



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: What Has Feminism Done for You Lately? – Part 2

Guest(s): Diane Passno

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- Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Today we're continuing Dr. James Dobson's classic interview with the late Diane Passno about her book called *Feminism: Mystique or Mistake?* Diane passed away earlier this year, this past April at the age of 79. Prior to that, she met Dr. Dobson when she served as focus on the family's first female vice president for over 27 years. Now, in part one of their conversation, Diane shared her own journey from embracing feminism as a student at UCLA in the 1960s to questioning its core assumptions. She explained how what began as a Christian movement advocating for basic women's rights had transformed into something very different, something that often dismisses the value of motherhood and marriage while promoting an agenda that can often leave women feeling confused and unfulfilled. Today we're going to hear the rest of this important conversation, but first, let's listen in now as Dr. Dobson sets the stage for today's discussion.
- Dr. James Dobson: We're going to hear the second half of an interview that is controversial and that other programs might not be willing to talk about or deal with. This one focuses on the subject of the women's movement and a book that was written by Diane Passno called *Feminism: Mystique or Mistake?* And in that book and on this program, she shared her view of the modern feminist movement in a very critical way and how it has really failed women. Truth is unity and when you get it right, there will not be a contradiction within it because it all comes from the creator Himself. And I think there are principles in the Scriptures that we need to look at before we swallow all of the ideas and concepts that came along in the late sixties and seventies and are still very much with us today having to do with the roles of women and how they should see themselves.
- Roger Marsh: Those insights from Dr. Dobson set the stage perfectly for what we're about to hear today here on Family Talk. Now, what makes this program especially powerful is that during the original recording, the audience contained a large group of college age students. Today we're going to hear many of the thoughtful questions that they had for Diane, questions that reveal the real struggles young women face as they navigate cultural pressures and seek God's will for their lives. So let's kick off this important discussion with a question from the audience.

Speaker 3: What responsibility is there for Christian scholars, women to step into the academia and just try to have an influence that counters the feminist ideology and philosophy that's dominating our society?

Dr. James Dobson: Good question.

Diane Passno: It's a wonderful question. I think it's very scary first of all because it's a David and Goliath situation because you will be in the minority and you need to understand that. I think my first bit of advice to you would be so it's not so scary, is to get involved in a Christian organization like Campus Navigators, Campus Crusade, YoungLife so that you're not David and Goliath. You're several Davids against Goliath because if you can mobilize women who are like-minded to confront the Women's Studies department in a university and say, you are one-sided, you giving me one side of this issue. Your teaching is not open-minded. It doesn't consider my worldview and my advice to you is just to get together with some of your Christian friends and go in force. You'll need comrades.

Dr. James Dobson: Getting to the heart of her concern is that there should be hopefully women on those university campuses that share the worldview of some of the students. I know when I first went to the University of Southern California, I was registering as a graduate student and scared half to death. There were 30,000 students around me. I didn't know what I was going to be expected to do. I didn't know what contradictions to my faith would occur and you always wonder if you can make it in that environment. And that very night, a professor who was just a few years older than I am but had gone on and gotten his Ph.D. was on the faculty there at USC in my field and he recognized me and came up and said hello to me and said, "Come on up to my office." And here's a guy who believed exactly what I believed, who essentially put his arm around me and said, "God's put you here and we'll work on this thing together." Boy, you talk about an oasis in the midst of a desert. That's what it was for me. And so to have these godly professors, even though they're in the minority there to assist and give encouragement to students who are trying to make it there is a wonderful thing, isn't it?

Are you thinking about being such a woman?

Speaker 3: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you really?

Speaker 3: I was considering psychiatry actually as a career, but I think that's as a trying to avoid, I don't know, just the vulnerability of being a mother. I mean I say vulnerable because I feel like it's such a lower position, a lower place in society.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you believe that?

