



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Raising Gender-Confident Kids— Part 2

Guest(s): Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the 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 back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and on today's program, Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch join us once again to continue our discussion on their powerful new book. It's called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids*. On our last program, Dr. Koch and Dr. Myers explained how gender confidence begins with confidence in God as our intentional Creator. They shared practical ways parents can approach this topic with compassion, hope, and truth. On today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, Drs. Myers and Koch will tackle some of the toughest questions parents face: what actually defines masculinity and femininity according to Scripture? How do we break through cultural stereotypes while still honoring God's design for men and women? And what can we do when we see our own children or grandchildren beginning to actually question their God-given identity? Well, let's rejoin Dr. Jeff Meyers and Dr. Kathy Koch for this conversation right here on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. Jeff Meyers. Dr. Kathy Koch, the authors of the brand-new book called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*. Welcome back for another conversation on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Thank you, Roger. It's been a fun conversation. Looking forward to continuing it.

Dr. Kathy Koch: Definitely. Thank you so much.

Roger Marsh: It's interesting as we're talking about the gender identity issue and we haven't really gotten the 800 pound gorilla in the room and that is what defines a boy, a man? What defines a girl or a woman? And you deal with it in *Raising Gender-Confident Kids*. And Jeff, we will start with you first because you probably have the biggest mountain to climb. It's pretty obvious in the culture right now that there's something wrong with masculinity. We went from identifying toxic behavior to just classifying all masculine behavior as toxic. Talk about how you address this in the book because I mean, quite frankly, the idea that, I love the poll quote we have here. "It's uncomfortable to admit this, but our culture operates on a widespread belief that boys are bad. They're like pit bulls cute

when they're puppies, but they're dangerous when they're grown." Talk about that if you would.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Well, I have two sons and two daughters, so I feel like I've got a little bit of a balance, but they're obviously different. Every parent knows this. It is important to begin with a recognition that there's a biological difference and there's a theological difference between males and females.

The biological difference basically is an issue of your gametes. Are they designed to produce ova or to produce sperm? You can see that biologically, but there as I mentioned, are 6,500 catalog differences between males and females, including how we see what our eyes see because of the kinds of cells we have in our eyes all the way to what happens when we are under stress. What kinds of hormones get upregulated into our bodies when we experience stress? So it's a biological aspect, but the theological aspect that God made them male and female you can see starting in Genesis, you see it in Genesis chapter one, but then in Genesis chapter two, God made the man and then He brought woman to be with him and it says that He made woman to be a helper suitable. That word helper is ezer in Hebrew, it almost always refers to God being our helper. Isn't that crazy?

Dr. Kathy Koch: Yes.

Dr. Jeff Myers: God is our helper. And then that word suitable means in the sight of or in front of. It was essentially she is now here in his face. He can no longer pretend that he is the center of reality. He has to take her into account and she is there for God's purposes. That word suitable, it's interesting. Another place that appears in Scripture is when the warrior Joshua is going along a trail and he meets the angel of the Lord and the Scripture says that the angel of the Lord was in front of him. That's the same word, same word. The angel of the Lord is in front of him and he says, "Are you for us or are you for our enemies?" And the angel of the Lord says, "Neither. I'm for God."

Dr. Kathy Koch: That's so cool.

Dr. Jeff Myers: It's such a great example, but that's the same word. So a woman shows up in Genesis and says, I'm here on God's behalf to work alongside of you to bring blessing and flourishing to the world that is a picture of male and female that you're never going to get in a biology class or a psychology class or any other kind of class if they are not taking God into account.

Dr. Kathy Koch: Oh, it's so encouraging. We want girls to respect their gender. We want girls to believe that it is good and beautiful and honoring to be a girl, and we want boys to believe that it's good honoring and wonderful and respectful to be a boy, and we want them to respect the other gender, not lust after it, not assume that if they transitioned all their problems would go away. That's such a lie. So I think

we do a good job in the book of presenting both male and female as good and glorious and beautifully designed by God for purpose and for complimentary.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Those are my favorite chapters in the book. You realize, wow, we have so many stereotypes and we had to talk about this when we were writing. How do we write about the differences between males and females without stereotyping them and making people who say, well, I don't really identify with that, so maybe I was born in the wrong body. And it's nuanced to the way you work through it, but still very powerful. We do live in a time where every kind of term is thrown out to try to overthrow the structures of a godly culture, and one of the terms that often is thrown out is patriarchy and we got to tear down the patriarchy is kind of the idea. And a lot of people have fallen for this concept. This is not God's way of approaching this in the Old Testament, in the New Testament all throughout Scripture, God creates this tremendous concern for women and children for those who are vulnerable and then shows how males and females harmonize together to do what God wants them to do.

