



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Ken Harrison: Lessons for Men to Steward Their Lives Well

Guest(s): Ken Harrison

Air Date: November 12, 2025

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: For the past several decades, our society has been at odds with the biblical view of masculinity. Now to those outside the church, God's design for men appears to be toxic, if you will, and somewhat dangerous, but to those who follow Scripture, the Father's plan for men as well as for women, brings order out of chaos. It brings structure to sustain spiritual growth and the overall wellbeing of the family as well as society. I'm Roger Marsh, and on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we're joined by a man who is a true everyday hero who has made it his life's mission to help men discover the benefits of true biblical masculinity and then to live those principles out. His name is Ken Harrison, and he of course is no stranger to the Family Talk studios. Ken is CEO of WaterStone, a Christian organization that helps donors give away \$3 million each week to causes that help advance God's kingdom.

He's also an accomplished author and speaker. His books include *A Daring Faith and a Cowardly World* and *Rise of the Servant Kings: What the Bible Says About Being a Man*. For the past 30 years, Ken has been married to his high school sweetheart, Elliette, beautiful name. They are the parents of three adult children who are faithfully serving the Lord and the Harrisons make their home in Colorado. Ken Harrison, welcome back to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. It goes without saying how much Dr. Dobson appreciated and admired you and the work you did, not only for calling us into biblical manhood, but also for the way that you've championed the family for so many years. It's good to have you back on the program today.

Ken Harrison: Oh, thank you. It's kind of wild. I grew up my mom's minivan when I was a boy listening to John MacArthur, Chuck Swindoll and Doc Dobson. So what an honor it was to be a friend of his all those years later.

Roger Marsh: Your ears must have been burning over the past few months because your name came up quite a bit and always very fondly. And Doctor has such a great appreciation for you and now is procuring on the legacy of the James Dobson Family Institute, it's so wonderful to have you here to kind of help set the trajectory for this next season of ministry and new seasons of ministry. Nothing new for you. I mean, you basically have had a couple of separate careers. Police

officer, owner of a successful real estate company now the CEO of WaterStone and the common thread through all of this has been your faith. So for those who may not be familiar with your story, how did you come to faith in Jesus Christ?

Ken Harrison: It is an interesting story and it's a good story for people. I think it's one people need to hear more often. My dad was a Los Angeles policeman and he was shot in the Watts riots, he retired due to complications from that in 1972 and moved up to Portland, Oregon and became a Christian at First Tri-City Baptist Temple and I was five years old and I ran up the aisle after my dad and really fell in love with Jesus right away. And we would go knock on doors and pass out tracks like good old Baptists back in those days and I'd have my patent and leather shoes on and my clip on tie I chased Ricky Nelson down at the airport once. My mom said it was a famous rockstar.

Roger Marsh: Oh wow.

Ken Harrison: So I chased him down and I witnessed to him for Jesus for about five minutes. That guy listened to me for five minutes, gave him a track, invited him to church. I also chased down Tonto from Daniel Boone, was also in the airport one day. That was who I was.

Roger Marsh: Oh my goodness.

Ken Harrison: But then we got into a church that was extremely legalistic and I say that I was filled with the Holy Spirit when I was saved at five and it took the church about 10 years to beat him out of me literally in some cases. And everything was bad. Movies were bad, rock and roll was bad, alcohol was bad, cigarettes were bad, black pants were bad. I've never figured out the black pants thing. You couldn't wear black pants.

Roger Marsh: That's interesting.

Ken Harrison: Cards were bad and it was interesting because all of the kids I was raised with in that era all fell away from Christ, but I really believe the Jesus I know is not... this is not the Jesus they're teaching. I just knew I had a relationship with Him as a boy. And so at 12 I started searching Scriptures and so I would read at least three chapters of the Bible every day, even at that age. So by the time I was 15 or so, I mean I really knew God's Word and I would dwell on it and pray. And they finally kicked me out of the legalistic Christian school when I was 15 because they got tired of me knowing the Bible better than they did. And I wouldn't argue, I mean I was humble and gracious, but I would just ask. And finally they got tired of the questions and that thought they'd be better off without me in there. But you can go one of two ways and we really do need to understand that. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments, but we also need to understand grace. And that is a sharp line that we're on right now. I think we've gone too far in the grace and we need to get back to the, if you love

me, keep my commandments, but I'm very sensitive to the legalistic people, putting their own rules on everybody else type of thing. I'd like playing cards. My wife and I play Gin Rummy all the time.

