app, or even on Amazon Alexa. And by the way, thank you for your prayers and continued financial support as well. We are a completely listener supported broadcast outreach. We would not be able to bring programs to you like the one you're listening to today without your generous contributions. By the way, to learn more about how you can stand with us financially, you can visit drjamesdobson.org. Now, let's get back to the conclusion of today's program here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: In my film series, *Turn Your Heart Toward Home*, in the first film I said children are the future and without children there is no springtime, there is no freshness, there is no newness, there is no color, there is no vigor, there is no energy of youth-

George Gilder: And no way to the Lord.

Dr. James Dobson: That's right, just an aging, selfish, dying culture, feeding on its own self-interest, and congratulating itself for not being distracted by these little children around our feet who would take so much of our time and energy. That's a very shortsighted view, isn't it?

George Gilder: It certainly is.

Dr. James Dobson: George, in terms of raising children, boys and girls to understand their appropriate sexual identity, I've done some programs on that. It's kind of hard to get a handle on it when you start talking specifically about how you raise a boy to be masculine and how you raise a girl to be feminine without being rigid. You get down to specifics like washing dishes versus mowing lawns and you get into trouble with that. Do you have any advice for parents in how to make those sex roles clear without being rigid in terms of things that are really kind of cultural and kind of silly?

George Gilder: Sure. Well, just be clear in your own mind what your role is and what the mother's role is. If the father's role as leader of the family is clear, and the mother's role is the central moral leader, and raising of children is evident, and the two roles are manifest, then the children will naturally follow them and these conflicts just won't arise.

Dr. James Dobson: So, you model it?

George Gilder: You model it.

Dr. James Dobson: It's not in rigidity in the activities or work or words or other things, but it is something that almost defies definition.

George Gilder: Yeah, it defies definition, but these definitions will emerge spontaneously, unless you make a deliberate effort to confuse them. Boys will be boys and girls will be girls most of the time, and you needn't worry desperately if the roles get confused for brief periods during the lives of either boys or girls. If the family structure is firm, the ultimate identification of the boy and the girl will indeed be firm.

Dr. James Dobson: In a book called *The Brain*, I've forgotten the authors, an excellent book on brain research and the differences between males and females. They talk about how they are different from so early in life. You go to a picnic or a birthday party for five-year-olds, the little boys will already be very, very different from the little girls. It's the boys that are throwing cake, and are putting their hand in the punch bowl, and things of that nature. It's that aggressiveness you're talking about, and the feminist would say it's trained into them. How come it's trained into them in every society around the face of the globe?

George Gilder: And in history. It's just another of these illusions, a utopian refusal to face the facts of life.

Dr. James Dobson: While we're talking about children and teenagers, George, I want to go back to my book, *Dare to Discipline*, and in fact, I've been kind of embarrassed by my answer to this question, because it sounds like 1970 or '71, and yet in the context of today's discussion, it sounds like it fits pretty well. Let's see what you think. This is the question I was dealing with. "My teenage daughter has admitted having sexual relations with several boys. Since she doesn't believe in God, she can see no reason for doing otherwise. What can I tell her?"

I said, "You might make her aware of the fact that sexual freedom is expensive and most of the bills are paid by women. The natural sex appeal of girls serves as their primary source of bargaining power in the game of life. In exchange for her feminine affection and love, a man accepts a girl as his lifetime responsibility, supplying her needs and caring for her welfare. This sexual aspect of their marital agreement can hardly be denied. Therefore, a girl who indiscriminately gives away her basis for exchange has little left with which to bargain. Your daughter might also be reminded of the expenses that are sometimes imposed by sexual irresponsibility, including those associated with venereal disease, unwanted pregnancies, and fatherless children. By contrast, the biblical concept of morality offers overwhelming advantages for a woman. Even if the matter of right and wrong were of no significance. Through moral

behavior, she is likely to achieve self-respect, the respect of society, the love of a husband, and provision for the needs of her children.

"The current move toward common law marriages, unmarried couples living as man and wife, offers no legal protection and no security for the "wife" involved." Wife in quotation marks. "Similarly, the new morality is a tragic imposition on the female sex. Women satisfy the desires of males while assuming the full responsibilities, risks and consequences themselves. Then, when their youth begins to fade as inevitably it does, they will find little sympathy from the men who have exploited them."

George Gilder: I couldn't have said it better myself.

Dr. James Dobson: It sounds like I was fishing for a compliment, but I mean it. I've thought about taking that paragraph out, because it sounds chauvinistic in the context of what the feminists have made us conscious of in the last 15 years.