Roger Marsh: It occurs to me as we're having this conversation with Dr. Jeff Myers, Dr. Kathy Koch, the fact that if you want to raise gender-confident kids, they have to understand what the standard is for gender confidence and the world has done, I mean the enemy is the deceiver, so of course he's done everything he possibly can to deceive you. Did God really say that about take your pick and all the differences. And Kathy, I know you wrote a book a while ago called *8 Great Smarts*, and you kind of incorporate that into helping girls see their uniqueness and their wonderfulness as women, strong women, but it's a strength that is feminine compared to a strength that is masculine. Can you walk us through what that means to help parents and grandparents who are hearing this conversation now saying, yeah, my kid is going to that school. They're not necessarily cross-dressing or doing that type of stuff, but they're sympathetic to the fact that there are people who are and they identify that way.

Dr. Kathy Koch: Okay, wow. Yeah. One of the passions Jeff and I have again is to break through the stereotype. So a girl designed by God to be a girl is supposed to be a girl. It doesn't mean that she's not allowed to change the oil in Grandpa's truck. Who wrote the book that said you have to be a man to do that? We are committed to Scripture being the basis of our decision making and God's design being what we celebrate here. So a girl can enjoy westerns with grandpa watching TV on a Sunday afternoon. It doesn't mean she should have been a cowboy.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Dr. Kathy Koch: A girl might not like cooking. If you look at the TV shows, most of the people on those competitive shows are men or the judges are men. Men can cook. So in that chapter about girls becoming godly women, we really wanted to present that there is no stereotype that we're going to believe in. There's God's type, and that's what we're going to really celebrate. And so you can be, as Jeff mentioned, you can be a girl and be very talented at math and science. And because girls think differently and view the world differently, we need girls who

are very good at math and science and we need boys who are good at art and design. And so it's this idea that we are really careful with our words that we're not shocked and disappointed when we have a girl who doesn't want to dance and we have a boy who does.

We know that that can be awkward at times, but you have the right conversation with the right people at the right time and you celebrate. And if you don't feel like you can be a role model of that, just go use a search engine and find out about male dancers who have changed culture. They're out there and maybe that's the biography you read to your son and the husband, father so that he doesn't freak out that he has a little boy who wants to be a dancer. Or again, we could go on and on with so many different examples, but part of our passion again is to know your kids, know all of who they are, so you can talk about all of who they are in a positive way that honors God.

Roger Marsh:

Can you talk to pastors right now who are listening and saying, well, good, I'm glad you're equipping parents. Now I don't have to deal with it, but the reality is a lot of times you're hearing about this from something that happened on a youth camp or in a Bible study or something like that. There's a small group where they feel comfortable sharing this, and now it's on the youth ministers to actually do something. What can churches do a better job of with regard to this conversation that parents can't necessarily bring into the conversation right away?

Dr. Jeff Myers:

It is true that parents are the primary shaping forces of faith in the life of a child, but we spend a lot of time with students. We spent time this summer with almost 2,000 students working with them personally, and one thing we find is that they're reluctant to be engaged with church. If the statistics hold, 70% of those who were significantly involved in church in their high school years are no longer even attending church by the time they reach their mid-twenties. Now at Summit Ministries that completely flips. We continue to study our students even after just a two week summit ministry session. 85% of them 10 years later say, I still hold to a Christian worldview. I'm still involved in a local church. But we got to that place by asking God to reveal to us what happens with the 30% who stay.

Not just the 70% who leave, but what happens to the 30% who stay? You know the number one thing they told us? My pastor does not ignore tough issues from the pulpit. In our church, we believe that a biblical worldview applies to every area of life. We're not rude about it, but we don't bury our heads in the sand and ignore these topics. If, and this is a hard word to pastors, and I always want to be an encourager of pastors, but if you're not talking about it from the pulpit, most of the people in your congregation will think that Jesus has nothing to say about this topic.

Dr. Kathy Koch:

Wow, that's significant. I thought you were going to finish the sentence. They'll think that the pastor doesn't know the issue, doesn't know how to address the issue, which might be true, but you're right, it appears that God is irrelevant in

this discussion, which could be further from the truth. And again, pastors don't have to know everything. They have to be willing to learn. They have to be willing to listen, and they teach truth. They teach that God is a good Creator, a good designer. Here's the evidence. Look at Job. Look at David. Look at Paul. Look at Jesus Himself. All designed on purpose with purpose, for purpose that they fulfilled. We're no different from that. So pastors to be confident in God and to talk more about creator with the capital C, and I am going to go back to something I said earlier. I think pastors can do a better job of talking about change and learning to understand that being uncomfortable is a part of life. All of us have been uncomfortable in more than one season of life, but how do you approach it? How do you solve the problems? To where do you turn when you don't like something about yourself and how do you problem solve? How do you make decisions? How do you arrive at contentment? What's contentment feel like? What do you do with your burdens and your doubts? There's just in general. We can get to a better place there.

