



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Biblical Encouragement for Everyday Motherhood – Part 2

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 another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, The voice you trust for the family you love. I'm Roger Marsh, and we are representing, of course, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. And with Mother's Day, just a couple of days away, a perfect opportunity for us to have a conversation about the fact that moms are the bedrock of the family. And Rhonda Stoppe is our guest today here on the program to talk about her brand new book called *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons for the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*, and that link is up at jdfi.net. Rhonda Stoppe, welcome back to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. It's good to have another day to converse with you.
- Rhonda Stoppe: Yes, I love that last conversation. If you guys missed it, go back because it was so good.
- Roger Marsh: Rhonda has delineated motherhood biblically into three different categories, fearless moms, flawed moms, and faithful moms. And we didn't spend a lot of time on the faithful because the flawed and the fearless just were so engaging and so compelling. But I wanted to not gloss over this because one of the biggest challenges that a lot of women are facing today is the fact that you've got a lot of single parents and you do have a lot of single again parents who wind up getting married. And when you get into that step family relationship, that's not always easy regardless of the ages of the kids. I mean, my kids, well, all of our kids were adults when Lisa and I got married seven years ago this December. And quite frankly, it's been a rough go in some areas, a little bumpy. One of the influences that you talk about in your book, *Moms of the Bible*, is the unlikely influence of a stepmother. Who is the stepmother you're talking about and why is her influence so important?
- Rhonda Stoppe: Oh, do I love this story? So I have to do a little backtracking and say when I was 10 years old, I was at a youth camp in the Santa Cruz mountains in California near the ocean. And there was a teacher that came down to the fire pit every night and he unpacked the story of Esther from Scripture.

And as a 10-year-old little girl, I was captivated by her story. Back, this was in the 60s when all I thought that women in ministry could do was go be a missionary because you saw the slideshows and all of that. So I was like, "I guess that's what I'm going to do after I left that camp." But as I heard him unpack Esther's story, she was just an average, beautiful, but average woman that God used in incredible ways. And we all know her story. She was taken captive. Mordecai says, "Well, hey, maybe God chose you for such a time as this. You need to go talk to the king." She says, "If I die, I die." She goes in, she rescues her people. Great story. Love it. But time out. There are our children and our grandchildren are watching our lives. And when Xerxes was king, and he was an awful king.

It's not this happily ever love story that, oh, he chose her to be his princess and he was such a great, he was a terrible, if you look at him in history, murderous King. And so he had a son named Artaxerxes. In fact, some historians believe the reason he did not put Vashti to death was maybe because she was pregnant with Artaxerxes at the beginning of Esther. If you've never read Esther, go back and read it. I don't have time to tell you the story, but do not miss that book in the Bible. It's fabulous.

Roger Marsh: Well worth it. Yes.

Rhonda Stoppe: Well worth it. And so here's the point of that story. Years later, Artaxerxes, when he is king after his father, he has compassion on the Jewish people. And when they want to go back and rebuild the walls, he says yes. And he sends them supplies and money and he writes them a letter and says, "Let them do this and I'm supporting this." Some historians honestly believe the reason he had such compassion for the Jewish people was because he was raised in the same palace as Queen Esther, who was a precious godly woman. So stepmom, you may only have them every other weekend. You may be the one they scream in your face and say, "You're not my mom. Don't tell me to do my homework." You may think you are not having any influence in their life, but you live out your faith in a real, genuine way. One that Jesus said, the priority of life is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength with your whole being. How do you fall in love with Him? Through the pages of Scripture. You unpacked. God revealed his character all through the Bible. He doesn't ask us to just blindly fall in love with those flannel graph Bible stories that we think we know about God. He says, "No, I am Yahweh. I am El Shaddai, the provider. I am Jehovah-Nissi, Your banner.

I am the God who sees. I am." You fall in love with who He really is. The second commandment Jesus gave was to love our neighbor as ourself. When I fall in love with who God is, not who I perceive Him to be, then the spirit of the most high God spills over with agape selfless love on those children. And maybe it's your own kids that are adolescents and that are shaking their fists at you. I know that too.

But His love, they can't ignore it and they cannot resist the love you have for your God. They may say you're crazy. They may say that's not for me, but it will imprint on them. And you never know down the road years later, that stepchild that God may remind that your God is the way, the truth, and the life. Amen. You don't know. You live out your life, you memorize Scripture, you sing worship songs, and then you love them with Christ selfless love and you trust God to do the work in their heart.

