



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A Legacy of Faith: The Harrison Family – Part 1

Guest(s): Frank and Jan Harrison

Air Date: February 24, 2025

Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute, supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr James Dobson, and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to this special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and in just a moment, you're going to meet a remarkable couple who are very dear friends of Dr. Dobson and his wife, Shirley. They are leaders who have consistently proven that faith and business can work together in powerful, transformative ways. But when you hear the story that you're about to hear, you're going to hear a story of faith, of fellowship and also of heartache and tragedy, and how God has led two faithful servants of His through the fire, through the valley, and led them to a higher plain when it comes to their life and love and ministry. The inspiring story you're about to hear that includes bringing chaplains into the workplace, prioritizing biblical values and business decisions and watching God work in extraordinary ways, is one that Dr. Dobson is anxious to bring to the airwaves today. So here now is our host, Dr. James Dobson to further introduce our very special guests here on Family Talk. Doctor?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, welcome everyone to Family Talk. I'm James Dobson. I'm so glad that you're here listening to us on the radio. The guests that you're going to be hearing from today are very dear friends of mine that we've known for many years, and they have served the Lord faithfully. They are Frank and Jan Harrison and Shirley, and I just love them both. They have experienced some of the greatest joys a Christian couple could ever hope for, but they've also been through some very difficult heartaches, and we're going to talk about that too during this program. Frank is the chief executive officer and chairman of the board of directors for Coca Cola Consolidated, the largest Coca Cola Bottling Company in America. His family history goes back 125 years. He's not that old, but his family is and I think you're going to enjoy hearing from him.

Frank also served on the board of directors of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and he is the author of an outstanding book called *The Transformation Factor: Leading Your Company for Good, for God and for Growth*. Frank's wife, Jan Harrison is also in the studio.

Frank Harrison: The way the Coke system works is so simple and so many people get it confused. They, first of all, they think we're one company all over the world, but

really the way it works, and if you do a little quick history, 1886 a pharmacist by the name of John Pemberton, stirred up the first batch of Coke in a drug store in Atlanta. Little nothing business. Two guys from my hometown, Chattanooga, Tennessee, had the idea of Coke and bottles, and that was 1899. They came down to Atlanta, talked to the owner of Coke and talked him into selling them the franchise rights to bottle Coke for the entire United States. They brought these rights back to Chattanooga, handed them out to family and friends, and that's when we got our first Coke franchise in Greensboro in 1902 but instead of just selling it in Atlanta, all of a sudden, through this contract with these guys in Chattanooga, you're selling Coke now all over the United States. They were like 1000 Coke bottlers in the early 1900s and here we are, 123 years later and what's that rule? 5% of family companies make it beyond 100 years. 5% of 1000 Coke bottlers is 50. There's like 60 something Coke bottlers left today. And we operate in a 14 state area and the District of Columbia.

And again, we buy concentrate from the Coca Cola company. We make, sell and deliver all these products to our customers. And in a simple version, that's how it all works. But my responsibility as chairman and CEO of Coca Cola Consolidated, if I had to say my number one responsibility, it would simply be that we accomplish our purpose as a company. And our purpose is really, it's really our culture. They're one in the same. We think culture is so important. We think it's the most important thing in any business, but our purpose is our culture, and our culture is our purpose. So what is your purpose? Well, our purpose is to honor God and all we do. Serve others, pursue excellence and grow profitably. It would take about an hour to describe what all that means, but-

Dr. James Dobson: We're talking about it yesterday at dinner and I would want everybody to listen carefully as you describe that part of your business. It's not just making a soft drink. You have a lot of other purposes here.

Frank Harrison: Well, first of all, honor God and all we do, we say.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that just you, or is that through the company?

Frank Harrison: Through the whole company, we have 17,000 teammates, and this is the purpose of our company, and again, to honor God, and all we do really is about our values. There's 10 of them. That's way too many, but we can't figure out which ones to delete. I mean things like honesty and integrity, humility and morality. But just to make a point real quick, honesty and integrity. Well, everybody has that, you know, that value in their company, I'm sure.

But we talk about it all the time. We do our best to live it. And one question I love to ask to audiences, you know, you think it's kind of the normal thing? How many of you, Luke, how many, Jan, how many have you told a lie in the last week? Dr. Dobson, surely not. But if you maybe told a lie in the last week, well, when you really think about it, you probably have-

Dr. James Dobson: I'm pure as the driven snow. I'm kidding of course.

