



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Biblical Encouragement for Everyday Motherhood – Part 1

Guest(s): Rhonda Stoppe

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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 Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and as we are soon to celebrate the women in our lives this coming weekend for Mother's Day, I'd like to start with a verse that you have heard many, many times before in conjunction with women and mothers. Proverbs 31, verse 28 reads, "Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he blesses her as well." Moms are truly the bedrock of the family, and I know the impact that my own mother has had on our lives and for her three children, for her five grandchildren and her great-grandchildren as well. But mom really left an imprint of faith on my life that will never change. And I can't wait for that moment to be able to tell her yet again on Mother's Day how much I love and appreciate her.

We have a great program in store for you today and a great guest too. Her name is Rhonda Stoppe, and Rhonda has written some really great books. She's a best-selling author. She's a speaker and host of the podcast called *Old Ladies Know Stuff*, which I think is one of the best titles for a podcast I've ever heard. Her books are *Moms Raising Sons to Be Men*, *The Marriage Mentor*, and *Real Life Romance*. She has a brand new book out called *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons for the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*. Now, Rhonda and her husband, Steve, have four adult children, and they make their home in a beautiful location in Northern California. Rhonda Stoppe, it is so good to see you again here on the video and welcome back to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. And I know how much Doctor was important to you, Steve, and your ministry and your family. So that makes having you on the program today even more special. Thanks for being here today with us.

Rhonda Stoppe: Oh, So happy to be back with you, Roger. And yes, to be part of Family Talk and Dr. Dobson's legacy. What an important role he played in my life as a young mom and wife. And then even as my books have been published, I think I was interviewed, but with him the first time in 2013 when my *Moms Raising Sons to Be Men*, first edition came out. He was just a precious man.

Roger Marsh: He lived everything that he preached. It's so nice to be in the shadow of that legacy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. And encouragement was such

a big thing for Dr. Dobson. And Rhonda, I know it is for you too. Bringing encouragement to women, literally to live with no regrets, which has got to be more difficult for moms in particular today than ever before. As you travel, as you speak, as you host your podcast with the really cool name, what are you hearing from women who are responding to your podcast, writing to you about your book, even as you meet them as you go across the country to speak?

Rhonda Stoppe:

Mom guilt is a real thing. And I had it. I know other women had it. In fact, let's start off reading really quickly from the beginning. I did an intro to this book, "God's Calling for You as a Mom." "'I'll be a better mom tomorrow.' I whispered to myself before drifting off to sleep. But when tomorrow never came, mom guilt plagued my anguished soul. Being a fun-loving, good mom was what I hoped for. But in reality, I spent many days in survival mode snapping at my kids when they spilled their milk and worrying over how we were going to pay for their extracurricular activities." I have been in those shoes. I have 15 grandchildren. I'm watching my daughters and daughters-in-law in those shoes. Just when you think you have it figured out, your kid moves to the next stage and you don't, right?

Moms are ... I'd like to start off by saying how you celebrated your mother and what a great mom and influence she was. But I also know the mom wound that so many of us have. And Mother's Day hurts our hearts. It makes us realize whether mom's still alive or not. She may not be someone you really want to come into your home, the drama that comes with it or the addiction that you're going to be exposed to or all of those painful mom memories that some of you who are listening have. And those scrolling mom celebration posts pierced your heart. And I want you to know my heart is with you. One of the first moms I would love to talk about, if I can just jump in, is Herodias. And she was a flawed mom. Herodias was married to Herod Antipas. She was first married to Herod Phillip, and then she left Herod Phillip for Antipas, who was Phillip's brother, got all that. Who needs soap operas? Read the Bible people.

And John the Baptist challenged them and told them they were in sin. So Herod arrested John the Baptist. Well, Herodias hated him and wanted him to see him dead, but Herod did not want to kill him because he was afraid of the people. So in the story, you find this flawed mother and you find the daughter Salame dancing before Herod on his birthday. There's a celebration and when it's over, he applauds wildly and he tells her, "I will give you up to half my kingdom as a reward for that beautiful dance." So what does Salame do? "Oh, I'll have a chariot. I'll have a new castle, a pretty dress." Nope, she runs to her mama and she says, "Mom, what should I ask for?" What kind of a mother doesn't take advantage of that for her daughter and say, "Honey, ask for a 401k, ask for a new chariot, ask for investments, ask to be second in command."

