



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Shayne and Sheila Pitcock: A Story of Redemption, Restoration, and Purpose, Part 1

Guest(s): Shayne and Sheila Pitcock

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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: No marriage is so far gone that God cannot restore it. That is the firm belief that our guests on today's edition of Family Talk... hold to. I'm Roger Marsh and welcome to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. And joining me today on the broadcast are Shayne and Sheila Pitcock. They are the co-founders of the ministry called Journey2Unity. And not only do they have a passion for helping couples find hope and healing through marriage coaching, but they also have an incredible testimony of, in their own words, quote unquote, *"living through the heartbreak, disconnection, and emotional distance that many couples face and experiencing firsthand the power of Gods' healing, and how it can restore even the most wounded of marriages."* That's a long quote. We're going to break that down in just a moment. There's a lot to get to today, and I'm very excited to dive into it. But first and foremost, Shayne and Sheila Pitcock, welcome to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. It's good to have you on the program today.
- Shayne Pitcock: It's good to be here. Thank you so much for the opportunity. We're grateful for what God has done in us and how we can possibly help others as well.
- Sheila Pitcock: Yes, we're so thankful to be here.
- Roger Marsh: Well, you come highly recommended to us because I know our president and chairman of our board of directors, Dr. Bart Brock, will highly recommend the Journey2Unity ministry. And I know Dr. Dobson would be looking at this and saying, Roger, get out of the chair. I want to have this conversation because the idea that you are not only helping couples in this area of marriage restoration and reconciliation in some cases, but also you have a story to tell as well that you've been very open and transparent about. So let's start at the very beginning. Shayne and Sheila, how did you two meet? I mean, and I'm going to ask Sheila this first, because you get a much clearer representation from her. Was it love at first sight, first time you met Shayne?
- Sheila Pitcock: That's a very interesting story. So, yeah, we actually met country dancing. Really? I used to joke with the Lord, you know, about the Lord knew that he was

going to have to bring my husband to a place where we were dancing because that's what I was doing at the time. So that's evidence that the Lord will meet you where you're at. And so when Shayne and I met, yes, it was. It was very much interest at first sight. But is it okay if I share the piece?

Shayne Pitcock: You have the mic, obviously.

Sheila Pitcock: Well, the twist of that was one of my friends was sitting in his lap at the time that I noticed him.

Roger Marsh: Oh, well, that got your attention. Okay, sure.

Sheila Pitcock: So, yeah, it did actually get my attention. So I thought, well, this friend found a cute cowboy. But later that evening, we did end up dancing together. And that was the beginning of, you know, a weekend of getting to know each other. And he came looking for me where he knew I was dancing at one point, and I went back looking for him where he was. So yes, that was the beginning of a very long story.

Roger Marsh: Okay, Shayne, let's hear your side of the story now. I mean, this is a very compelling tale from her.

Shayne Pitcock: We frequented two different locations. So the fact that I had to go looking for her, she knew that I was looking for her because I wouldn't normally go to that particular location and vice versa. When she came walking in the door of where I go dancing, then I knew she was out there looking for me as well. But that night that I saw her walk through the door of this birthday party celebration that we were attending, it was an answer to prayer because I had given up looking. Not just two weeks prior to that and said, Lord, you're going to have to bring her to me and let me know when that happens. Because I'm just going to go about my life the way that I know to do. And sure enough, when she walked in the door as clear as day, I believe the Holy Spirit said, that's your wife. So it took another two or three days to confirm that with her to get the same message. But that's when I believed in the moment and we just pursued it from that point forward.

Roger Marsh: Wow, so you guys met and it wasn't very long before you were talking marriage, from what I understand.

Shayne Pitcock: Actually, that's true because we were engaged two weeks later and we were married five months later.

Roger Marsh: Oh, my goodness. And then everything else was lollipops and raindrops and happily ever after, I'm sure.

Sheila Pitcock: I wish that was the case. I don't recommend the dating for two weeks and getting married in five months plan, but, God has used it.