Roger Marsh: Well, it's interesting that you kind of had this boomerang effect and I can see where you and Dr. Dobson had that affinity because he went forward and I think at age four, and his dad was the preacher who was preaching. So the fact that you were literally following your dad's footsteps into faith and then to have that experience where God literally brought you 180 degrees when you started your law enforcement career, you knew what had happened when your dad had been through and yet you wanted to go down that road anyway. Did you feel that was a ministry calling or just this is the family business, what was it?

Ken Harrison: Yeah. My great uncle was an LA cop. My uncle was one of the most famous LA cops ever. He was in SIS and the Half Squad. Those are things that would mean something if you were from the LAPD part and he was responsible, if you think about all the gangster movies and the mafia, they're always New York and Philly and Chicago, never Los Angeles. The mafia was never in Los Angeles, and that was thanks to a very small group of men, of which my uncle was a part that kept the mafia out of LA

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Ken Harrison: Not always respecting the civil rights, but keeping them out of Los Angeles. So it was a big family thing, and my dad would've finished his career there. He was on for nine years when he was shot. So it was just you were raised with those stories. It was the coolest thing ever. And I did really enjoy the LAPD. I did really walk with the Lord while I was on the LAPD and it was during the Rodney King stuff at the height of the gang wars between the Crips and the Bloods and 18th Street gangs. And it was a very interesting time. I was assigned down to the Compton area, what people know of as Compton and Los Angeles. So it was a very interesting time. And I'll tell you, when you're 21, 22 and you have a badge and a gun and you get to drive a car really fast and put really bad guys in jail, it's pretty fun. Before you realize you could die doing this, it's pretty fun.

Roger Marsh: I'll bet. I bet. I'm sure there were some life lessons that you took from that. I mean, watching these people who are kind of habitual career criminals, if you will, or other people who just got caught in the middle of something that was bigger than they thought they could handle, was there anything now that you apply to your ministry that you can still lean back on those cop days and say, yeah, I remember seeing this in my early twenties.

Ken Harrison: All the time, and what it is is it's the most simplistic version of right and wrong. When you look at perpetual career evil people, number one, what caused them to be that way outside of obviously original sin? Fatherlessness. What we saw was no dads, no one raising the kids, and you see it at such a base level and you see the consequences of it at a base level. Right then. It was amazing when you turn on the radio, it was just beep beep and screaming of call after call, and we

averaged two felony arrests per day. We averaged taking one gun off the street per day. So the vehicle pursuits and the foot pursuits and the shootings, I mean, it was really when people think of like crazy police officer work, that was what that was. I mean, I drew my gun five or six times a day. The beatings and the victims and the dead bodies, and we used to go out and in the morning as the sun was coming up, you're driving our patrol cars, we would see the women out there scrubbing blood off of sidewalks from drive-by shootings.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Ken Harrison: And it's crazy. I was just reading the statistics of some city. They were saying how horrible murder the murder rate was there, and I thought my police division 77th division, we had about 180 murders per year. But then you see the words of Christ, everything is about dying to self and dying to your rights to yourself because as we get more money, more sophisticated, more civilized and educated, it's the same thing. It's really just trying to satisfy our evil desires, our lusts at a higher level, and the consequences are not as obvious because we don't leave dead bodies in our wake. What we do is leave damaged souls in our wake as we get more sophisticated. And so it's a chance to really see the real reality of if you want to love Jesus, you have to every day say, how can I not live for me today?

Who can I minister to? Who can I love? Because we just don't know who's hurting all the people that are surrounding us every day. I just had my long-term partner, one of my best friends, 32 years he was on the job. We went through the academy together and the day after Charlie Kirk died, he killed himself. And I loved Steve. He was an amazing guy and nobody knew. Nobody had any idea. He was with another one of his partners the day before. He'd planned killing himself for at least a week. He'd written notes, he'd prepared it. No idea. Nobody had any idea that Steve was hurting and he wasn't the kind of man who was going to reach out for help. So we don't know who we're put in touch with every day by the Holy Spirit. And if we're dying to self, if we're not standing up for me my rights, what am I going to get?