No. Her mom who's been holding onto this resentment and bitterness and anger and is an opportunist whenever she can find it to pay back someone

who's wronged her, she immediately tells Salame, "Oh, you go ask for John the Baptist head on a platter."

Okay. What kind of a mother does that? So Salame, to please her mom, doesn't bat an eye, and it feels normal to go back and say, "Give me John the Baptist's head on a platter." That mom might be someone who was your mom. And I want you to know, just because you were raised by a bad mom does not plague you to have to be a bad mom. The Lord saves us and transforms us. His spirit indwells us. He puts our sins as far as East is from the West. He has Christ in us the hope of glory. And to what He has called us, He will equip us. I love Paul who says, "My adequacy comes from the Lord." I was raised by a teen mom. She wasn't an abusive mom. She was adorable. She was raised on the beaches in Southern California. She was 17. My name's Rhonda because she loved the Beach Boys. If you're from SoCal, you understand that joke.

Roger Marsh: "Help Me, Rhonda." Yes.

Rhonda Stoppe: Exactly. I loved my mom. We grew up together. We shared clothes. She was the cool mom, but I didn't have a godly mentor. And when I became a mom, my husband's mother was amazing, but she came down with Alzheimer's. So I didn't have her. And I wanted to be a good mom. And I would promise I'm going to try harder tomorrow. And the harder I tried, the more guilt I felt back to that mom guilt thing. And finally, in Scripture, Titus 2, which is why old ladies know stuff, it's a nod to the Titus 2 woman. Titus 2 calls the older women to teach the younger how to love their husbands, which means be a friend to him and how to love their children. So I looked around at the moms of the youth where my husband was in youth ministry and their kids, the ones that wanted to be with their parents, that laughed with them, they'd invited their friends to their house.

I'm like, "I want to know what those women know." And I reached out to those older women and man, God's Word is so powerful because He promises to equip us through His word, through the church and through godly mentors. So that's why I feel so strongly about the value of godly mentors.

Roger Marsh: Wow, that's incredible. And Rhonda Stoppe, the book *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons from the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful* is ... I love how real it is and how authentic it is because oftentimes we could very easily get sentimental and say, "Okay, well, who are the moms?" Well, the moms are Mary and the moms are Naomi and we find all the sweet spots. And the fact that you've got a good portion of this book that says, "Hey, wait a minute, we've got some moms here who look like the moms on Dance Moms or Real Housewives of somewhere where they're vengeful, they're spiteful and they're just awful." And yet at the same time, we're having a good chuckle about it, but you know women like that. I know women like that. I know people who've been wounded by women like that. And I think of how many young people right now, we're talking to a lot of parents who might be going through an estrangement

season with a child, an adult child or two, and you have to wonder if the estrangement isn't because they're estranged from the wounding mother, but they'll pick on somebody else because they learn those same patterns of behavior. And I know your heart for the mother-child relationship is to say, "Hey, look, if you look to Scripture, you're going to see it all."

Rhonda Stoppe: And the key to breaking free from that is forgiveness. Forgiving people, raised forgiving people. There will be a time that your children are going to have to grow up and look at how crazy you were. I had PMS and postpartum after my third child, and I remember those days. And I have asked my children for forgiveness. If they've seen you forgive, they know that's a normal part of the Christian life. I would love to say I led my mom to the Lord six months before she passed away when she was in her 70s, and that was a joyful experience. But one of the moms I talk about, even in that painful chapter, a woman where I was speaking at a woman's event, she came after I talked about forgiveness and breaking free. And I told my story; my dad was raised by an abusive alcoholic. And when my dad finally came to Christ and forgave his dad is when his dad's hold over him, he felt set free. And a woman said to me, "You don't understand. When I was 15, my mother forced me to have an abortion."