Speaker 3: No, I don't, but it's hard when you're not supported. Here I feel supported to say that I want to be a mom and have kids, but I feel so demeaned if I'm with other people that are challenging me with all these other ideas and philosophies.

Dr. James Dobson: And you know what's happening over and over now is that young women hear this message and they either postpone or decide not to have babies, and then at 33 and 34 and 35, they start to panic and they realize they've missed an opportunity and it's getting very late. And there are many childless women today who would love to hold a baby and they were sold a lie I think in the early days, and I resent the lies that are being told to the young women that are out there because in 20 years they will regret it. Many of them will regret it and it'll be too late.

Diane Passno: I resent the lies that are fed to the young men as well because we have a generation of men who don't know what it means to make a commitment, who don't know what it means to protect a family, who don't know what it means to cherish a woman and remain pure until marriage. The feminist movement has distorted so many things that were precious and that the Lord said in Scripture were precious.

Dr. James Dobson: Next question.

Speaker 5: My question is what can men in today's society do to reestablish the roles of men and women in society as they were intended by God?

Diane Passno: I think the best person in the world to answer that question is James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, God will give you the opportunities to defend the things that you believe and you have to be ready to give an answer. You have to know what you believe. You have to have thought it out properly and it has to be consistent with Scripture and then grab the opportunities the Lord gives you. You're not going to change the whole world. I've been guilty of trying to do that on occasion. You can't change the whole world, but you can sure change your little corner of it and be useful to the Lord and if no one responds, you've still done what He asked you to do. I think if you keep your eyes and ears open, you'll have an opportunity to do that. I just wish that more Christians saw that as their responsibility to defend the things they believed. Diane, to get intimidated by that same politically correct notion and keep it to themselves because they don't want to get hurt and embarrassed and ostracized Who's next? Okay.

Speaker 6: What is your advice to young women like myself who I'm not ready to be a mom and a wife and I have aspirations and I do have longings and hopes and desires to do things, and is there a balance for that future or your advice to me now as all of us just as singles and who are built with passions to serve the Lord and to do different things?

Dr. James Dobson: Good question.

Diane Passno: Yes, it's wonderful you have opportunities that women of my era never had, and so I can totally understand when you say I'm really not ready for marriage. I don't even have a boyfriend and actually I'm really looking forward to taking my education and having a great career. My caution to you would be this: career isn't everything and always use discernment in your professional life. Are you doing what you're doing because you're getting plotis from your parents, from people you went to college with? Are you climbing up the corporate ladder because it's what you've been told is important? Just remember to submit yourself daily to the Lord and He will guide you to where He wants you to be because serving Him is all that really matters really when you get right down to it.

Dr. James Dobson: Diane, until that relationship comes along, the person that you love, the person you want to marry and have children with and maybe be a full-time homemaker or not. Until that occurs, you would support her desire to press toward a career that uses these talents and skills that she's learned in school and let the Lord lead. Wouldn't you?

Diane Passno: Let the Lord lead.

Dr. James Dobson: He says He will be a lamp unto your pet. What that means to me is that He never reveals the horizon to us. There's not a big headlight on your hat like a miner would have that shows far out into the future. He shows you one step at a time. That's all you see. He's a lamp onto your path and you walk in the light that you have. Right now, there's no man in her life and she has this desire inside to use her life productively. You would I'm sure suggest that she press ahead.

Diane Passno: You have gifts that are unique to you and if you give them to the Lord, He's going to make you shine like the noonday sun in whatever you choose to do. I would never ever have anticipated being where I am today at your age. At your age, I was going to have marry my husband, have adorable babies and maybe teach when they were raised. I never anticipated a career, but the Lord does surprising things when you submit to Him. He orchestrates your days, but it's an act of submission and you have to get yourself out of the way and let Him work.

Dr. James Dobson: Next question.