It's amazing how God can use us. And who knows, we'll find out at the judgment seat of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:10. Who we blessed that we'd never had any idea. That gal that we smiled at in the Starbucks, that hurting person that we saw somewhere and we just said, are you okay? Are you all right? We won't know what blessings we have or what curses with when we say negative things to people, but I believe in *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World*, I wrote about five crowns that the Bible promises for people after they're saved that they can earn. So yeah, as a cop, I just realized all I was seeing was the very base level of humanity. But then I realized when I got into business that guys in ties do the same crimes. They're just less violent.

Roger Marsh: I was going to say, I was going to say you kind of traded one storm, if you will, for another as your law enforcement career winding down, you entered into commercial real estate. You are now in, you're in the thick of this. And this led

you not only into WaterStone, but you've done work with Promise Keepers. You're really writing books and traveling the world and speaking and encouraging people in areas that aren't terribly popular. But there's been kind of a pendulum shift of late to where the pendulum has swinging more back toward biblical values. Is that an accurate statement?

Ken Harrison:

Very. I'm actually really taken by what's going on. I think we had a generation of especially young men who were raised to not keep score on the soccer field. Well, every young boy keeps score on the soccer field. We know that it was 12 to eight, and we know that I scored two goals and Johnny scored three goals. And we know when we go, Johnny's going to tell me he's better than me. He scored another goal than I did. And the adults are all saying, oh no, nobody won. Nobody lost. There was no score. And those little boys were like, these adults are stupid. There's something wrong with them. And those young men are now in their mid-twenties and they still think that we adults are stupid. Charlie Kirk was a great example in identity of what they wanted to be. And I also, I think a lot of the weakness of the evangelical church, the megachurch movement, the irreverent show up to church in your flip flops, maybe you'll come if it's convenient, you're not going to come. If the Dallas Cowboys are playing and all that stuff, they're done with that and they're looking to the Orthodox church and the Anglican church and the Catholic church and they're saying, I want tradition. I want male authority. I want to know. I'm not ashamed of the patriarchy. And that's why it was at like 72% more a gap between young men voting for Trump than young women.

Crazy because they're seeing we need real masculinity. I missed the days when the military is something I'd be proud of enjoying. So I do think, and I thank the Lord, and I think about where we have come. A couple of WaterStone stories that are really phenomenal, like you're talking about the blessings. I got a call from somebody a few years ago who was the sole supporter of a hospital in Syria for bombing victims, burn victims. And he was in a panic and said, "Look, they've shut down. I can't get money from the western world into Syria and I need WaterStone's help. And if I don't have money there in a week, the hospital's going to shut down and they're going to be putting women and children from burn units onto the sidewalk in Syria. You've got to help me." We had all the money into that Syria, into that hospital that next day.

We had a shell company in Lichtenstein that we'd used. That's why we changed the name WaterStone's actual name is Christian Community Foundation. But we came up with a DBA back in the late 2000s because we get so much money into India and China and the Middle East that we couldn't have Christian in the name or otherwise they wouldn't take the money. So now we've changed it to WaterStone, but we have more and more stories about incredible...We had a woman in Kenya who she had a 632 square foot house that she had 30 sex slaved girls that she'd rescued in her house. Imagine. She slept in a closet with her two kids under her arms to make room for as many kids as possible. For \$400,000, we built a school, a dormitory for 150 girls and a house and a well. I

mean now we have 150 girls who are sex slaves who are now hearing about Jesus from this girl.

So the stories that we have are unreal. And our team of women out here that are in the giving strategies group, I guess they're not all women, but mostly women, and they help give 'em away money. And one of the things they do is pray all day. And I've gotten more letters from people saying, I was heartbroken, I was depressed, I was this, I was that. I called WaterStone and Gail or Sally or Tina prayed with me and they just took the time with me and how the Lord's using us. And I just think back to what I wanted to do in my flesh was to ski and hike and maybe watch some football. And when I think about where life is now, I still get to ski and hike, but it's not the object of my life.