Roger Marsh: I was going to ask you, what was it about each other that you saw and said, you know, after two weeks, we just know. I mean, was it really the Holy Spirit, or was there some kind of biological clock saying, gosh, I'm almost a certain age, and I thought I'd be married by now? I mean, be as honest as you care to be, as candid as you were, but I know a lot of people, there was someone in my world years ago, I mean, when I was a young boy going to church at a Southern California congregation, and one of the ushers there met his wife and asked her to marry him the night they were introduced. And she pushed him off for three whole weeks before she said yes. And they were married 70 years. You know, I mean, so sometimes it does happen that quickly. For you guys, you kind of felt this compulsion. And what was it like once you said, I do, and exchanged vows five months after you met? Was it love at first sight, then all of a sudden, what in the heck did I do?

Shayne Pitcock: It's the weak side of the story you get. For me, I thought things were wonderful. And for me, Sheila was a great wife. She did everything possible to ensure that the home was functioning well and all of what I was looking for in marriage. It was three years before our first child came along. So part of that was complications that we had early on. But the other part of it was that we were settling into what it meant for us to be a couple. And so I thought things were great.

Roger Marsh: Sheila, a little different perspective from you?

Sheila Pitcock: Well, one of the things, the first question that you asked about kind of what drew us to each other so quickly. And one of the things for me was Shayne was very transparent emotionally with me. He shared his heart and he seemed to truly be interested in mine. And I felt like I could open up and kind of be myself and those types of things. And so I thought I was going to live this fairytale life and we were going to live happily ever after. And so several months into the relationship, we were just having a conversation and something happened. A trigger happened. And I saw a side of him that I hadn't seen before. And I didn't know how to respond. And I was... I was not raised in conflict of any kind. Literally, I did not know that married people fought. And so when this conflict happened and I had no tools to deal with it, it took me off guard and it started a path for me of self-protecting emotionally and just not knowing how to handle or work through the conflict.

Roger Marsh: Now, what's interesting about that, talking with Shayne and Sheila Pitcock here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, I can completely resonate with what you're saying, Sheila. My parents were married for 70 years. They were the perfect couple. They really did have a good marriage. I mean, it was coming from kind of dysfunctional homes that they did. They became best friends, and they had a wonderful marriage. I never saw them argue. Heck, I barely even saw them kiss. They handled everything just on their own terms. So when I got married, all of a sudden, and conflict showed up, I'm like, what am I doing? What's going on? Something's broken here. Instead of, no, we just disagree. But it feels strange, doesn't it? When you don't have that modeled in home that, yes, conflict does

happen. It's unavoidable. But you have ways that you can work through it. I'm sure that just really kind of set your head spinning. And then you're married to Mr. Wonderful, who's over here going, we got a great marriage. This is just wonderful. And I'm sure that had to be really infuriating for you. I'm going to ask Shayne the question here, because this is a tender one to ask a husband. But Sheila's in this kind of turmoil. When did you first realize that all of a sudden it's like, wait, maybe we don't have the great marriage I thought we did?

Shayne Pitcock: Quite honestly, for me, I did not have any kind of awareness until Sheila started focusing her attention more towards our children. And so that was three years in when our first one was born. And I no longer got the attention from her. And she did everything possible to try to make everything right. And I did not realize the level of conflict I brought into the marriage.

Roger Marsh: Interesting.

Shayne Pitcock: My home was completely abusive mentally, emotionally, spiritually. There was some very heavy-handed punishment. And so I was nothing but conflict in the relationship. And she didn't, never saw conflict so now not only do you have a real situation where it's worse than oil and water, I, I, just had no clue and I had no idea that this really was going on sheila didn't say anything, and I didn't know anything, and I was clueless. So I was just replicating the family life I grew up with and putting that on Sheila, and then became more and more controlling of the more and more children that we have. We have three grown adult children now, and they have survived, and fortunately, God has saved them from a path of their own destruction. So based on what they lived in for 13, 14 years this went on, that Sheila just did not have the strength and understanding of what do I do about this and how it's going until somebody was able to come alongside her and provide her the support she needed to create a boundary to say this is no longer acceptable.