Roger Marsh: Beautiful and encouraging story. And one of the areas too that toward that end, Rhonda, and I love how you address this in your book, *Moms of the Bible, Life-Changing Lessons for the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*, which is up at jdfi.net, is there's another component that is kind of as old as time. It's become a plot point in a lot of comedies or in a lot of dramas. It's the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship. And you take us through that whole relationship. We know what it's like when mom does not like the young lady that her son picked out. No one's going to mess up my precious boy. Or the woman finds the man of her dreams and then meets mom and, oh gosh, what am I going to do? But when you tell the story of a mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, I think it helps us to see it with new eyes. Thank you for allowing my little preamble, Rhonda, please take it away.

Rhonda Stoppe: My mother-in-law was a precious, godly woman. She was German. Her first language was German and her mother-in-law hated her. She married her only son and it was ... I've heard stories of ... And my mother-in-law just held such a godly spirit in that situation. But my mother-in-law, Eleanor, she came down with Alzheimer's when she was ... Actually, I was a new mom and I would've loved to have her as a mentor, but she was so confused. And I love the story of my mother-in-law. I'm going to tell it real quick just because it's in the book and it's so good. Toward the end of her life, she stopped having the ability to speak. Her German sisters came and she could talk to them in German. It was crazy. But one of the last days that she was in my home, and I was caring for her when we could still talk, when she was having a conversation, she kept telling me about this woman that she led to Jesus and we need to help her.

And I'm like, "Okay, mom, sure." She never went anywhere. And I took her to the bathroom and when she was washing her hands, she looked at herself in the mirror. And my father-in-law would take her to have her haircut at his barbers. So her hair was a barber cut now and she had no makeup on. She always wore lipsticks, had none. And she looked in the mirror, she washed her hands and she goes, "There she is. That's the woman I led to Jesus. We have to help her." She led herself to Christ. She just didn't know it was her.

Roger Marsh: Oh my goodness.

Rhonda Stoppe: But what I love about that story is my mother-in-law was such an evangelist and she taught me to be an evangelist. All of my books in the appendix have how to have a relationship with Jesus. The first chapter will somewhere take you to that. It's a great gift for Mother's Day. If you have a daughter-in-law or someone

that you're not sure if they know Christ, it's a great gift. But when I wanted to emulate someone, it was like my mother-in-law and I started looking at the mother's-in-law in Scripture. I was going to write about Naomi and Ruth. Great story. Great mentor. I knew what it was going to be. But as I got into the story, it's really about grief and infertility and loss. She follows her husband to a foreign land, much like I followed my husband from the San Francisco Bay Area to the middle of nowhere USA to live on a generator in 1988.

And she gets there and her husband dies. And then her sons marry Moabite women. I mean, just the heart wrench of that, knowing her son's married women who worship an idol that puts babies on an altar to burn for the God of prosperity, how upsetting. But that upsetting turn to grief because they could not have children. So there was this infertility. I have eight grandbabies in Heaven. I'm talking fast because I want to get this story in. But feel the feel of losing our grandchildren and having our children have that experience. And then her sons die. And that's when Naomi's like, "That's it. We're gone. I'm going back to my people and I'm going back to my God." And the girls start to follow her. And then finally, Naomi turns to her daughters-in-law and says, "I don't have anything for you. So Orpa, go back to your family. Ruth, go back."

Orpa does. Go back to your family, go back to your gods. Orpa does. We never hear from her again. And this is when this is when Ruth says, "No, don't send me back. Your God will be my God. Your people will be my people. Where you go, I will go." And here's the point of that. That was Ruth's covenant to the God of Israel. She said, "Yahweh, you will be my God." When did she make that covenant? After she observed her mother-in-law go through the deepest heartbreaks any woman can endure, the death of her husband, the death of her sons, infertility. And that is what spoke volumes to Ruth. Sometimes your trial's not about you. Sometimes God brings us through painful trials to validate our testimony to our children, to our daughters-in-law, to our grandchildren. They want to know that what we say we believe, we really believe.

And it shines brightest from a place of heartbreak when we say, "God, though You slay me, I will trust You." And I love that's what that whole story of Naomi and Ruth is about is just letting God shine brightly through the highs and the lows of your life so that others will want to know your Savior.

