



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Raising Men of Honor – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Dr. Robert Lewis

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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 back to Family Talk, I'm Roger Marsh. And if you are the parent of a son, you are going to want to hear this powerful conversation on today's edition of Family Talk. Dr. James Dobson continues his discussion with his guest, Dr. Robert Lewis, focusing on the theme of Raising Men of Honor. These are concepts that you'll find in Dr. Lewis's landmark book called Raising a Modern Day Knight. For over 40 years, Dr. Robert Lewis has been a pastor, an author, and a speaker. Currently, he is the senior advisor for leadership network. He's also the founder of the Men's Fraternity, a ministry that provides a year-long bible study to encourage men to live Christ-like lives. Dr. Lewis earned his master's degree in Greek and another master's in Divinity from Western Seminary, and also holds a doctorate of ministry from Talbot Theological Seminary.

On yesterday's broadcast, Dr. Lewis shared how his alcoholic father was emotionally distant and really not a very good role model for him. Fortunately, by God's grace, Dr. Robert Lewis came out of that situation and has since developed a passion to see men become God-led fathers. On today's broadcast, he'll share with Dr. Dobson the need for men to actively cheer each other on in fatherhood, as they journey through these days together. And now, here is the conclusion of our conversation of Dr. James Dobson's interview with Dr. Robert Lewis right here on Family Talk.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Dr. Lewis, I'm really glad you have agreed to join us again today. I've said it many times that if husbands and fathers understand their role and if they're willing to follow a biblical model for their children, the nation will survive, in my view. But if they don't, I'm not sure, in the long run, that it will. Is it that significant and important in your understanding? Do you agree with that statement?

**Dr. Robert Lewis:** I totally agree. I think men are the first cause of everything, like it or not. And if they're the first cause for good, great things follow. If they're the first cause for evil, then only evil will follow. And I'm like you Dr. Dobson, I worry that young

males today are falling behind. They're losing their masculine will, their masculine vision, a sense of calling. And so they fall back into the foolish things of boyhood even as they grow into full-grown men.

Dr. James Dobson: Look at the role models that are out there for them. Look at many NBA players, many NFL players, look at the sitcom actors and the roles that they play. You'd never know that there are these principles that a man should follow and should be.

Dr. Robert Lewis: That's exactly right. The idea of a noble quest, a man of courage and action, you just don't see that. In fact, I think my wife sometimes gets a little frustrated with me reacting to commercials on television where the man-

Dr. James Dobson: Is a fool.

Dr. Robert Lewis: He's a doofus, a fool, he's passive, and the woman is having to do everything for him.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, that just drives me crazy watching the commercials on television because there is this stupid guy, he's in every commercial. He looks nerdy, he sounds nerdy, and he does stupid things while the women have it together and they often just sneer at how dumb he is. Just watch that, you give boys, especially, a steady diet of that kind of stupidity, and they will start to emulate it.

Dr. Robert Lewis: It scripts their lives. It scripts their lives to become that. And I think when we look at the world in which we're in today, we're seeing a world where women, because of a lot of the vision that had been painted for them to excel, they are excelling, especially in the professional fields. And then you look at men, and the New York Times reported, that males in college or where they were 30 years ago, they've fallen so far behind their female counterparts that today in America, 33% more women will graduate from college than men. Now, what does that say? It says that men have lost any kind of quest to be great at something, and that is going to pay huge, unfortunately, negative dividends to the culture that follows.

Dr. James Dobson: Robert, you have made a major emphasis in your ministry on Bible studies for men and men's support groups. What have you heard from them that led you to generalize and say, "Many men don't know what it means to be a man."? Are there stories that you've been told?

Dr. Robert Lewis: Yeah, actually, it was a group of men who initially started this whole thing taking me to lunch, who were in my church, and they said, "We need something where men can get together and talk about their lives." They were all guys moving into their thirties where they felt like they knew everybody but no one knew them. And there was stuff happening beneath the surface of their lives that they couldn't fully explain and they just needed to talk about. And so that's where we

began to meet as group of men and began to study the Scriptures and talk in what I call a safe place about our lives.