Roger Marsh: You know, and Shayne, you brought up something very interesting I want to underscore before we get back into Sheila's response to this, if I may. And that is the fact that you were talking about the abusive home that you grew up in. You mentioned emotional. You mentioned verbal. You mentioned spiritual. You didn't mention physical. And I think a lot of people, when you hear the word abuse, the first thing they think of is, oh, yeah, dad's an alcoholic or mom's a rager and stuff gets thrown. And, you know, people are there. There's some kind of physical connection here. But not having seen that ever, you know, and the fact you probably didn't even realize there was abuse going on in your home. That was just, that was normal for what, that's what you were used to.

Shayne Pitcock: Is that an accurate assessment of what you heard? That is very accurate. And I just, I knew it was not a normal family, but then I didn't know anything as a contrary to that. So it really took me off guard to have to come to awareness that that was full out manipulation and control in an overly expressive way that was abuse. And a lot of people don't understand the correlation of mental,

emotional, and even spiritual abuse when it comes to exacerbated, overextended over control on somebody else.

Roger Marsh: Sheila, what was the point for you where you said, okay, enough's enough. I've got to do something. Shayne mentioned a reference to someone coming alongside you and helping you. I'm sure that, you know, not only did you, you knew it was wrong, what was happening, but you didn't really have the skills at that point, it sounds like, to address it, to try to work through it. What was the turning point for you in terms of getting that help?

Sheila Pitcock: So as far as, I was raised in a, very legalistic religion where women had very limited... in my perspective as a child, I felt like women didn't really hold much value.

Roger Marsh: Interesting.

Sheila Pitcock: And so when all of this conflict started happening in our family.

Roger Marsh: Oh, it's still tender, isn't it?

Sheila Pitcock: My belief at that time was it was all my fault. Oh. That I wasn't a godly enough wife. If I was just a better wife, then he wouldn't have any reason to be angry. So I spent a lot of years just trying to be really nice, manage the environment, not give him a reason to be angry and feeling...sorry.

Roger Marsh: No, no. I mean, you can tell it's still, it's still very tender. And it's something that you experienced where the juxtaposition, the conflict paradox, if you will, of the spiritual obedience versus the pain that you were experiencing and realizing there was something wrong in your, your spirit was saying there's something wrong in this marriage.

Sheila Pitcock: Right.

Roger Marsh: That still resonates.

Sheila Pitcock: Yeah. And so we were. Actually living with some friends. We actually had an adventure.

Roger Marsh: Okay.

Sheila Pitcock: In Colorado, we decided that we would sell the house and live in an RV and be able to have some family adventures while the kids were young and back at home school. And so we were living in an RV and that became kind of the pressure cooker that brought everything to the surface. When you're living with five people and 380 square feet, you can't just go to the other side of the house and it's open. And so it really did become this pressure cooker where all of this stuff started bubbling to the surface and we didn't know what to do with it. But during part of that transition, we actually stayed several weeks with some

friends. And during that time, they were able to witness some of what was the reality of our relationship. And so they were the ones that actually came alongside and said, this isn't normal. Let us help you guys. And they actually were the ones that helped us get into counseling initially.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Sheila Pitcock: Shayne was saying he didn't realize it was abusive when he was growing up. Well, it took me five sessions with a professional counselor before I could admit that I had been living in an abusive situation because it wasn't physical. And so that was the turning point for me. I had this couple that came alongside, helped me see, and then got me connected with professional counseling to actually see, no, this isn't normal. It's not your fault and let's start figuring out a way out. Now, at that point, I thought boundaries were mean. Christian women don't do that. They're just brick walls that shut people out. And so having to learn those boundaries and healthy skills felt very foreign to me and very uncomfortable at the time.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, looking at your work, I know one of the quotes you have is that boundaries aren't that brick wall you just described. They're really more of a fence. Talk about what's that fence made out of. Is it wrought iron? Is it chain link? Is it hay and straw with duct tape? I mean, what kind of fences are we talking about?