And this was in the 70s when abortions were not ... They just become legal. There were no ultrasounds. There was not a lot of information. And her mom was supposed to be a believer and she said, "I will not be shamed by a daughter who's pregnant. And you can't live here if you don't go have an abortion." So her mom dropped her off at a clinic. She had the abortion. Her mom picked her up and she told her, "In a couple of days, you're going to feel better. Just rest." And she didn't feel better. And she started to hemorrhage. And her mom took her back to the clinic. They didn't realize when they did the abortion, she had a twin and they killed the twin, but they did not remove the body of the twin.

Roger Marsh: That's dangerous.

Rhonda Stoppe: It was inside of her. Yes. So she had to go in and for surgery. Well, her mother signed approval for a full hysterectomy.

And she said, when I woke up, I realized what my mom had done and I had no opportunity to have any more children. And then about a year later, her little sister got pregnant and her mom let her sister have the baby. And then her mom made this woman, we'll call her Sue, drop out of high school to care for her little sister's baby so her sister could finish high school. So this woman's telling me the story and she says, "My sister graduated from high school. She got married. She had more children. She graduated from college. She has a career." She said, "I never graduated high school. I never got married. I never had any children. How am I supposed to forgive my mother of that?" Now that's not just something where you go, the Bible says forgive. So just forgive. That is a mental health issue that's going to take inside information. I'm just going to take outside help from godly biblical counselors.

But the reality is hatred and love both tie us to a person and they have a power over us. So learning that that person who has wronged you and righteously you have a reason to be wounded by how they treated you, they don't deserve to have power over you for the rest of your life. And so where forgiveness seems impossible, God is the God of possible and He can grant you the courage to forgive. So it's a long process, but it's worth working through if you had a flawed mom who was a Herodias in your life.

Roger Marsh:

Incredible wisdom from Rhonda Stoppe today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and Rhonda's brand new book is called *Moms of the Bible*, perfect for Mother's Day, *Life-Changing Lessons from the Fearless, the Flawed, and the Faithful*. And we have a link up at jdfi.net. One of the moms that you talk about in the fearless part, we talked a little too much about flawed for just a moment. I need a breather. I don't know about you, but I really do need a breather because the fearless part, when you talk about Jochebed and Moses' story, I think we know it anecdotally as Christians or we've read it, maybe we've even studied it. But unpack, if you will, the fact that there was a point where I think all of us, maybe not putting our child in a thatched little basket and putting them in the water, but there's a part where a mother has to release a child at some point, either because it's time for them just to grow up or maybe it's in the child's best interest. Talk about why this part of the book was so important to you.

Rhonda Stoppe:

I love Jochebed. Her story is a blip on the radar in history. That's us. We as moms are a blip on the radar in history and God used her in her moment to raise up the deliverer of Israel. Jochebed did not know when she hid that precious baby boy for three months that she was hiding Israel's redeemer. She hid him because she loved him. The Bible says that he was beautiful and she was a good mom and she loved him and she hid him at the cost of possibly her own life if she got caught. So many people say we are raising kids in the hardest, worst time in history. I believe that Jochebed would beg to differ with you. Any Egyptian could rip a three-month or younger nursing baby off of the breast of its mother and throw him in the Nile River. That's terrifying.

And to keep him quiet, awful. She had an older sister, an older daughter named Miriam, who would've watched Jochebed one day when she pulls out a basket and she starts lining it with pitch and she wraps that baby in his little Hebrew blanket and she puts baby Moses in the basket and she starts to secretly carry him down to the Nile River. Miriam follows her mom. I have a firstborn daughter. I understand they know everything and they're asking questions and they're trying to figure out what the heck you're doing, mom. And Miriam followed her mother. And did she ask or did she just ponder? We don't know. But then she would've watched her mom. And I cannot help but imagine Jochebed picking that baby up and just kissing him one more time, smelling his little head, nuzzling him and whispering sweet loving adoration to him, praying over him and then putting him in the basket, putting the lid on the basket and letting go of the basket, having no idea what God's plan was for her son.

Crocodiles in the water? Yes. Serpents? Yes. Could it tip over and he could drown? Yes. And she walked away and she left him in the care of her God.

That is a fearless faith that she knew not what God was going to do with it. And I think of Miriam who followed her baby brother's basket and saw Pharaoh's daughter and she steps up and says, "Hey, I know someone that can nurse that baby for you." And God gives Jochebed like four more months, I mean maybe four years. Historically, how long can you nurse a kid before they're like, "Okay, you're done. Give him back. He's dunking his Oreos and your milk now. You're done." And she has to give him back to this woman who worships cats. I just recently went on a homeschool field trip. I have a ton of kids, grandkids, 15 of them, and a lot of them are homeschooled in California. The schools aren't the best. And I went on a field trip with them to the Egyptian Mummy Museum.

And we went into the room that showed all the artifacts from that religion. And there's these giant in gold with a black-headed cat and all of these things. And it just washed over me anew, this is who Jochebed entrusted her son to, a woman who worshiped not the God of Israel, but this. So what would I have done in those four short years I had that baby? And they say the first four or five years of a child's life is the imprint on who they're going to become.

It's so important. So let's just take a tiny little parenthesis and say, if you got to go back to work after your baby is born, you put that baby in the care of someone who loves God and loves Jesus and will pour over them songs about Jesus and a biblical worldview. It is absolutely essential. So here's Jochebed nursing this baby, singing to him of the God of Israel, all of those Scriptures that would have been the Old Testament stories that she would have told him of the God that he would serve. And it had such an imprint on him that as a man, the Bible said he didn't want to have the comforts of Israel, I mean of Egypt. He gave it up to be with his people. Mom, you don't know what those first four years will do and the fearless faith. And I know some of you have to let go of your child to go visit a biological father who's not a believer.

Maybe they spend the weekend with a dad and an ungodly stepmother or your ex's girlfriend and they're watching movies you would never let your kids watch or they're being exposed to internet that you would never let them be exposed to. That is so hard and you cannot do anything about it. It's a court mandated thing. I hear you and I see you. You get on your knees because the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous one accomplishes much. And when those children are in your care, you live out your faith in such a way that they cannot ignore your passion for Christ. You don't badger the child about how awful their dad is. You talk about how good their God is.

Roger Marsh:

Amen. Amen. When I think of it in Jochebed's case, especially she was entrusting that someone was going to find Moses. I mean, it turned out to be Pharaoh's daughter. But the idea that she's really entrusting him to God, even though there's a whole bunch of cat worshiping and other weird things going on

in Egypt, she's trusting him to God. And we see this time and time again where God takes a godly person, one of His children, and wanders them through an Egyptian type of season, if you will, whether it's Joseph or Moses or however, and what that does to a family and what that does to the faith, but knowing that they have that biblical foundation, Rhonda Stoppe. This is so very, very vitally important. And for those, I think moms today are facing... having three daughters who are married moms and responsible for all of our grandchildren and watching the struggles that they face.

They're all in their early to mid-thirties. They've got kids who are eight and under, because that's five of the six and the sixth granddaughter is in ... She's in Michigan right now. She may as well be in outer space because she's in high school. And so we never know which Riley we're going to get, right? But that's okay. She's a sweetheart. But I see how much it takes out of moms to make the decisions that they do and to work through, okay, I'm feeling this way. I'm experiencing this type of stuff. And Rhonda, I just really commend you for the book that you've written here, *Moms of the Bible*, because you don't pull any punches, you don't cut any corners, but the fact that you're showing it real life and oh, by the way, all of these mom's stories are in scripture. It's got to be somewhat ... Well, what's it like for you, pastor's wife, mom, grandma, who looks at this situation and says, "I know that moms are going through a lot of challenges right now, but Scripture already spoken to these situations." Not that they," I think we can make this apply." I mean, they've already been through this before. It seems too bad and good to be true.

Rhonda Stoppe:

Well, and honestly, that's what I gained from the mentors, the older women that spoke into my life. They invited me to a Bible study. I'm like, "You guys, I don't have time to do another Bible study. I went to Bible schools. I know those verses by heart. I just need to be a better mom. I just need to be a better wife." And they kind of laughed at me. I went to their Bible study. It was a precept study. And honestly, I was the only 20-something in the room. Everybody else was middle-aged or older, and I was thinking, "Oh, it's going to be so boring." Man, it was so real. These women, as they studied Scripture, they shared honestly what they were being convicted of. They shared the regrets that they had from past mistakes and how God had redeemed their mistakes. And I always say, you can write a letter to your younger self, but it does no one any good.

But if I write these books and I get it into the hands of the next generation ... By the way, this book is great for grandparents and grandparents raising their grandkids too. I have lots of friends that are doing that. My heart is with you. But if I can put this book and mentor them through the pages, I feel like ... I handed it to my granddaughter, Eliza. She's nine years old. And I said, "Liza Joy, this book Nana just wrote, it's for you." I'm going to cry. And I have, of all our 15 grandkids, only four of them are boys. The rest are all women. And I'm like, "You guys, when Nana's dead and gone, this book can mentor you to be the mom that you long to be because this book helped me and I know it." And Eliza's like,

"Nanny, you're going to die?" I'm like, "I'm going to go to be with Jesus one day." Everybody gets a turn on the planet.

And then when we leave, I want to leave this for you. This book is written so it will be timeless. If you look up moms of the Bible book title, you just will find maybe a self-published one. I went to Harvest House, who is my publisher. I love them because they always publish sound doctrine. And I said, actually, my *Moms Raising Sons to Be Men* is written in three sections. The first section is "Moms of the Bible" and so many people wanted to know more. So I went to Harvest House and said, "We got to write this book." And they were on board. I'm so grateful. But yeah, I want 20, 50, 60 years from now that this book is still mentoring women. It's timeless because Scripture is timeless and transforms us.

Roger Marsh: I love it. I love it. Rhonda Stoppe, the book is called *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons for the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*. We have a link for the book up at jdfi.net. It's a perfect resource gift for Mother's Day. I highly recommend it and I know doctor would highly recommend it too. We're not even halfway through this book and we're out of time. Rhonda, could you join us again next time and we can continue this conversation?

Rhonda Stoppe: Absolutely. I would love to.

Roger Marsh: Well, you're listening to Family Talk and part one of my conversation with Rhonda Stoppe about her brand new book called *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons From the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*. With Mother's Day coming up this Sunday, I know you know someone who would appreciate having a book like this. And if you'd like to hear the program again and learn more about how you can get a copy of the book, go to jdfi.net. Well, the National Day of Prayer is just around the corner. And here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, this day is deeply personal. For 25 years, Shirley Dobson devoted her life to leading the National Day of Prayer Task Force, and we want to help you carry that torch on into the future. Visit jdfi.net today to find a special booklet and video resources that will equip you to pray with purpose this coming Thursday.

You'll find all of those National Day of Prayer materials at jdfi.net. Well, Dr. Dobson understood just how hard the job of parenting really is. He spent his entire life equipping moms, as well as us dads, to raise godly kids in an ungodly world, and that mission didn't end with him. It continues every single day through programs like the one you just heard and through the faithful support of listeners just like you. We invite you to partner with us in carrying this legacy forward. You can speak with a member of our constituent care team about how to do just that when you call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. If you prefer, you can send your request and donation through the U.S. Postal Service. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949, or you can make that donation online through our secure website at jdfi.net.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of 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 when I'll continue my encouraging conversation with author Rhonda Stoppe. We'll be discussing her brand-new book, *Moms in the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons From the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*. That's coming your way right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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

Dr. James Dobson: No one works harder than a mother who stays home to care for multiple preschool children.

Roger Marsh: Here's today's Dr. Dobson Minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Not only does she have many noisy responsibilities from morning tonight, but she experiences an unusual kind of emotional stress as well. Youngsters between two and five years of age have an uncanny ability to unravel an adult nervous system with their constant talk and their endless questions. Furthermore, they're a perpetual danger to themselves and one another throughout the day. Even if mom begins her morning with guarded optimism, by 4:00 PM, the pressures often reduce her to a lump of putty. Is there anything the husband can do to make things easier? Well, I suggest he start with a little understanding. The frustrations of the day are much more manageable if their husbands take time to comprehend them.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit drdobsonminute.org.