And out of that, came this eruption of loneliness where they couldn't talk about their failures, their incompetence at home, where they couldn't ask, "What should I do as a dad to raise my son?" They were fearful of asking that question because they assumed everybody else knew the answer. There were wounds from their childhood they couldn't process, especially wounds with dad. And when you would talk about that in an audience about did your dad ever say he was proud of you? You could look at the audience in a good 50 to 60% of the audience would start tearing up.

These men would suddenly start getting in touch with this pain that they didn't know how to process. And so that's what led me to keep going. I'm in the right stream, keep pressing forward even though I was discovering as I went. But I was pressing in the right stream. And as we continued to learn and develop materials and discussions, guys started coming alive and began to be different men, and the people who reported that most were the wives.

Dr. James Dobson: That was the basic idea behind Promise Keepers, in the beginning, wasn't it?

Dr. Robert Lewis: Right, it was.

Dr. James Dobson: There is that widespread need to have community. You talk, in your book, about community.

Dr. Robert Lewis: It's huge.

Dr. James Dobson: About giving community to your boys. Explain that.

Dr. Robert Lewis: Well, manhood is made in a community of men cheering for one another in common directions and with common vision and being given good practical application that get results. And that's what we try to do as a church community. That's the materials I've tried to develop, is getting men together on a regular basis to process life together. Because when they do, they actually call themselves much higher than you would ever expect them to get. What I tell guys, and it kind of catches them, I tell them that they need male cheerleaders. And they kind of pull back for a moment, "What do you mean male cheerleaders?"

And I say, "When we were young growing up, our parents cheered for us. They'd say, 'Come on, you can do it. You can do it.' Then when we got into high school, it was a coach or a teacher, maybe it was in the workplace, our first boss, but somewhere for the noble things of life, about the time of your mid-twenties, no one cheers for the noble things of life." And what I mean by that is that when you're on that business trip in Ohio, you didn't watch the pornographic movie. Who do you come back to and tell that too and they cheer for you? And the

answer is, no one. And then I tell the guys this, "Men always go where the cheers are." So if we start cheering for one another on the noble things, we'll go there.

And I never will forget. I shared, one time, in our men's study about writing my wife a poem on our 25th wedding anniversary and getting down on my knees, and I'm not a poet, and getting down on my knees and reading that to her and how that poem went from that moment to on the wall of our home. And after I shared that story, this construction worker came down afterwards and he said to me, "Think I could write my wife one of them poems?" And I said, "Well, what are you going to do?" He said, "It's our 25th and I'm taking her on a cruise." I said, "Why don't you take her out on the deck at night, get down on your knees and read her that poem?" He said, "I don't think I could write a poem." I said, "Yes, you can." I started cheering for him. About a month later I saw him, he came up to me and he said, "Wrote my wife that poem." I said, "How did it go?" He said, "You wouldn't believe it."

And then we gave high-fives and bump chests and I gave him a big ol' hug. And as I was doing that, I said, "This is what men lack, male cheerleaders to pursue the noble things of life."

Dr. James Dobson: Let's go into greater depth with regard to what you tell an adolescent boy about how to relate to a woman, how a woman is different, what she needs from her husband if they are married, and how to understand the differences between the two. How did you approach that?

Dr. Robert Lewis: Well, the way I approached it first, when my son was moving into his teenage years, is to take teachable moments in regards to what I was doing with my own wife, because I think he loves mom as much as I love mom. So it's a good way to share that. So for instance, if we walked up to a door and I would say, "Garrett, grab the door." And he would look at me, and I'd say, "Let me tell you, a man always initiates and honors a woman." So that could teach him that.

Or when it was on her birthday or it was Mother's Day, rather than just going and buying a card, I told my son, "Garrett, a woman loves words. She loves words, especially affirming words. And your mom in particular really loves to be affirmed with words." And rather than just buying a card, we would sit down and I would have him write out what mom meant to him. And the whole time I would explain to him as he was doing that, "One day you're going to marry a woman and what she needs to hear from you are affirming words, especially that you love her, that she's secure with you." And so it was things like that, those teachable moments.

And then as they moved forward in his life and got a little older in his later teenage years, we actually took him through a manhood study where we explained to him, as well as some other sons that were in our study, what the top four needs of a woman were in my estimation, starting with security, then significance, those kinds of things. And it just explained to him and then talked

about how a man initiates with a woman, protects a woman, that a real man is a life-giving spirit, not a life-absorbing spirit. And we turn to 1 Corinthians 15, it says, see right there, it compares two atoms. The first Adam, it says, the first original Adam was just a living soul because he sacrificed his masculinity. But do you see what it said about the second Adam? He was a life-giving spirit. That meant, everywhere he went, especially with women, he was giving life to them, not taking their life.

And I told him, I said, "Mason or Garrett," I said, "Notice the men around you. They're always taking a woman's life, using it, but not a real man." Those kind of moments teach a son how to engage a woman.

Dr. James Dobson: You and I were tracking the same information from the same source because I talked, in *Bringing Up Boys*, about four responsibilities, biblical responsibilities, that a man has to a woman. The first is to protect and defend. I mean, you should give your life for her, if required.

Dr. Robert Lewis: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: The second is to provide for her. I mean, maybe she is working outside the home, she's earning money, but the responsibility is yours and don't forget it.

Dr. Robert Lewis: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: You're the one-

Dr. Robert Lewis: Always give her that freedom to do what she needs to do. I always tell my boys, "She can work, but she needs to have the freedom to stay at home when she needs to and if she wants to."

Dr. James Dobson: But it's his responsibility.

Dr. Robert Lewis: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: The third is to provide leadership for the family. And the fourth is to take initiative in the spiritual dimension.

Dr. Robert Lewis: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: When I was speaking just many times a year before I learned better, after I would speak, it was very, very common for women to come up to me with tears in their eyes and say, "The greatest frustration in my marriage is my husband will not take spiritual leadership. And he's left it up to me." You hear that?

Dr. Robert Lewis: I hear it all the time. I hear it all the... But one of the things I love is if you can paint masculinity in a way that helps a man see that spiritual initiative is part of becoming a real man. I found that it unlocks the energy of a man to then want

to take that initiative to be a spiritual leader. It's just spiritual leader always sounded like, to a lot of men, like it was hung out in thin air and it's just what the super spiritual person did. But when it gets attached to his masculinity, that pride of wanting to be a man really encourages him to start praying with his children and taking initiative with his wife, spiritually, with the Scripture and those kinds of thing. And I love seeing that, but it's attached to a vision of masculinity.

Dr. James Dobson: At this stage of my life. I have been blessed in many ways with what some people would call success, through this ministry, through writing, through a number of different things. You know what I am most pleased about in my life? It is that I have taken care of my family. My family, not just everybody else's. I have protected my wife. I have provided for her. I have provided leadership for our family, and I've provided spiritual leadership for the family. I haven't done it perfectly. I wish I could do some of it over.

Dr. Robert Lewis: Sure, we all wish that.

Dr. James Dobson: But I have devoted myself to that purpose. There's a sense of masculine identity and meaning that comes out of doing that job right.

Dr. Robert Lewis: It does. There's no greater satisfaction. In fact, I thought about two Christmases ago, we had all our kids in town and our grandkids and our son-in-Law, and our daughter-in-Law, and they were all over at the house and it was present opening time. And instead, I just stopped for a moment, read from Psalm 16. I said, "Before we open presents, let's just go around and share what God has done in your life." And I think it was the greatest moment of my life because it took two hours for us to get around the room with tears and sharing about life change in Jesus Christ, coming out of the lips of my kids, with no pressure. And you could just feel the spiritual passion. And I thought, this is one of the greatest moments a man could ever have.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you tell your boys, "If you take a girl out on a date, you don't even think of expecting her to pay for it?"

Dr. Robert Lewis: No.

Dr. James Dobson: "You have the money or you don't go."

Dr. Robert Lewis: That's exactly right. In fact, I think one of the hardest things was telling my daughters that you don't call boys, they only call you. And then to watch them to sit at home.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's totally turned upside down today.

Dr. Robert Lewis: Oh, that's totally turned upside down. But I watched them suffer, waiting. And I realized even again, we've got this generation of young men who are so passive that I think is wreaking havoc on that male population.

Dr. James Dobson: Last weekend I took Shirley on a date and I had it all planned, and I took her to a symphony, and we went out to a nice dinner before and then to this wonderful concert. And she absolutely loved it. I didn't say, "What do you want to do on Saturday night?" I had it planned. And when we were dating, I never called her to say, "You got any ideas for what we can do?" That's my responsibility. Do you see it that way? Do you talk to your boys-

Dr. Robert Lewis: Not only do I see it that way, I constantly exhort men that when they do that, they inflame in the most positive way, the souls of their wives and of their dates.

Dr. James Dobson: Robert, last time also, we talked about your father. The fact that he was an alcoholic, that he never said that he loved you in the childhood years, and that he was not a good role model for you. And there was that soul hunger, that male emotional need that you talked about. But near the end of the book, you talked about the end of that story with your dad. You've got to share it here at the closing moments of this program.

Dr. Robert Lewis: Well, the thing that was so amazing is that I prayed and prayed for my dad for years. In fact, one time I met him at breakfast real early in the morning, tried to share the gospel. He wasn't interested. And there came a moment where my dad, in a drunken kind of stupor, hit my mom, accidentally. He didn't know even hit her. But hit her, and she fell back on a table as he was walking out of the house and it fractured her neck. It was a very serious injury. My dad didn't know he had done it. He went out and the night out somewhere, my mom had to be taken to a hospital where for the next six weeks she had pins in her skull and traction. And the result of that was that the police found my dad and told him that that had happened. He immediately had a heart attack. Because again, this was-

Dr. James Dobson: He didn't want to be that kind of man.

Dr. Robert Lewis: No, this is a man, like a lot of men, locked up inside himself wanting to get out, but with no key. That's the way I've always seen my dad. And I think his heart showed that he did love my mom and just the expression of the heart attack. But I remember I came in that evening to see him in the hospital, and a friend of mine was his cardiologist and was worried about whether he would live. And I went in and talked to my dad, and when my dad came kind of to consciousness, he told me that he deserved to go to Hell. That's the first time I'd ever heard my dad even say something religious. And I've never said this to a person. I said, "Yeah, you do. But you don't have to." And it gave me the opportunity of sharing the gospel with my dad who prayed to receive Christ. But in the midst of that, which was both a celebration, as he kind of went in and out of

consciousness, he suddenly thought I was the physician and began to talk about his son, who he was so proud of.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, my.

Dr. Robert Lewis: And it was like on one evening I got the double blessing. I got the blessing of hearing my dad say to me that he was proud of me, but I also got the opportunity as a son to introduce my dad to Jesus Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: You went in and hugged him every day.

Dr. Robert Lewis: Oh, I did. Oh, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And it's never too late, is it?

Dr. Robert Lewis: It's never too late, because a son will always want to reconnect with his dad.

Dr. James Dobson: There's a vacuum inside.

Dr. Robert Lewis: It is, God meant it to be that way. The glory of sons is their father's, and that will be true for a man to his dying day.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we're talking today to men who think it's too late. Some of them are 40 years of age or 30, and they think it's too late. But it's not.

Dr. Robert Lewis: It's never too late.

Dr. James Dobson: You can still establish a relationship.

Dr. Robert Lewis: It might require for you, as a dad, even hearing this broadcast with your own dad, to just go and reach out to him. It may mean if you're a dad with a son with a broken relationship, you may need to go confess to him and just simply tell that son, "I'm sorry, I missed it with you."