Roger Marsh:

Ken Harrison is the CEO of WaterStone. He joins us today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk as we're talking about rediscovering masculinity, true biblical masculinity in the culture. It's interesting, the daring faith in a cowardly world concept. A lot of people might push back and say, now, wait a minute, Ken, I think the world is becoming kinder. It's not becoming more cowardly. What is your response to someone who says, why do you call this a cowardly world when maybe it's just getting kind and you've got some old fashioned values?

Ken Harrison:

Well, that's a really great question. I thought I knew I was going to go with the answer, but now you've flipped it for me. So I've given this talk many times. If I was the enemy of your soul, if I was the devil and I hated you and I hated Jesus, what would be the best strategy in the world for me to make you ineffective and unhappy? Well, all I really have to do is change the meaning of the word love, right? The entire law can be summed up in a single command: Love your neighbors yourself. So if I can get you to have the wrong idea of love, it says in 1 Corinthians chapter six, "Do not be deceived, but the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, alcoholics, the verbally abusive," and I forget the other two, there's eight, "will not inherit the kingdom of God, and so are many of you, but you've been washed, you've been redeemed, you've been sanctified in the blood of Jesus Christ."

So if I come to you and I say, "Roger, you're verbally abusive. I've noticed you really, you're slandering people, you're gossipy." And you say, "Well, Ken, I was born that way. I mean, that's just who I am. In fact, I think you should make me a flag and you should give me a special month and we'll call it verbally abusive people month. And we'll throw a parade for me because if you loved me, you would tolerate my verbal abusiveness." And I would say to you, "Roger, Jesus said that if you see your brother in sin rebuke him and if he repents, forgive him, right?" But the key is rebuke him in his sin. Well, we have accepted in the evangelical church too much of a tolerance is sin, which God and Jesus has no tolerance for. When we knowingly sin, we spit on the massive sacrifice that the Son of God made for each one of us to save us from that sin.

Now that goes to what the argument, the answer is going to give you to begin with, which is we have swallowed a giant lie in the evangelical church, which is that you say a prayer and this is what *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World's* about. You say a prayer, you say the magic prayer, you're in the club. Now you're saved. And just say the prayer to mean why not just say the prayer. That is not at all what Jesus taught. When you get saved, you now have good works that you are saved to do. Ephesians 2:10, "For we're God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which we're prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." So you and I and everybody listening to this has works that the Lord has created us to accomplish, and He's given us the gifts and the skills to do those works, not other works. If He didn't train you to be a pastor or prepare you to be a pastor, that's not what's for you. That's not for me. I'm very bluntly spoken. I would not be a good pastor because if someone came to me and said, I drink too much and I beat my wife, I'd say, well, then stop drinking, you idiot. And now done with that one. That's not how pastors are, right?

Roger Marsh: That's a very loving thing to say. It isn't terribly gracious thing.

Ken Harrison: Kind of more of a CEO thing than a pastor thing. So what we have done then is realize that we have things that we were created to accomplish after our salvation sealed by the blood of the lamb. You have things that you were saved to accomplish, and what are the last words of Jesus? "Behold, I'm coming quickly and My reward is with me to give to each person according to what he has done." Well, he's not rewarding non-Christians. These are for Christians.

I want that reward. He says in Revelation, He comes out and He says, "Don't let anybody take away your crowns. The one who perseveres will sit at My father's right hand with Me on My throne." Well, these promises mean something. He's saying guard those. Paul says earlier in Scripture, "I don't know if I've earned yet the crown of righteousness." Now, this is Paul. He's not talking about salvation. He's talking about the crown that comes from persevering to the end. I don't know if I've gotten it yet. I still have a ways to go. In 2 Timothy, he's getting ready to be beheaded, and he says to Timothy, everyone's abandoned me. He's in Rome. He wrote Romans 10 years earlier, no one's here. They've all abandoned me. I'm all alone. Timothy, would you come and bring my coat because I'm cold. But by the way, I know now that I've earned the crown of righteousness because I've persevered." He's excited that he gets to go home.

We have lost the idea that God is a merciful God and a just God, and God is rewarding Christians for what they have done. Did you stay with it? Did you persevere? Did you avoid sin? Was sin unacceptable for you so that you can be fully used by God? When God comes to you, will you say, yes, I'll give up everything. Or will you say, no, I'm going to keep on skiing and hiking and notice in my life I didn't say yes right away. I whined at God. I'm sick of people. I don't even like people, but you might as well be honest, but we will come to those moments where you got to make a choice. Am I all in for Christ or am I not?