Shayne Pitcock: It depends on what's necessary at the time, Roger.

Roger Marsh: Okay, okay. Fair enough.

Sheila Pitcock: Yeah. Dr. Henry Cloud's Boundaries book was super valuable to me in that season. It was actually recommended to me by a mentor. And so that's where I kind of got the analogy that, okay, it's not a brick wall, it's a fence. But in my mind, as I painted the picture of that fence, I guess I would say, say, I'm a Texas girl. So it's a wooden fence with like the giant metal in between, not chicken wire, bigger than that. But the most powerful thing about that to me was I learned that the fence has a gate in it and I got to control the gate. And that rocked my world because I hadn't really had control of much up until that point. And to realize that I got to control what came in my yard, what needed to be on the other side of the yard. And then a few years into that, the Lord actually gave me a download. He speaks to me in pictures a lot.

Roger Marsh: Okay.

Sheila Pitcock: And so he gave me a picture of emotional boundaries, because that's harder to put into words and be tangible. So I understood the fence and the gate, and I was doing well with that. But then these emotional boundaries, when the gate is closed and somebody else is on the other side and throwing garbage over your fence, and what do you do with that, right? That's when somebody's trashing your emotional boundaries. And so the Lord showed me a giant... In

Texas, we call them skidsters. They're little yard tractors that they use for landscaping, and they have a bucket on the front. And so he showed me that in the backyard, and he said, this is like your Roomba vacuum, but for your yard. So when somebody's throwing emotional garbage over your fence, me, as a recovering people pleaser, at the time, I would scurry around. I would spend all this energy, manage the environment, clean this up, so this and that. And all of this energy and emotion was going into cleaning up something that wasn't mine in the first place. And the Lord said, When that happens and you sense that there's garbage in your yard that's not yours, I want you to just turn your head and let me clean it up. You just tell me, your Roomba tractor, to go and clean up that emotional mess. And then I will put it back over the fence where it belongs.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Sheila Pitcock: And so that was just a very practical visual that has helped me in that process of not picking up and cleaning up any longer things that weren't mine. to deal with.

Roger Marsh: Oh, my gosh. Sheila, that's such a beautiful word picture of the boundaries that God wants us to set and the role that he plays. Because I was thinking the same thing you were. Oh, my goodness. Does the skip thing go on Roomba mode where you just turn it on and it goes out and cleans it up for you? And you realize, well, no, that's God's responsibility.

Talking with Shayne and Sheila Pitcock, the co-founders of the ministry Journey2Unity, on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. And we have a link for their site up at jdfi.org.

Okay, Shayne, I'm going to turn the spotlight on you for a second. Because you realize that as Sheila's getting this help and she's getting whole, that you play a huge role in some of the emotional garbage that was going on there too. What was it like for you? She said five sessions and all of a sudden she began to realize her role in it. Were you enthusiastic, encouraged, willing to go to counseling? Or was this just something like, okay, she wants to do it. I'll do anything just to put a smile on her face again.

Shayne Pitcock: At first, no, in all honesty. When somebody who is down the path, and I'll use the word, but I don't like the label of narcissistic way of living, it becomes extremely selfish, focused, and oriented towards what makes me happy. And the fact that she no longer responded to what I asked for or she would put up a boundary saying i'm not going to acknowledge that any longer had a wake-up effect to me and the fact that I had to realize okay do I want to keep my marriage or do I take my own selfishness and move on and you know the lord definitely got my attention and actually I knew Jesus as my Savior at this point but I never acknowledged God as my Father and that was a completely different transition that I had to learn because of my own father wounds, if you will, because of the abusiveness that I was raised in. You know, career army military man and, you know, an army brat raising up. You know, I didn't know anything but the rules and regulations and punishment if you don't do it right. Sure. And