Dr. James Dobson: Well, what if that man we're talking to, has done some pretty wretched things in life? In the case of your dad, he'd been an alcoholic and broke his wife's neck, accidentally. There are worse things that somebody can do. Some are guilty of murder. God couldn't forgive them, could He?

Dr. Robert Lewis: Oh, yeah. And you've seen the wonder of that. In fact, I remember one dad coming up to me who was talking about how bitter his two sons were towards him because when they were teenagers, he had left their mother, and he had, for years, thrown money at them, tried to spend time with them and to buy off their love with everything other than an apology. And I said, "Well, how's that working for you?" And he said, "We just can't connect." And I said, "Well, let me ask you a question now that you're a believer in Jesus Christ, do you think it was wrong for you to leave your wife?" And he said, "Yes." And I said, "Why don't



you go tell your sons that what you did was wrong and ask their forgiveness?" He said, "I couldn't do that." I said, "Why not?"

And he thought for a moment, and he said, "Well, maybe I could." He said, "Do you think that would work?" I said, "Well, let's try it." So he went and he did. He went to his sons and said, "I have tried everything and it hadn't worked, and I love you boys, but I am sorry. It was wrong for me to divorce your mom." And in that moment, there was a deep reconnection because those boys had been boys in waiting to reconnect with their dad. But they're not going to do it inauthentically. They're only going to do it when there's true authenticity.

Roger Marsh:

I know there are many dads who are listening to this program right now and feeling like you failed your kids. If that is your story right now today, I encourage you to use this time to redeem that relationship and start to fix the problems that may have occurred when you were raising your kids. If you received some helpful information from today's edition of Family Talk and the conversation over the past couple of days featuring Dr. James Dobson and his guest Dr. Robert Lewis, you want to visit our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk), if you're not there already. You can learn more about Dr. Robert Lewis, his classic book, *Raising a Modern Day Knight*, and what he's doing for ministries for men and dads today. Simply visit the broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk), and be sure to feel free to also share today's and yesterday's broadcasts with a friend or family member.

Now, as we conclude today's broadcast and our broadcast week, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who signed up and attended the special live screening that we held for the new documentary based on Eric Metaxas' book called *Letter to the American Church*. If you'd like to share with us your feedback about that event, please don't hesitate to reach out. Let us know if you enjoyed it, and let us know if you'd like to experience other events like this from the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. You can reach out to us on our website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) or give us a call at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732 -6825. Of course, our long-form conversation with Eric Metaxas is available on our website as well.

It's part of our special Countdown to Decision 2024 Initiative. Your vote does matter and you want to be sure to check out the voter resources that we have for you, like Eric Metaxas' interview, when you go to [drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024](http://drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024). You can sign up to receive your free voter guide. You can also watch the free Countdown to Decision 2024 podcasts on all the hot button election issues. New episodes are published weekly leading up to election day, and they feature interviews from guests like Eric Metaxas, Kirk Cameron, Jack Hibbs, Pastor Samuel Rodriguez, and more. Now, new episodes are coming up each and every week, and to watch, all you have to do is go to our website at [drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024](http://drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024). That's [drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024](http://drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024).

Finally, before we leave the air for today, a reminder that Family Talk is a listener-supported broadcast outreach. We truly appreciate your prayers, also your comments, your questions, and your faithful financial support. We want to help encourage and guide you on your journey to become closer with the Lord and also to be a better parent and spouse. Without your faithful financial support, we would not be able to bring you the daily programs that you hear on terrestrial radio and podcast platforms all over the world that really help bring God's word to the public square.

It's more critical now than ever before, especially this time of year. So please go online to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). You can make a financial contribution securely online. You can also give a gift over the phone at 877-732-6825 or send your gift 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. Well, I'm Roger Marsh, have a blessed weekend, and be sure to join us again Monday for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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