Roger Marsh:

That is that beatitude I think that got edited out and edited out in the final version of Scripture, "Blessed are the comfortable." It's not there and yet for the Western church, a lot of times it's, "Hey, how can we lighten your load a little bit?" And this is one of those things where it isn't going to be a lighter load, but it is going to be less of a burden if we deal with it biblically and intentionally in the way that you are mapping out in your book *Raising Gender-Confident Kids*. Dr. Jeff Meyers, Dr. Kathy Koch, our guests today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm going to ask you guys to kind of do a little forecasting here, if you will, because there is a parent who's listening to this conversation right now and says, "I've wondered."

I mean you see it in the media all the time. I was reading some article about a guy who played in the NBA for years, and now he has a son who dresses like a girl and says, "This is my daughter and I'm helping her with the transition." I knew, the quote that got me was, "I knew when he was three that he was not a boy. Something got in mom and dad's mind about that. I'm sure that does have an influence on it, but what can we as Christians who are looking at our kids and our grandkids and looking at the fact that they might start be veering in that direction, is there anything we can do to intercept it?"

Dr. Jeff Myers:

There are lots of things we can do to intercept it. That's the good news. In a program like this, we could talk about quite a few of them, but one of them is just affirming God made you the way He did on purpose. And when you go through difficulties and times of questioning, that is not a time for you to think, well, maybe I'm a mistake.

It's a time for you to ask God to help you understand how you need to become stronger. Dr. Kathy wrote a book called *Resilient Kids*, and I wrote it forward to that book because I was so impressed, so impressed. It's such a huge issue. And young adults all today, they know that they really need resilience. They really want this, but it is so difficult for them to get to that place. Well, there's only one way to get there. You have to be able to go through hard things and have

somebody who is older than you say, "You're going to be okay. You're going to make it. I'm right here walking alongside of you." We heard of one young woman, she told us that. She said, "When I was growing up, my hair was out of control. I had glasses, I had braces, and I felt really envious of the young, cute cheerleader in my Sunday school class." And she had a wise older mentor, an older woman say to her, "Look. Someday you're going to figure out what to do with your hair. You're going to lose the braces. You're going to get contacts, but what you have developed during this time of your life, your character, that is forever."

So that is the message. We did a program I guess in April where a question came in. This was a livestream thing, knowing there are thousands of people there, and this question comes in from a young man who says, I can't decide if I'm a boy or a girl and all of this. And I said several things to him, but the first was, "You know what? You're going to be okay. You're going to be okay. I want you to stop worrying about this. I want you to stop fretting about this. Stop asking how do I feel about me? And start asking, how do I go out into the world every single day and find where there's a need and help?"

You switch your perspective. And then the second thing is if you realize that your primary identity is as an image bearer of God, rather than in your perception of your sexuality, a lot of that anxiety that is at the source of this trauma begins to subside. Affirming the transgenderism never helps kids in my experience. Now I'm going to go ahead and say that because I've worked with tens of thousands of kids. It has never helped them. It may give them a short sense of a burst of purpose, but in the long-term, anxiety always grows. Depression always grows. Traumatic events that are part of childhood become inflated in the person's mind and their sense of importance, and they stop seeing themselves as a dignified image bearer of God and start seeing themselves as a victim of their culture. And that is a downward spiral that is very difficult, and it's distressing to see that some parents actually think affirming it is a good idea.

Dr. Kathy Koch:

Oh, that's so well stated, and it doesn't work. A boy can't become a girl, and a girl can't become a boy. As we've said, 6,500 differences. You can't make a quick surgical decision or pop a pill and make it happen. It won't happen. So the very thing that they've put their faith in, if I put it that way, this is going to solve all my problems won't work, then their problems are exasperated by that. Added to that would be the physical difficulties that we know comes if somebody does begin to medically transition. So back to the father of the three-year-old. He says he wants to be a girl; I'm going to let him be a girl. No, no, no, no. We have to say no to our children. We have to have the guts and the courage and the understanding that this is unhealthy foolishness, unwise, unhealthy.

You can call it what you believe it is, but it's, I can be a parent today. Parent means to bring forth. I can bring forth his masculinity. I can help him believe that it is good to be a boy. I can be a better man around him. So he wants to follow in my footsteps. We believe there's weak parenting. It's easier to let

something go than it is to stand against that, right? And yet, man, we respect the parents who say, "Son, no, that's not wise. Let's keep living the way that you are." And again, what's the percentage, Jeff? Almost 90% of young children, pre-adolescents who believe that they're born in the wrong body will disagree with that. They'll come back around to agree that they are in the right body by the age of 18 if we have not interfered with them.

Roger Marsh:

There are parents right now who are wrestling with this, and they may be not doing, they're going to TikTok for advice. They're not listening to Dr. Jeff Myers, Dr. Kathy Koch. They should be listening to you and not watching TikTok, but unless you're on TikTok, and then we'll promote your TikTok channel too. But I'm thinking about the parent who says, "Hey, my brother and sister-in-law have a child and they're wrestling with this, and I want to say something, but I don't want to parent their kids." Or maybe like in my case, my wife and I, blended family. We have six adult children and four of them are parents and those couples, and we have really had to learn the boundaries of what flies at grandma and grandpa's house doesn't fly at mom and dad's house and the other way around. What if this is the issue where the parents are really seriously saying, I think there's something I want to jump in. My wife wants to jump in and say something. What advice do you have to the person who's close enough to be family, but on the fringe enough to say, hey, that's really not your call.

Dr. Jeff Myers:

Well, it isn't your call. They have been given the responsibility to steward the children that God has given to them. It's one of the hardest things about living in culture today is that we aren't God. We don't get to decide that, but we can choose to walk alongside. How do you walk alongside what I'm about to say probably is going to be the number one source of negative feedback you get from the show.

Roger Marsh:

Just fire away Jeff. We want to hear it.

Dr. Jeff Myers:

Transgender ideology operates like a cult. It operates like a cult. It has a recruitment mechanism, an evangelism mechanism, a mechanism for ensuring that once people are in, they become afraid to leave. And even a mechanism for cutting people out of your lives who disagree with the decision that you've made. The idea of transgender ideology is that you progress through stages that are increasingly irreversible from a social transition in the front of everybody around you to a medical transition that involves puberty blockers, and then cross-sex hormones and ultimately surgery so that once we've got you in this agenda, then we've got you for life. That is how it operates. So if transgenderism operates like a cult, how do you help people come out of cults? I think it's a really fascinating question. Dr. Steven Hassan is the main guy in this country. He's not a believing Christian that I know of, but he helps people come out of cults. He was involved in a cult when he was a young man himself, and he said, the first thing you have to realize is that people who are in a cult are enslaved. Well, we know what to do about that. 2 Timothy chapter two says, "you gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to a knowledge of the truth so that they may escape the trap of the devil who has

taken them captive to do his will.” So you continue to pray, you continue to identify things in that child, as Kathy was saying, that aren't related to gender. If you obsess about it, they're going to obsess about it. But you say, what are the kinds of things you love to do that return energy to you and make you feel more alive? What are some areas of life where you're finding success? Those sorts of things, and to keep that relationship going. In the book, we actually, which we want everybody to get. Donors made it possible for you to get this book for free, so please take advantage of this. But we have 24 frequently asked questions that are impossible. The 24 questions, when we first made the list, I was like, there's no way. There's no answer to these. But if you start from God's perspective, you can work your way toward an answer that is both compassionate and truthful, and that's what you got to do. But you've got to realize they are enslaved. And if someone is enslaved, you always treat that differently than if someone is intentionally doing something dumb.

Dr. Kathy Koch: So good. Yeah, we want them to be free, to free them from that. So yeah, walk alongside compliment your kids, the in-laws, whatever's going on there, and be available and speak the truth in love and affirm them when you can. Hey, say in the past when your child was struggling, you handled it so well. I remember when he didn't make the baseball team and he was a wreck, and you took him to the park and practiced more like you've always been a great problem solving dad, so why are you not willing to look at this as a problem to solve? It's not that he is the problem, but he has a problem. And why are you caving and so quickly unwilling to walk into work again? Now we're back to fear and ignorance, but we're helping with that we pray.

Roger Marsh: Yes, absolutely. Well, Dr. Jeff Myers, Dr. Kathy Koch, this is a must-read, and especially now as you mentioned that because of the generosity of a donor, this is something that even cost wouldn't be an obstacle. The book is called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*. We have a link for it up at drjamesdobson.org, Dr. Jeff Meyers, Dr. Kathy Koch, thank you so much for taking on this subject. You guys easily could have phoned it in and written five tips to a happy kid or four tips to a great childhood or something like that, but you went right into the lion's den and I think you've come out victorious and thank you for leading us through this conversation today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Thank you, Roger.

Dr. Kathy Koch: Thank you so much.

Roger Marsh: Much standing firm on biblical truth while extending compassion to those who are confused. That's the balance every parent needs right now. And Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch have shown us exactly how to do so. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, featuring our conversation with Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch about their new book called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids*. If you'd like to revisit today's broadcast, or if you'd like to go back and listen to part one, you'll find both of them at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And

while you're there, be sure you also look up information on how you can get a copy of the brand new book by Dr. Kathy Koch and Dr. Jeff Myers. It's called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*. Again, you'll find that information and more at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh and from all of us here at Family Talk and the James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

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