Roger Marsh:

And you write about in your book, *Moms of the Bible*, a mother and grandmother relationship that might ... I mean, you got a special young man here who's going to be called into ministry and does, but you begin to see that the reason that he is being called by the apostle Paul is not because necessarily his dad was such a wonderful guy or that the men around him led him, but the real seeds of faith were sown by his mother and his grandmother. Talk about why that relationship and that dynamic is so important for us to see in terms of being faithful as a mother and as a grandmother.

Rhonda Stoppe:

So as a grandmother, I just spoke at the Legacy Coalition Grandparenting Conference. I used to speak at youth camps. Now I speak at grandma and

grandpa camp. And I was the emcee last year for that. I would love ... I used to do emcee at youth camps. I'm like, I'll do an emcee at a grandma and grandpa camp all day long. That was the funnest thing I've ever done.

Roger Marsh: Yes, I love that. I love it.

Rhonda Stoppe: But it's about being influential. It's about those conversations. We slow down and we get to see life, how quickly it goes. We get to remind their parents when they're hitting adolescents. You went through it too.

It goes fast, encourage them. But I think of Lois and Eunice. And first of all, we have to go to understand that here's a grandmother. Before her daughter had Timothy, she watched her daughter marry someone who wasn't a Jew. That was a no-no. And I can only imagine, I kind of unpacked the beginning of that chapter. What did her mother think and did she warn her? And then she marries this ungodly man who was a Jew, a Greek. We know that Timothy was not circumcised, and I'm sure it was because he was married to a Greek and his dad's probably like, "We aren't cutting off the end of that boy's bobo. No, that's silly." And here's a grandma just standing watching, right? And then at some point, we don't know what happened. Either the biological father of Timothy either left or died, but she was probably not married to him by the time that the apostle Paul came on the scene is what historians think.

But here's what Paul says to Lois in Eunice and what he says about them. It was because of the word that was implanted in you by your grandmother and your mother that you were ready to receive the gospel when Paul showed up on the scene.

We just do what's right in front of us. We just teach them truth. We memorize Scripture so they see it's important to hide God's word in our heart. I have the entire Book of Philippians memorized because it transformed my life when I studied that. I want my grandkids to understand you're never too old to stop memorizing Scripture. It's what is quick and powerful and sharper than a sword. It is the lamp to your feet and the light to your path. And if you're not hiding God's word in your heart, your best bet is just your best bet. Your feelings are going to guide you and they're going to lie to you. And so here's Lois and Eunice. They don't know that they are literally training the person that the apostle Paul is going to hand the very mantle of his ministry when he is put to death for his faith.

They just did what was in front of them to do. And that's God's call to us. We just do what's in front of us. We just speak truth. We wash our minds with truth so that we can live out our faith in a way that is a light that draws them to our Savior, not preaching at them. Why do you dress like that? Why do you talk to your friends like that? That will shut them out. But one of the things I spoke on at that grandparenting summit was why our grandkids need our stories. Tell them stories of God's faithfulness when you were going through the hardest time in your life. Stories of God's Word. I tell a story about my son Brandon, he

had severe seizure activity, epilepsy. And I remember after four years of that, we had planted a church in Texas. Our house was filled with 200 teenagers serving the Lord in Jesus' name.

And my son was having severe seizures. And at one point I went in my room and I wept before the Lord after Brandon had a very severe seizure. And I said, "I quit. I'm done. We're serving you. We are literally seeing kids come to Christ trashing our house in Jesus' name and you cannot heal my boy? I quit." But when you hide God's Word in your heart, you won't sin against him. And in the still small voice of my heart, I heard "in everything, give thanks for this is the will of God and Christ Jesus concerning you." There's a long story that goes with that. You can read it in the Bible, but I tell that to my grandkids because I didn't walk away. A decade later, my daughter Meredith gave birth to a special needs daughter. She was in early high school years when that was going on.

Sometimes your trial's not about you. Sometimes what you're living out in front of your kids is equipping them for a trial for the giant, the Goliath if they're going to fight one day down the road. What if I had walked away? I would have come back because the Bible says, no man can pluck you out of his hand. I would have repented and I would have come back. But at what cost? My kids would have seen me walk away. Instead, living out my faith like Job, even though You slay me, I will trust You. Was it easy? No. Did I cry a lot of tears? Yes. But in the end, would I have thrown myself on that sword to equip Meredith and Jake for when they would have a special needs daughter 10 years later? Absolutely worth it. Absolutely worth it.