Frank Harrison: No well, you're way too honest. And these big audiences, like church audiences, nobody says they told a lie. I do a little prison ministry from time to time. I'll ask in a prison group of guys, how many have told a lie in the last two days. Everybody raises their hands. But just as an example there, we just drive that thing home hard and clear. When you know that the people that you're working with reporting to you, solving problems, they're not white lying, they're not exaggerating, they're telling you the whole truth. Oh, it makes such a difference. And then humility, we don't do proud cocky at Coke Consolidated. You got to go down to go up and all that and morality. And I could go on, but Psalm 5:12 says, "For you, oh Lord, will bless the moral or righteous with favor. You'll surround him as with a shield." We want God's favor and protection and blessing on our company. And so-

Dr. James Dobson: Has it always been this way? Or did you bring that culture when you took over?

Frank Harrison: Oh, my word. Now you're getting into a lot of stuff there, but yeah, we had a very different culture as far back as the mid 80s, and I fortunately got to work around it about 10 years and our Coke plants moved to our corporate office and got about three years around a really, really bad culture. And it taught me so much, so much about what not to do in business. Just oh so political, messy, dishonest, short sighted, compensation was all based on the stock price. It was just, it was not a good culture. But when I did become in charge, I just say this that I had a wakeup call. I just understood day one that Frank, someday you're going to be accountable before God for the influence and impact that the company's having for God. Now, I understood the accountability of my life before God. I understood accountability before shareholders for the growth and the health and the value of the business, but accountability before God for the influence for Him. I didn't know what to do with that, but I felt it, felt it strong and clear, and so we just began to pray about that, and then things began to happen that led to the culture we have today.

Dr. James Dobson: Has the company more recently gone in that direction, or is this really something that goes way back?

Frank Harrison: It's been about 23,25 years now, 23 years ago, a friend of mine mentioned to me that he had put a chaplain in his manufacturing plant, and that had been a good thing. That's all he said. And what he really did was he planted a powerful seed that day. I'm thinking, public company, chaplain, you can't do that. So totally let it go. But then God just had me run into chaplains one after the other. I think the first one there, our sheriff in Mecklenburg County asked me to come down to the jail to do some target shooting. We were down there wearing these targets out, and we go by an office and it said, "Chaplain." And I said, "Sheriff, you got a chaplain in city government. Can you do that?" He said, "Oh, of course. Nobody's giving us any problems, which has been great." Two weeks after that, I'm at Clemson University walking around with a football coach back then, Tommy Bowden. He introduces me to their chaplain. And I'm thinking,

public university, can you have a chaplain? And he said, "Yeah, we pray. We like to win football games. It's good. Works. Good for us." And right after that,

I'm at the Coke 600 right before the race, they have a driver's meeting. Right after the driver's meeting, they have a chapel service. And I noticed most of the teams were there. Many of them had chaplains. So to make a long story short, go back into work the next week and say, "Man, we should look into this chaplain thing. It might not be so crazy after all." And so we decided to do a pilot test in our Nashville, Tennessee Coke plant. We put two chaplains down there. And you know, they all have their counseling degrees, seminary degrees, and six, nine months of those chaplains in place, we get a call from the HR people, and they say, "Frank, if you pull these chaplains, we're gonna have a revolt in our hands. It's incredible what's happening here."

Marriages being put back together. I think two suicides prevented. Kids gotten out of jail and put in Christ-centered addiction places, and then we had an employee who died, came to Christ through the chaplain. Family didn't have a church, asked if they could have the funeral at the Coke plant. I knew nothing about it there in Nashville, but they had the funeral back on the loading docks. And 13 people came to Christ at the funeral. And just from there, we just really woke up and said we should spread these chaplains around, and I could tell you chaplains, these stories for the next five hours, how they rescue our people. Our people-

Dr. James Dobson: That's where you get your thrill too, isn't it?

Frank Harrison: Well, probably, but, but our people, just

Dr. James Dobson: Maybe it's not where you get your thrill.

Frank Harrison: Well, that's my wife, Jan over there.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, okay. You got more than one thrill, right?

Frank Harrison: Yes, but they so rescue our people. I mean, all the people out there-

Dr. James Dobson: Did you grow up in a Christian home?

Frank Harrison: I did, thank God.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, there was a dedication to Christ in your family?

Frank Harrison: Yes, my mother led me to Christ as a kid growing up. She got saved at a Billy Graham crusade. In 1953, Dr. Graham came to Chattanooga. My mother wanted to hear some good music, went, heard the message God sent His Son, Jesus, died on the cross for her sins. She would just repent and invite Him into her life, she'd be saved and going to Heaven. So she did, and made all the difference in

the world and how I was raised. She had us in church every Sunday night, Wednesday night, Sunday morning. She was one of nine. Her parents were dairy farmers and believed in hard work, so we had jobs, and you worked all the time, and it was a wonderful childhood, really.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, I was fortunate enough to have the same kind of culture in my family. My grandmother had six children, and she would bring them all together early in the day. And she said, "I have something I want to say to you all. You have been raised in the culture of life." And she said, "If I lose one of you, it would have been better that I had never been born," and she meant it, and that's the way she brought them up, and that's been that part of my family ever since. How about you, Jan?