Speaker 7: I would have to admit, even when the ladies are introducing themselves to our class, we always say what our career goals are and it's almost intimidating to say, well, when I grew up, I want to be a wife and a mom. And so it's almost like we've killed our hearts. If we do have that desire, we're scared to say that. But you had mentioned that it has infiltrated the church, so my question is how can the church bring back the heart to women or what's the church's role in this?

Diane Passno: That's a difficult question because of a dynamic in the church. There's this incredible tension between moms who stay at home and raise their children and

moms who work and pursue a career. So when you ask what the church's role is, that's a difficult question because you do have that subtle battle going on within the church and you're not going to get a consistent response.

Dr. James Dobson: A lot of passion on both sides.

Diane Passno: Exactly, and that's a hard question. Do you have anything you can add, Dr. Dobson?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you're right, Diane. It is controversial and if we bring homemakers in here to the studio and we talk about what their lives are like and we try to support them, we'll get an avalanche of mail from angry women who are angry at the women who are staying home and pointing a finger at them. On the other hand, if we bring the working women into the studio and we've done that, then we get beat up from the other side. It is amazing what tension there is throughout society and the church is really a product of the culture at large. What that means for women this age right here is they're going to hear about everything in the church and you have to decide what God's saying to you.

Diane Passno: You're going to hear about everything and what Dr. Dobson said is precisely true. You have to hear what God is saying to you because to say that all women in a congregation should stay home with children negates the ability of the Lord to orchestrate the lives of his people. There might be women in that congregation who He wants in the workplace for very viable reasons to further His kingdom on earth. And so you cannot put people in boxes and...

Dr. James Dobson: We've got to be respectful to each other.

Diane Passno: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: Whatever the decision is made, don't we? I mean, we've got it fixed so that everybody loses. The working woman feels guilty because she's not home taking care of her kids, and the woman who's home taking care of kids feels like she's wasting her life. Everybody loses everybody and God didn't intend that. Next question.

Speaker 8: I understand that your book addresses post-abortion stress, and how you think that is going to affect the abortion issue?

Diane Passno: I think that is the deepest darkest secret of the feminist movement that women are suffering after having an abortion. They keep it a secret. I think Christians keep it a secret too.

Dr. James Dobson: But they write to us, don't they Diane?

Diane Passno: They write to us and Christians who work in crisis pregnancy centers who are running post-abortion trauma classes are seeing women now who had abortions

back in the seventies when it was first made legal, and they are still suffering the after effects emotionally from that experience. But it's a secret. No one wants to talk about it because to talk about it means that feminists were wrong about it and their love affair with abortion is so important to them. They'll protect it at all costs, including that lie. They will lie to women to protect it.

Dr. James Dobson: And Diane, I really believe that many pastors won't talk about abortion, not because they're afraid to deal with the legal and moral implications of it, but because they know they're women throughout their congregations who have had abortions, who have been hurt by them and they don't want to hurt 'em more, and so they don't raise the issue.

Diane Passno: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: But it's better to turn a little light on. Sunshine is a marvelous healer and it's better to take that to the Lord and cleanse it and let Him have it. I think it's a mistake not to tell people that. Next question.

Speaker 9: My concern is similar to Katie's in that I have a strong desire right now to pursue a career and to pursue higher education, and my question is I wondered if you had any practical advice for a woman, a Christian woman in the workplace on how to actively and even confidently pursue a career without falling into the trap of the feminist mentality or to even be associated with that because it can be so destructive.

Diane Passno: I think the most miserable women who I've ever worked with are those who accept what feminists say is important in the workplace and make that what's important to them. And I'll give you an example. There are young women who come to work and their measure of success is how quickly they can climb the corporate ladder and how quickly they can get into supervisor and managerial positions because that to them is success and that is not success as measured by the Lord. The Lord might have you in a position, for example as a writer or an artist or some other thing that is exactly perfect for your skillset, exactly where He wants you to be, and if you were to change positions and follow that dictate that you need to be climbing and you always need to be doing something different and aggressively pursuing the next step, you might be negating His plan for your life altogether. So just remember, it's not important. What you've been told is important that to succeed, get more money, climb up the ladder, have a title. That is not important.

