



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Dobsons: A Marriage Made in Heaven – Part 2

Guest(s): Shirley Dobson

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk, the broadcast ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we are bringing you a deeply personal and historic moment in the life of Dr. James Dobson and his wife, Shirley. It's a farewell that touched countless hearts all across America. Now just last week, Thursday, August the 21st in the early morning hours, Dr. James Dobson breathed his last in this life and entered into the eternal loving arms of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Yesterday would've been his 65th wedding anniversary with his beloved wife, Shirley. And what you're about to hear is Dr. James Dobson and his wife, Shirley, speaking at a significant transition point in their ministry journey. At that point, they had spent 33 years of faithful service at a large media ministry here in the Colorado Springs area. They were preparing to step into what Shirley called God's next assignment.

And you heard Dr. Dobson mention on yesterday's program that was the foundation of Family Talk. Well, what you're about to hear is a program that we're sharing as part of our best of recollection as we remember the life and legacy of Dr. James Dobson. It begins with Dr. