



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** 50 Years of Marriage: Our Success Story – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Jon and Marylois Gibson

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

**Roger Marsh:** Hello and welcome to today's edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and I hope you're enjoying the last week of 2022. As we inch closer to the new year, we look forward to what the Lord will do in our lives and here at the JDFI as well as through Dr. Dobson and Dr. Tim Clinton. Today's program is another presentation from our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection and originally aired this past May. This heartfelt and inspiring conversation is between Dr. Dobson and his dear friends Jon and Marylois Gibson. The Gibsons celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this year and in the program they talk about long-term love and how to make a marriage go the distance.

Now, before we begin, I want to let you know that we have a matching grant in place currently here at the JDFI. This means that any financial contribution that you make to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute during the month of December will be doubled thanks to some very special friends of our ministry. Now there are only a few days left to have your tax deductible donation doubled, so visit us online at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) or call us at 877 732 6825. Here now to introduce today's guests is our founder and host, Dr. James Dobson.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Well, hello everyone, and thank you for tuning in to Family Talk Today. I'm your host James Dobson and on this broadcast we're going to take a close look at a long-term marriage and explore what made it so successful. I hope this discussion will be an inspiration for our husbands and wives wherever they are on their journey through life Together. Our guests are Jon and Marylois Gibson, who on March 5th, 1972 were married and they just celebrated 50 years together. They had a big anniversary party out in Sacramento, California with friends and well-wishers. Shirley and I were invited to that party but we couldn't go but because we couldn't be there, I asked them to come here to Family Talk, to discuss their journey together and to offer some advice and suggestions to those who are about to make this trip. Jon and Marylois congratulations to you both for 50 years of marriage. In this day and age, that's not only an

accomplishment but it is a blessing for all of us who know you and have had the pleasure of getting acquainted with you. Welcome to the broadcast today.

Marylois Gibson: Thank you. Thank you, James, for having us.

Jon Gibson: Thank you, doc.

Marylois Gibson: It's an exciting thing. Thank you.

Jon Gibson: We love you. We love this ministry and it is such an honor to sit here with you.

Dr. James Dobson: 50 years. Tell us about the anniversary ceremony that just occurred.

Marylois Gibson: Well it was amazing to reconnect with dear ones, both family and friends and an especially delightful shock was the arrival of our daughter and son-in-law. Nobody was expecting them, not even her brother. And so running into them was just amazing because that meant about a 48-hour jaunt from Baltimore to Sacramento and back on their part. So that was awesome. The pictures and the reminiscing, the fun and the laughter, the entertainment, including songs by our son Marcus and Sarah Vienna, our almost daughter whom you've had on the show, who was visiting from Romania. Beautiful flowers, tables, wonderful food. God definitely smiled on the event and hearts were there. The kind comments from the audience that spanned generations from lives we've been privileged to encounter was a special heartwarming blessing.

Dr. James Dobson: Jon, talk about where we met. Tell people how it came about.

Jon Gibson: Oh, I remembered as if it was yesterday and that is Marylois and I thought, why on earth are we invited to this gathering what you called the Washington Briefing and it was like drinking from a fire hose, but it was pivotal-

Dr. James Dobson: You perceived it as a fundraiser, didn't you?

Jon Gibson: Oh no, I perceived it as somebody had me confused as to who I was because while I was a real estate developer, I was just getting started and so I thought they must have me confused with some big shot. But that meeting was pivotal in our life because it was what was presented about what was going on in the world and people who were standing up just convinced us that you have to stand up for what you believe in, whether it's in your home, in your community, and if it's politically, but you have to stand up because the other side has been studying up for too long.

But there was something else that happened that was key to me and that is at a dinner event you shared that on the news was going to be news about you wanted us to hear it ahead of time that a Christian leader had fallen due to his impropriety with his own wife. But here's what was key. You said, "Folks, we all have to remember that we have to stay on our faces before God because I could

fall, any of us. Satan knows what our buttons were", and I took real stock of that because it said these people are real and this is not phony.

Dr. James Dobson: And we've been like brothers from that time to this.

Jon Gibson: We have and it's an honor to call you my friend.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's talk about the two of you. How did you meet? As a matter of fact, I'm going to back up. You both had decided to give up on dating. Didn't you Jon decide that you were not going to marry for five more years?

Jon Gibson: Yes. I had no plans to get married for at least five years because I was going to making at least \$30,000. So I had plans and I was burned out. We both were on blind dates, but our roommates insisted that we had to meet each other.

Dr. James Dobson: So, you met on a blind date?

Marylois Gibson: We did, even though we'd both gotten the victory over blind dates and we resisted our roommates for a long time and they had met on a California freeway off ramp. So that's another story. And they kept, each of them individually, would say to us, "Well, you just need to meet this person because you both are strange in some of the same ways". So we weren't sure how complimentary that was, but we finally just to get them off our backs, right, "All right, all right, we'll do it". Well Jon is not one to leave things to chance, so he and his roommate had this scheme all set up. I didn't know about it that they had some kind of code language and so the date was broken up into phases and I think they had three phases planned and we made it through phase one. And I must have passed because I think we went past phase three right up into phase five or six.

Dr. James Dobson: Jon, you fox, what'd you do? Think it through the whole thing?

Jon Gibson: Well, I thought why waste each other's time if this is not good? But oh my goodness, I saw something very special in her and I was such a baby Christian at that point that I didn't realize that what I saw was the Holy Spirit speaking through her. And I said, "Lord, can I put her in an ice box for a few years", and finally realized that ain't going to work because somebody else is going to capture her. And that was a change in her life.

Dr. James Dobson: And how long did you go together before you married?

Marylois Gibson: Well, Uncle Sam interfered.

Jon Gibson: Yes, big time. Uncle Sam interfered because-

Dr. James Dobson: You were in the Air Force.

Jon Gibson: It was the Vietnam era and I chose to enlist in the Air Force and I went to pilot training. And so we had a courtship that was just totally unrealistic and that was, we'd only see each other occasionally on a weekend where we could shut out the rest of the world and we'd just focus on each other, which meant then when we got married she said, who is this soldier whose preparing for combat and preparing for war? And I think what helped save the marriage was that I often was gone for several days at a time so she could take a breather before I came back.

Dr. James Dobson: Maybe the Lord had a plan there.

Jon Gibson: He sure did. He sure.

Dr. James Dobson: So how long was it before you married?

Jon Gibson: It was about a year and a half before we married. I had to finish pilot training and type training for the aircraft I was going to fly and then reported to my unit and said, I need some time off to go get married and have a honeymoon. And they begrudgingly let us do that.

Dr. James Dobson: So, you were married and in Vietnam at the same time?

Jon Gibson: Yes, because I was immediately assigned to a reserve unit, so I was gone for several days at a time and back. I was not stationed in Vietnam.

Dr. James Dobson: What was your first year like?

Marylois Gibson: Challenging. Yeah, you put two very different individuals who don't really even know each other all that well together, and with the stresses of it was not a positive time for someone to be in the military. Culture was not friendly to that. So that added to the stress level and then just the realities of daily life and trying to figure out how do you balance that with this other person being there and they have needs and they have expectations and a lot of our expectations clashed. We had not had any premarital counseling, so there was a lot of discovery that went on in that first year and trying to figure out how do we make this work.

Dr. James Dobson: Jon, I'm going to tell people you have tears in your eyes. Tell me why.

Jon Gibson: She's not talking about the fact that she married a guy who was all about himself. And it took quite some time for me to recognize my obligation to truly honor and uplift and cherish my wife.

Dr. James Dobson: Marylois, was there any time in that first year or two that you wondered if the marriage was going to make it?

Marylois Gibson: No, I knew that it would make it. I just didn't know how comfortable it was going to be. I just knew that it was going to be harder than I had expected. We're both pretty strong-willed in our own ways.

Jon Gibson: That's putting it mildly.

Marylois Gibson: We have very different ways of approaching everything. We don't even work a simple math problem the same way. And our religious and spiritual differences were much bigger than I think I realized before we got into it. So in my mind there was never a question of us making it.

Dr. James Dobson: So, the commitment was there. It was going to work, but the details is where the problems deliver.

Marylois Gibson: Yes. And that was one of the things that I appreciated about Jon early on. I felt like he understood the concept of commitment. And a lot of people in that era did not.

Dr. James Dobson: They still don't, Marylois.

Marylois Gibson: I know. And he also seemed to get the idea that love is not a feeling, it's a choice and it's an action. And I felt like those two things will carry it and make it work. But we're going to do a lot of learning along the way and it's a long learning curve.

Dr. James Dobson: I read of a family not too long ago who said, "I will stay with you for as long as I love you." Guess how long it lasted? Not-

Marylois Gibson: A couple days, maybe.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah right. There's got to be more depth to it than that.

Marylois Gibson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: You went on to UC Davis and became a diet-

Marylois Gibson: Nutritionist.