Jan Harrison: How about me? I am so honored to be here. Thank you for having us. I have just been a part of all of these things in a very secondary way, as far as the things that Frank has just shared. We were young when we got married, right out of college, and I would say we probably really neither one had a great idea of what it looked like to be married. We, you know, were attracted to each other. We had hopes, we had dreams, and we learned to follow the Lord. And I would say that probably the word over our lives really, has over and over again been redemption. To just watch God take broken people but with a heart and a desire to please Him. Guide and lead and show us how to build a marriage, how to build a family, how to build a business, how to build a culture within that business. And how to follow Him and serve Him has been just a day by day, step by step, season by season walk with the Lord. And here we are, we've been married 47 years and have three grown daughters, one son in Heaven, nine grandchildren with the 10th one on the way.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, I said you had eight grandchildren. You picked up ones.

Jan Harrison: I know. God has just redeemed so many things from two young people who showed up with a desire to raise Christian family and be a Christian family, but not a whole lot of experience, I think I found out very quickly that it's all a lot harder in reality than it looks to be married and to build a godly marriage to be a godly mom, and I will have to say right here and now, thank you for all of the times you spoke so personally into that radio, into those books, into my-

Dr. James Dobson: That really touches my heart.

Jan Harrison: -desperate desire to know what to do, but really not a whole lot of experience to go on. So thank you. You were one of my mentors and teachers.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, this is what you're teaching in your programs. Talk about what you do with women.

Jan Harrison: Well, when I was 27 years old, so I would have told you I was a Christian. I believed in God; I believed in the Word. I knew the stories, but I was really very

well churched. I didn't grow up in that atmosphere of prayer and that atmosphere of learning how to seek God's face. But when Frank and I were newly married, and we lived in Raleigh, North Carolina, a friend invited me to a Bible study, and within about the first and I was like, "Oh yeah, I can do this. This is the kind of thing I do." And it felt very comfortable, and I knew the story, so this would, you know, this would be a good thing to do. And I heard the Word of God taught from such a powerful place of conviction, of passion, of application, that within the first few weeks I started to realize, well, I know all about Him, but I don't know Him personally.

And the teacher just continued to explain, there's a time and a place you will remember. I think we shared that last night; your memory of that day you gave your life to the Lord as a little boy was so vivid. And I didn't really have it, and I just thought, well, if I've done this, I don't remember it so vividly, so I want to know for sure. So I think that my true, genuine spiritual birthday, I was 27, I went home from that Bible study. That day, it was Bible Study Fellowship in 1980 and I went home and I said, "Lord, I want to know you personally, and I want to walk with you, and I want to know your Word." It's been a journey. I didn't like grow up overnight by any means, but seeking the Lord and knowing His Word and sharing that because I think, particularly in our culture, in our area of the country, we live in the Bible Belt, it's so easy for people to believe they know Him and they really just know about Him. The church culture is acceptable, less and less so maybe but for many years, it was so easy to be deceived that you really knew the Lord, and that was the passion that drove me to teach-

Dr. James Dobson: When we were talking last night, you were referencing my telling you and the rest of the people at the table when I found the Lord which was at four years of age, and as I was telling it to you, at four years of age, I broke in tears. Remember that? I was crying, and that's the power of it. Amazing, I'm 88 years old, and that moment at four years of age is still with me and still guides me and still is meaningful to me. And I want to say to those who are listening to us, who just have nothing really powerful in your life. You just kind of making it up as you go along, you start looking for Him, and He'll set you on fire.

Jan Harrison: Amen. I love that too, because I get overwhelmed trying to remember people's names. But when I stop and think that God knows us by name, and when He calls your name, when you all of a sudden realize, "I sense this personal call to give my life to Him," the God of the universe, calls you by name, and you never forget it.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell us about this program that you have, who comes and how many come? What do you do?

Jan Harrison: Well for years, I was part of, it was really a community Bible study, and we met. For a while, we were like squatters. We would meet wherever a church would allow us to meet. But after several years, I was able to meet in my home church. So it wasn't really under, it was community and non-denominational was the

affiliation, but it was called Women of the Word, and I really, really desired and knew I needed to be under the covering and under the authority and under the protection of my spiritual leaders. So-

Dr. James Dobson: How many come?