Roger Marsh: In talking with Ken Harrison today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and the idea of being a man according to biblical principles and your daring faith in a cowardly world title can even that definition of the word daring takes on such a great significance these days because it seems like a lot of people go, daring, I'm not one of those daredevils, but rather daring Christian men to require Christian men simply to live according to biblical principles. That has become a daring act in and of itself, hasn't it?

Ken Harrison: Yeah. It's so important that people remember that God calls them to be who they are and not who somebody else is. And to be daring in your own place and being daring doesn't mean you have to be a Navy Seal or an LA cop. It might mean that I need to be a really good father. It might mean that I take the time to ask my kids, what are you learning in school today? Oh, you learned about gender identity? Well, let's go into that. What does the Bible say about that? And in order to be able to do that, I have to know what the Bible says in the first place. And so being daring is showing our kids, hey, this is what we as a family stand for. I will say that for all people, they're searching for identity. All people want to know who am I?

And we have let them down in the church a lot because we have said, your identity is that you're a sinner saved by grace, and the best lie is always the one that's closest to the truth, but not really the truth, because that statement I just made is 99% true. The reality is we are sinners saved by grace, and now we are sons of the most high God. See, if I leave you at your sinner saved by grace, which is what happens so often, then what do you think of yourself as well, I'm a sinner, so I struggle with this sin. I struggle with pornography. I struggle with gossip. I struggle with whatever it might be, but Jesus loves me anyway so I'm okay. So being daring means I will stand for truth no matter what in my own way. It may be being the big, bold person. It may be being the missionary in India somewhere. It may be that I give a strong identity to my household, to my kids, to my brothers and sisters, to my parents, that I stand for truth unequivocally, lovingly, that when people insult me on social media, I don't insult them back. I pray for those people. I answer them with grace because they're struggling with something. So maybe that's the daring faith in a currently world that we want to have.

Roger Marsh: Well, it was such a privilege to sit down with Ken Harrison and hear his heart for Men on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. We spent years telling men that God's design for masculinity is somehow problematic and look where it's gotten us. But Ken Harrison is right. There is a hunger out there, especially among younger men for something real and authentic. They're tired of the lies and they're ready to embrace what the Bible actually teaches about manhood. As you've been listening to today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, you heard my conversation with Ken Harrison about rediscovering biblical manhood in today's culture. Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you want to share it with a friend, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Now, at the beginning of today's broadcast, you heard me mention Ken's book called

Rise of the Servant Kings. We actually had Ken here on Family Talk a few months ago to discuss that very book in depth. During the conversation, Ken and Dr. Dobson explored what the Bible truly says about biblical manhood, why authentic masculinity has come under attack in our culture, and how fathers can raise sons who understand what it means to be servant leaders. Ken also shared powerful stories from his time as a police officer in Los Angeles, California, and how those experiences shaped his calling to lead the ministry of Promise Keepers. By the way, if you'd like to hear that complete program, simply go online to our website, drjamesdobson.org and search for Ken Harrison.

Well, we all face seasons when life doesn't make sense when God's plan seems hidden and our faith feels shaken. That's why we've created a powerful 10-day email series called "When God Doesn't Make Sense." It's based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book with that same title. These daily touch points will strengthen your faith and show you how life's darkest valleys can bring your greatest blessing, which is a closer walk with the Lord. Now, we've done an email series based on this material before, but this brand-new and updated and expanded edition is one you'll definitely want to check out. So again, go to drjamesdobson.org and check out the powerful, new expanded and updated 10-day email series called "When God Doesn't Make Sense."

Every Day Families Across America turn to Family Talk for biblical truth. They can trust through daily broadcasts, articles, videos, and other resources, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institutes stands firm in promoting biblical principles that support strong marriages. If today's conversation has encouraged you, would you partner with us in this mission? Your gift of any amount helps us continue reaching families with the hope and wisdom they desperately need to make a secure donation. Go to drjamesdobson.org. To make a contribution over the phone. Call 877-732-6825. Remember, you can also write to us. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for joining us today, and 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.

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