Dr. James Dobson: How long did you serve in that capacity?

Marylois Gibson: By the time I finished with that, it was we got to start a family. And so I never did work full-time as a nutritionist. I did work still about a day a week, doing dental hygiene and added health education for the other day. So I did for a very short while, I did lot of volunteer speaking and health education, but also developed a little company, if you want to call it that, of doing continuing education for health professionals and ran that for about a year.

Dr. James Dobson: Well Jon, we've got you in the military. How long did you stay there, and how did you get out of the military? You were an officer so you could choose when you wanted to leave.

Jon Gibson: Yes. So at the end of my term, it was about six years. Then I went out and I started in the commercial real estate business. We moved, relocated ourselves, dislodged ourselves from southern California, moved to Sacramento. Neither one of us having a job, saying we're going to find a way to make this work. And it was a shock because it was difficult, but we were committed. And what Marylois just said is a demonstration of her modesty. This woman was invited to go on to dental school and she could have been a phenomenal dentist, but she said, "I am committed to our kids". And she then said, "Raising my children is the most important job I will have in my life". And she did that with us homeschooling our children, our daughter through the sixth grade, our son through the eighth grade. And I truly believe that much of what they become is because of her commitment to them.

Dr. James Dobson: I think he loves you, Marylois?

Marylois Gibson: I think so. I think we're a good team. I mean he was really supportive in the homeschooling thing, which I appreciated. He was building the business so he was very busy, but managed to find time to provide the transportation and the funding for our social studies field trips, American history sites back east, cycling in Vermont in the fall, trip to Europe. We flew ourselves to the Caribbean once and not flying ourselves. We did a mission trip in Zambia, Africa with the two kids.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, the two of you are not the only individuals who got married and struggled to try to come to terms with one another. What advice do you offer for those in the first three years of marriage?

Jon Gibson: Commitment. This is not an option. This is something you need to commit to. And if you think it's going to get better by leaving that spouse and going elsewhere, you got holes in your head. It will not. God put the two of you together and you need to work to make it work. And the way to do that is to stay on your knees. And the way to work on it too, I discovered, is it's not all about me. And as soon as we get ourselves out of the concept of it's about me, to saying it's about loving this spouse that I had, and the two of us together, loving other people, suddenly the world is a whole lot brighter because when it's all about me, we're not really even happy.

Marylois Gibson: I would say to those struggling in those first three years, it's worth it.

Jon Gibson: Yes.

Marylois Gibson: Hang in there, do the hard work, count on the Lord. He will help you. Open your arms and your heart to receive the grace of God, recognize that we all need it.

And in so doing, He will just slosh His grace all over you until it's just pouring out of your shoes and it will allow you to splash that grace onto your spouse and your marriage and the people around you.

Dr. James Dobson: And that happened with you?

Marylois Gibson: Absolutely. And still does. I mean, we're still working on that because without the Lord, I'm a selfish person.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm afraid we all are.

Marylois Gibson: And so I think-

Dr. James Dobson: Except me. I don't have those things.

Marylois Gibson: Yeah. Well you're special.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm above and beyond it.

Marylois Gibson: You've outgrown it, haven't you?

Dr. James Dobson: I also have a problem with the truth. So you were intentional about that love relationship from the early days. Even though it was bumpy, you were doing what you could to make it work.

Jon Gibson: We absolutely were. In fact, when our kids were about maybe six and nine, one of them said to us, "We've seen you arguing a couple times recently. And our friends have told us that that's a start, because then after that happened, their parents divorced. Are you guys going to get divorced"? And we said, "Sit down and let's talk".

Dr. James Dobson: Did that rock you?

Jon Gibson: It did. It did.

Dr. James Dobson: So, they were seeing something that made them ask that question?

Jon Gibson: Exactly. And the arguments weren't serious arguments, but you could imagine if you're a child and you see your friends say once the arguments start, the marriage is over. And we said, "That's not an option. We are committed to each other and we'll work through the issues". And we got so many rewards for that. Our children encouraged us to take time to love each other and to date each other. And in fact, as they got older, they would encourage us to take weekends off and what they would do is to reward us with us. We'd come back and they would fix us, because Marylois had trained them in the kitchen, they'd fix us phenomenal five and six-course meals.