Jan Harrison: There were about 300 at one point, there were that many. Now, all of that since right before COVID, that group no longer meets. They meet in smaller groups, and it seems like women have really shifted through that period of time in the last five years, six years to desire instead of large groups and then meeting in little, small groups. They like to have intimate personal relationships. So the last few years, I've done a lot more small group mentoring and being a part of a small group and being able to lead and share. So it's been a transition, but it's been very personal and intimate as well.

Dr. James Dobson: That's your mission.

Jan Harrison: That's my mission.

Dr. James Dobson: Frank, you've now known this lady for 47 years.

Frank Harrison: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: You think it's gonna work?

Frank Harrison: Just listening to her talking, I just, Jan has so studied the Bible for years and years and years, you know, teaching, but you know, when I leave to go to work in the morning and you leave your wife just in the Word, there's so much wisdom and so much protection and so much blessings that have come from that over the years. I'm just so thankful for Jan's discipline and teaching and just her, you know, with decisions, just that wisdom that she has is incredible. We cry out for wisdom, you know, and comes from God, and it's not as we know, not like knowledge and the facts you have, all the facts and knowledge, and you have no idea what to do. And for us, for me, the biggest decisions, it seems like you really don't know what to do. You're trying to buy a company. You have no idea, really what you should pay for it. And at some point, you just got to get with it-

Dr. James Dobson: Can you really ask for the Lord to help you in those routine kind of thing? Those decisions that everybody has to make.

Frank Harrison: And sometimes in the middle of meetings, we'll just stop. It's kind of part of our culture when we're lost. I mean, if we're honest, you know, we're smart people now but when you're trying to figure out a tough decision and you got three or four options, you know how it is, and you're trying to pick one, just stop guys. We gotta just stop and pray. We don't know what to do here, so I definitely do that.

Roger Marsh:

Well, that is very wise counsel from our guests today here on Family Talk. Frank Harrison, who's in studio with us, along with his wife, Jan and our own Dr. James Dobson is discussing with them the way that they integrate faith into every aspect of life. Their story reminds us that when we honor God and place Him first, He can and will use us to greater impact the lives of others in truly remarkable ways. Now if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or you'd like to share it with a friend or a loved one, we encourage you to go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. We've got two more special programs featuring these very special guests so be sure to keep tuning in to hear more of the remarkable story of Frank and Jan Harrison on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Now keep in mind, as Dr. Dobson mentioned, Frank Harrison is the author of the book called *The Transformation Factor: Leading Your Company for Good, for God, and for Growth*. For information on how you can receive a copy of this outstanding book, you'll want to visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. You can also find information about that book in our call center when you contact our Customer Care team at 877-732-6825, that's 877-732-6825. Frank Harrison's book, *The Transformation Factor*, is one that Dr. James Dobson highly recommends, so make sure you call or click today to learn more about how you can get your copy of this outstanding resource.

Here at the Dr James Dobson Family Institute, we are committed to helping families and leaders live out their faith with purpose and impact. Just as the Harrisons transform their company culture through biblical principles, we aim to transform families all across America with God's Truth. These daily broadcasts that you hear on the radio and online are made possible through friends like you who share our vision for strong faith-centered families, and if you appreciated hearing today's program about leading with godly values, please consider partnering with us.

Your gift of any amount helps us continue sharing biblical wisdom with the nation in need. Make a secure donation online. Go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Or you can call us and give a gift over the phone at 877-732-6825, that's 877-732-6825. And remember you can always write to us at Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949.

Now, as we were mentioning Frank Harrison's outstanding book called *The Transformation Factor*, if you'd like to see the same type of transformation happen in your marriage, we encourage you to check out Dr. Dobson's book that he co-authored with his wife, Shirley, called *Night Light for Couples*. Whether you're newly married or celebrating your golden anniversary this year, regular quiet moments with your mate are essential.

They're times to renew love and intimacy with each other and with the Lord. We'll be happy to send you a copy of *Night Light for Couples* by Dr. and Mrs. Dobson as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of our

ministry. So go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk and reserve your copy today. Well, I'm Roger Marsh and from all of us here at Family Talk, thanks so much for listening. Be sure to join us again next time when Dr. James Dobson continues his conversation with Frank and Jan Harrison. That's coming up right here next time on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone this is James Dobson inviting you to join us for our next edition of Family Talk. Every day we come to these microphones with someone in mind. Whether it's a busy mom looking for tips on discipline or a husband who wants to learn more about connecting with his wife. We want to put an arm around your family in any way that we can so join us next time for Family Talk, won't you?