Roger Marsh: Incredible. And to think about the fact that how many times as moms do you hear this from women saying, "Okay, I quit. I'm done. I mean, I've done everything I know how to do. I'm praying. I'm doing everything right." And then you hear that still small voice that says, "Hey, you know what? I mean, it's be thankful in all things, not because of all things." And you're, "Oh man, here we go again."

Rhonda Stoppe: And there's a cool part of that story. Brandon became an amazing musician because of those years that he was so heavily medicated. We had band practice in our house for worship. My husband said at 10 years old, I've never met someone who thinks in music theory like Brandon does. He grew up, he's a worship pastor. He's toured with some amazing Christian bands. I wanted to raise an athlete that heard the crowd glory in his accomplishments, but God's like, "Get out of the way, woman. You're going to raise an arrogant athlete. I'm going to raise a humble worshiper who brings the crowd to glory in my son's accomplishments through worship." But that's why old ladies know stuff. You got to hear our stories.

Roger Marsh: That's right. Check out the podcast. We'll put that link up at jdifi.net as well. *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons for the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful* by Rhonda Stoppe. I would be remiss, Rhonda, if I did not ask you about the final chapter of this book when you talk about faithful moms who have no name,

help us unpack why we need to be aware of these faithful moms who are essentially nameless.

Rhonda Stoppe: Sometimes we just feel like we're wiping boogers and bums all day long and we feel like it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter at all.

Roger Marsh: That's one way to put it.

Rhonda Stoppe: Yeah. It is. It's our life. It's not on your jeans, all the things.

Roger Marsh: Boogers and bums. Okay.

Rhonda Stoppe: Yeah. And yet our faithfulness in the daily, and honestly, the real Christian life is two steps forward, one step back. Your kids know you mess up. Your kids know that you need to come to them and ask for forgiveness. They see your realness. And honestly, in 18 years of youth ministry, the number one thing that drove kids away from the church and from Christ was the hypocrisy in their Christian homes. You give me a kid whose mom is on crack and I tell him Jesus loves you and he's like, "He loves me. Are you sure?" You tell a kid raised in a Christian home of a hypocrisy based family, Jesus loves you and they go, "Yeah, yah, I've heard it my whole life. No big deal." I want to go to my kids when I blow it and say, "I am so sorry. Please forgive me. Mommy asked that person to forgive me. I asked Jesus to forgive me."

But let's talk about David. We don't even know David in the Bible his mom's name. He raised the man that God said he's the apple after my own eye. Some historians have an idea of what her name is, but there is not a shout out to the woman who raised King David. I'm like, "Okay." My son, Tony, did not come to our family till he was 15 years old. He was a lieutenant colonel. One day we were on base. I was in the backseat. We drive up, he shows his credentials. They start saluting him like nobody's business. He flew the raptor, the F-22, is a big deal. And I'm sitting in the backseat and not one person saluted me. Not one person acknowledged me. Yeah. And I'm like, that's motherhood. You do it and you hand them over to whatever God has for them and you celebrate that. So when we look at moms in Scripture like, okay, how about this? Who made the lunch for the little boy that had the loaves and fishes?

Roger Marsh: Yeah.

Rhonda Stoppe: His mom, I'm guessing. I don't know who she is. She doesn't know. She has no idea even, and maybe she did know, what God did with that little that He made much out of it. We do what's little in front of us and He will make it much, but we have to trust Him. One story I love to tell, when my kids were all adults and we had had, I told you we have eight grandchildren in heaven. We'd had a lot of miscarriages. And my youngest daughter Kayla was pregnant and Steve and I went on a cruise. And when you're a pastor going on a cruise, you literally unplug. Nobody can get ahold of you. It's a great way to be gone. We pull into

port and our family group text lights up and Kayla is having a miscarriage and it's a hemorrhaging, rush to the hospital experience. First child, first baby. And all of our kids in the thread are saying, "Are you okay? I'm praying for you." None of them lived near Kayla and Esteban at that time. "I'm praying for you. Do you want me to come?" My daughter-in-law who's a doctor is giving medical advice and prayer. My other kids are ... They're helping Kayla and Stev direct their gaze towards Christ. Meredith, who just had a special needs daughter is offering to come to help. And at first as a mom, I'm like, "Oh no, we weren't there for this." And then Steve and I stopped and we stepped back and we said, "They're doing what we taught them to do."