Dr. James Dobson: And Diane, you of all people say that with the understanding that you began at probably the lowest position here or one of them and did climb the corporate ladder and did rise in salary and did rise in supervisory responsibility and did get a title, but I have the feeling that that never was primary to you. I've never sensed that you were hammering for that.

Diane Passno: Never mattered to me. Every time a job change was brought to my attention, I fought it as a matter of fact. I didn't want to change because it was not a comfort zone.

Dr. James Dobson: I want to say something to the women who are here that I think is really important to understand. The longer you live, the faster life goes, and looking back on it, you realize how very, very brief a particular period of your life was. When you're your age and you're looking forward, it looks like 10, 15, 20 years is a long, long time. It is the blink of an eye and you can devote yourselves to children to raising those kids and giving them the best that you have. It's a short window of your life and you've still got by normal actuarials; how long you're expected to live. You've got a longer period of time to use the skills that you have and to develop those professional responsibilities. There's a lot left. You don't have to choose between children and a career, but you usually have to take the children first because the window closes on that one very, very quickly. You understand what I'm saying? And maybe that's what you're trying to say in this book.

Diane Passno: Well, there are many older feminists who are now looking back at their lives and questioning what they indoctrinated this generation with and they're questioning it and they're going, maybe I didn't have all the answers, and unfortunately so many of them will never look to Christianity for the answers.

Dr. James Dobson: And their children are even more confused because they've gotten mixed messages and the passion with which the early feminist started is now kind of diminished with time in the present generation. Maybe that's why you call your book *Feminism: Mystique or Mistake?*

Diane Passno: The great title.

Dr. James Dobson: The subtitle says, *Rediscovering God's Liberating Plan for Women*. I know it was difficult for you to do this.

Diane Passno: It was difficult, but I don't think people realize how well read you are on the issue of feminism. They think that feminists, women know women's issues, but Dr. Dobson has accumulated maybe more files than I have on the subject. You can talk about it just as well.

Dr. James Dobson: I wrote my third book on that subject, *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women*, which was really coming right out of the feminist movement. It was 1974 when I wrote it, and we were right in the thick of that philosophy and I saw that it was flawed then, and that's what I was writing about way back then. You've come along and updated it and thanks Diane for being with us. Thank you ladies and man for being with us today and for participating in the broadcast, and we'll get together again. God's blessings to you, Diane.

Diane Passno: Oh, thank you for having me.

Roger Marsh:

Well, it is such a privilege to listen in on that conversation and the honest questions from these college students. Well, you could really hear the tension they were feeling, wanting to follow God's plan for their lives while facing pressure from a culture that often dismisses traditional values. You've been listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's memorable conversation with the late Diane Passno about her book called *Feminism: Mystique or Mistake?* Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or you want to go back and listen to part one, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

The questions we heard from the college students and the audience get to the heart of the real world struggles. This generation is facing their longing for truth and craving clarity about their identity and purpose, and that is precisely why the work of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute remains so essential. Right now, your generosity will go twice as far thanks to the historic Dr. James Dobson Memorial Matching Grant. Every dollar you donate will be matched through December 31st, 2025, up to \$6 million. Now, this remarkable gift is an incredible memorial and a statement of confidence for the only organization entrusted by Dr. Dobson to carry out his legacy and expand his work to new generations and geographies. Together, we can honor Dr. Dobson's vision and ensure that future generations have access to biblical wisdom when they need it most. To make a secure donation online, go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. If you prefer, you can call a member of our constituent Care team at 877-732 6825. That's 877-732 6825. Or if you prefer, you could send your tax deductible 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. Once again, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, or you could just use the initials JDFI for short. P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of all of us here at the James Dobson Family Institute and the broadcast division which is Family Talk, 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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