George Gilder: It's entirely true. It's just a statement of the facts of life, of sexual liberation liberates men to exploit women, and the feminists claim that liberation somehow affirms and exalts women, but the opposite is the case. It liberates men in the typical pattern to leave their wives as they grow older, and marry their secretaries. That's the typical pattern of sexual liberation. And powerful men get to take the marriageable years of more than one young woman, and this is a dream of men in all societies, and it's only societies where morality breaks down, where the rules of monogamy collapse, where men can have harems or a succession of young women in their lives, and this is the terrible joke of sexual liberation. It's not a joke, it's a tragedy.

Dr. James Dobson: Tragedy. So, monogamy and the stability of a particular culture are linked in every context around the world. This is not a Western concept.

George Gilder: No.

Dr. James Dobson: This is worldwide.

George Gilder: This is worldwide.

Dr. James Dobson: Primitive and civilized.

George Gilder: That's right.

Roger Marsh: Well, Dr. James Dobson and George Gilder sure have unpacked a lot regarding the way culture looks at the intimate relationship between a man and a woman on today's edition of Family Talk, and sadly, not much has changed since this program was originally recorded. Some may say this dynamic has even gotten worse today. Well, if you'd like to learn more about what George Gilder had to share, visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk, and be sure to join us

again tomorrow for the conclusion of this fascinating conversation, as they'll be discussing the different roles that men and women have in relationships, and how culture has impacted those dynamics.

As we conclude today's edition of Family Talk, I have a special guest we'd like to introduce to you, the newest member of the team here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, Dr. Owen Strachan, who is our new senior director of the Dobson Culture Center and Dr. Strachan, it's good to have you with us on the team, but also here on the Family Talk program today.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Thank you so much, Roger. My joy to be here. I appreciate it.

Roger Marsh: Let's talk about why this is so important. People ask the question, what does culture mean in the ever-changing culture that we're living in right now? There are so many things that we used to define very clearly, biblical worldview, that are kind of up for grabs right now in the culture. What is the biggest challenge that you see in launching this initiative?

Dr. Owen Strachan: In launching this initiative, we need to seed the church of the Lord Jesus Christ with a very strong shipment of both grace and truth. It's easy to come up short in either category, Roger, because there's not a lot of grace out there in the broader world when you think even about how people on opposite sides interact with one another just in a common grace sense. There's not a lot of that left today, and then there certainly is not a lot of truth out there in great measure either, because there are a lot of lies that Satan has woven the church into, and so lots of people are believing things that simply are not the case. So, what we need to do in 2024 is we need to go big on both grace and truth, and that's not just generic grace and truth. That's the grace of Christ and the truth of Christ and praise God we have every single last thing we could need for this mission of being salt and light in a Matthew 5 way in the Word of God.

Roger Marsh: Talk about the need for parents to understand the gravity of what we're dealing with. You're a parent, you're a husband and a father, you've got three teenagers. You're right in the thick of this. Why is it so important for us as parents and grandparents to understand what our kids are going through and what kind of world they're living in right now, why this is such an important initiative?

Dr. Owen Strachan: You could call me a survivor if you wanted, a survivor of teenagers. I'm being silly. I love my teens and they're great kids and we're having a blast in these years, and honestly, that's a part of what we need to articulate in this day and age is that you don't need to fear the family. Part of what the devil, our adversary, is doing is convincing people that it's a really bad thing to have kids, and it's a really terrible thing to have a family, and you don't get to have any fun and your life just drains of color the minute that you get married and then have some kids come into the picture, and the opposite is the case.

Of course, being a husband or a wife is a lot work, being a father, a mother is a lot of work, but the good stuff in so much of our lives is found in the small things, is found in the day-to-day life, is found in the walks you go on, it's found in the trips you take to the mountains or the ocean, it's around the dinner table conversation, it's playing games together as a family, board games, all those kind of things, the simple things.

And so, what we want to do is we want to recapture through the Dobson Culture Center in our broader work, the goodness of God's design, and the blessing it is to have a family. You don't have to have a family, of course, you can be a single man or woman and live to the glory of God, but if God gives you the blessing of a family, Roger, in some, He hasn't dropped an anvil around your neck and consigned you to misery the rest of your life. There's going to be ups and downs, there's going to be trials, but fundamentally God has brought you into a pathway that has so much joy, and gladness, and fulfillment on it powered by His grace.

Roger Marsh: Well, indeed, Owen. I've enjoyed really being a father and now as a grandfather, I'm actually having even more fun, so there's a lot of merit to what you're saying there. There's more to come from Dr. Owen Strachan and the Dobson Culture Center in the near future, so do stay tuned for those updates. I'm Roger Marsh thanking you for joining us today. May God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow deeper in your relationship with Him, and be sure to join us again tomorrow right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

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