When we're gone, they're supporting each other with biblical scripture, with prayer, with a biblical worldview, with offering physical help and crying with them. And when you're at home and you're trying to teach the siblings to stop arguing with each other, to believe the best about each other, to forgive each other 70 times seven, it's exhausting. I get it. And we talk about sibling rivalry in the book. There's a lot of great insights on that. But you see it when you're not in the picture, what a gift that you gave your kids in those mundane moments of motherhood.

Roger Marsh:

Yes.

Rhonda Stoppe:

And you're no longer here. And the unnamed moms in Scripture. If I could read one really, really quick.

Roger Marsh:

Yes, please do.

Rhonda Stoppe:

This leads me to the final unnamed mother I want to explore. I don't know her name, but you do. She is you. My heart is so filled with hope for this next generation. When I consider the influence you will have as you raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, the influence of unnamed mothers has shaped nations, inspired leaders, nurtured artists, and motivated ordinary children to accomplish extraordinary achievements. Mom, this is your God-given time in history. This generation needs you to selflessly embrace your blessed calling of motherhood to bring up courageous and righteous children. In the seemingly mundaneness of motherhood, please don't lose sight of the valuable investment you will make in your children, your grandchildren, and future generations.

Roger Marsh:

Beautiful. Beautifully put. And such a perfect way for us to conclude this just inspiring conversation with Rhonda Stoppe today here on Dr. James Dobson's family talk. Again, the book is called *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons for the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*. And I'm sure a lot of moms are going to see that their season becomes a lot more fruitful after reading the lessons that they learn in this book. And we've got a link for it up at jdfi.net. Rhonda, it's always a pleasure to be with you and to have conversations with you, but thank you, especially for this particular project. What a legacy piece for you, for your children, grandchildren, and for all of those who are listening to this broadcast

right now too and watching it as well. To have that encouragement, Rhonda, thank you so much for being with us today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Rhonda Stoppe: Thank you. My pleasure. And if you go to nobragretswoman.com and click on that book tab, you can watch all the free videos that I teach on each chapter. There's a QR code to find those in the book and it's all free.

Roger Marsh: All right. Rhonda, thank you so much for being with us today.

Rhonda Stoppe: Thank you. My pleasure, always.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a great way to end my time with Rhonda Stoppe today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Rhonda's brand new book is called *Moms of the Bible: Life-Changing Lessons From the Fearless, Flawed, and Faithful*. I hope these past couple of days of conversation have been a real encouragement to you and to moms everywhere. When you go to jdfi.net, remember you can find more information about this book and also how you can stand with us financially. Our founder, Dr. James Dobson, knew that parenting was, at the same time, one of the most difficult, but also the most sacred callings on the planet, and he dedicated himself to equipping families to do it well. That mission continues today through programs like the one you just heard, and it's made possible by listeners just like you who believe in this work. We invite you to partner with us and carrying Dr. Dobson's legacy forward.

You can give a gift over the phone when you call a member of our constituent care team. That number is 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. And tomorrow is the National Day of Prayer, and there's a reason that this special day means so much to us here at the James Dobson Family Institute. It was back in 1991 that Shirley Dobson answered God's call to lead the National Day of Prayer Task Force. Then over the next quarter century, she faithfully rallied communities from coast to coast to come together in prayer. I encourage you to head over to jdfi.net right now where you'll find a booklet, a video interview with Shirley Dobson and other resources to help you and your church have a more meaningful National Day of Prayer. You'll find the special NDOP resources as we call them here when you go to jdfi.net.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for tuning in to Family Talk today from all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We truly appreciate your listening. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another 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.

Here's today's Dr. Dobson minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: It's common to hear people say today that being a homemaker is boring and that the mothers who stay at home to raise children are accepting an unchallenging way of life. Well, compared with what, I might ask. The truth is almost any occupation you can name from a telephone operator to a medical pathologist to an attorney or a dentist involves long hours of tedious activity. Few of us enjoy heart thumping excitement each moment of our professional lives. No, I doubt if the job of being a homemaker is more boring than most other jobs, particularly if a woman refuses to be isolated from adult contact. But as for the importance of the assignment, many mothers tell me that nothing can compete with the satisfaction of shaping and molding and guiding a new human being. For them, it's a supremely stimulating investment of their lives.

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