so I had to learn to be empathetic. I had to learn to understand what she was going through. I had to learn so much that was foreign to me. And it came in the fact that, oh, I ran up against this boundary. Nope, that boundary. Nope, that boundary. And it was very much a difficult thing for me to adjust to because there were so many boundaries at first and I didn't appreciate any of them. And I would knock them down. I would run through them. I would throw the emotional blanket over her entire yard, if you will. I would do everything possible to try to get her back into my control. And when that was not working, in all honesty, I had to come to terms with it. And God the Father sat beside me in His perfect love and said, how's this working for you, Shayne? I'm like, obviously my way is not working so well. He said, oh, would you like a way out of this? I mean, just this conversational questioning of where are you at in your heart? Like he asked Adam, Adam, where are you? He wasn't because He didn't know where Adam was. It was because he wanted Adam to come to terms with what was going on in his own heart, right?

Roger Marsh: Sure.

Shayne Pitcock: And that's the God the Father did for me in his perfect love. And we talk about the tenderness of his love. It still gets me today of the fact that he met me where I was, loved me through it, and it was. And said, I have a way out and gave me a promise that I will restore and redeem all if you're willing to surrender what you want to do. And it just became a life of surrender of that point forward. I can't claim any glory of my own, quite honestly, because every time I tried, I messed it up. But every time I surrendered, God's glory was shining through and brought our relationship closer together.

Roger Marsh: This is such a beautiful love story that Shayne and Sheila Pitcock have, and I love the fact that it's still a work in progress. I mean, you can still see there's tenderness from some of the hurts from their childhood growing up, and even in their first few years of marriage where there was a lot of tension. And yet, Journey2Unity is the ministry that they now have co-founded and lead, and are helping couples all over the country with all sorts of resources that we'll put a link for up at jdfi.org. Well, we've gotten to the point now where your marriage is a complete shambles and we were trying to put it back together again. And Sheila's setting up boundaries, and Shayne keeps throwing emotional trash over the fence. I hate to leave our listeners right here at this moment, but we've run out of time for today's program. So can you come back on our next edition of Family Talk and let us know how you got to the place where you are right now?

Shayne Pitcock: We would love to, because it's all about God's hope and His redemption.

Sheila Pitcock: Yes, the story's not done until you hear what God did.

Roger Marsh: Two weeks engaged, married five months later, and a marriage that nearly came apart before God put it back together. And I promise you, you will not want to miss part two of this conversation because the best part of their story is still to come. On today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, you've been

listening to my conversation with Shayne and Sheila Pitcock, the co-founders of the marriage ministry Journey2Unity. If you missed any part of the program, if you'd like to share it with a friend, visit jdfi.org. And when you go to our website, you'll also find a link for the Journey2Unity site as well. That's journey, the number two, unity.com.

Well, stories like this one reach families all across the country because friends like you stand with us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, carrying Dr. Dobson's legacy forward to the next generation. By now, you have heard that our \$250,000 July matching grant goal has been met. So I want to thank you once again for your incredible generosity. Your response was tremendous and a real encouragement to all of us here, especially those who were responding to all the letters that came in the mail and all the phone calls that we received. Your support helps us carry Dr. Dobson's legacy forward through this broadcast, through the Dobson Policy and Culture Center, through Gary Bauer's Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast, and more. And that important work continues every single day long after the match is behind us because you make the contributions and you are praying for us. So whatever amount God lays on your heart, I invite you to partner with us today. You can call a member of our constituent care team. That number is 877-732-6825 or give a gift securely online at jdfi.org. And if you prefer to send your donation through the U.S. Postal Service, our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39,000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to tune in again next time when I'll continue my conversation with Shayne and Sheila Pitcock. They'll return to share how God brought their marriage all the way back to restoration and how they're helping other couples now do the same as well. That's coming up 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.