Dr. James Dobson: When I was four years old, my mother and father were both spark plugs and they argued, I wouldn't call them arguments or fights, but they were fussing with each other. And a child feels that. And it got pretty intense on some occasions when both of them felt something strongly. At four years of age, I went to my mother and I said, "Are you going to get a divorce"? It rocked them. My dad was a pastor and they never even thought about the fact that little eyes and little ears were observing this and they got their conflicts together and resolved them, probably out of my hearing. I don't doubt that they continue to have some struggles because that's who they were, but they never let me hear it again.

Jon Gibson: What you just said is so critical because as believers, everybody's watching us very carefully, but we have to know that our children are watching everything. And so we need to stay on our knees to make sure that we can be the proper influence.

Marylois Gibson: But I think we need to be real too.

Jon Gibson: Absolutely real.

Marylois Gibson: And admitting to the kids that we didn't always like each other, but the love was always there and the commitment was there and we were going to work through it. To pretend that there's never any disagreement is not equipping them for their future life.

Dr. James Dobson: Even if they become intense.

Marylois Gibson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: My parents could argue over how to pack the car with the bags. They could argue over anything, but they'd loved each other deeply and there was never a threat to the relationship. I got really acquainted with that. Shirley and I have not dealt with that to that degree. We have had disagreements and when we had been married one or two years, when I'd really get angry about something, I'd leave the house and go to the library. I'd be gone for an hour or two and cool down and I'd come back to keep from having that kind of battle.

Marylois Gibson: You do have to pick your fights a little carefully, but in my home growing up, my parents never argued in front of me. And so I didn't learn that having a disagreement is normal.

Dr. James Dobson: So, it was a shock to you when it came to-

Marylois Gibson: So it was like, "Okay, I knew you guys were upset with each other", because my dad could stay angry for days, but I didn't know how did you ever resolve it? How did you ever fix it? I never saw that. So I felt like in our home, maybe the kids need to see that there are some ways to fight fair.



Dr. James Dobson: That sounds like a contradiction to a loving couple, but it is true. You have to learn how not to tear each other up when a moment like that comes. Because the things that you say there will never be forgotten. If they really sting, they stay alive. So you have to stop just inside of that moment when you are demeaning the personhood of the other individual. And you learned how to do that.

Marylois Gibson: Well, we're still working on it.

Jon Gibson: Yes. Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Jon, talk about your children.

Jon Gibson: I think I told you once when we met, I said, when you wrote the book, Strong-Willed Children, you made a mistake. The mistake is you didn't put my daughter's picture on the cover of the book. She was a strong-willed child, but that strength that she has, has allowed her to become one of the finest physicians. She's a great mom and she's a great wife.

Dr. James Dobson: And you have-

Jon Gibson: We have a son and the son is just amazing. We always waited for the shoe to drop with Marcus and it never did. But he is committed and he's been through some real struggles, but he endured them well and he is the loving father of three children and soon to be four.

Dr. James Dobson: So how many grandkids do you have?

Jon Gibson: Six and a half. I love that.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes. Oh, that's another one coming.

Jon Gibson: We have another one coming. And I like what Marylois said because it's not a mass of tissues. We have a grandchild. It's just simply pre-born.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, were you very much involved in your church in those early years of marriage?

Jon Gibson: We were. In fact, we were involved with our youth and-

Marylois Gibson: Not in the early, early years.

Jon Gibson: Not in the early years, no. But we did get very involved with the youth and the Lord has just opened so many doors. I mean, He opened the door with you. He opened the door with Chuck Colson, and He's just opened phenomenal doors that we've just discovered that if you simply show up, He will give you some ministry opportunities that you never would 've dreamed would possible.

Dr. James Dobson: I love you Jon and Marylois. Thank you for dropping by. You're in a private plane, your plane and you landed here and then you're going on to somewhere else. Thank you for taking the time to come by and see us here at Family Talk.

Roger Marsh: While that was part one of Dr. Dobson's conversation with his close friends, Jon and Marylois Gibson about the commitment to marriage. Just as Marylois said, love is not a feeling. It's a choice and it's an action. That is powerful.

If you'd like to hear more insightful content then you'll enjoy our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection. We put together the best shows that you, our listeners, love the most into an 18 episode six CD set. This fine resource is available to you for a suggested donation of \$50. We also have a digital download version available as well. Just visit [drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022](http://drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022). That's [drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022](http://drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022). The digital download order link is featured right there in bold and shaded in Holiday Green. You can also order the CD set or the digital download by phone. Our customer care team is standing by to help you, just call 877 732 6825. I'm Roger Marsh, and with only a few days left in the year, thank you for inviting Family Talk into your home during this 2022 holiday season. God's richest blessings and His promise of true joy to you and yours.

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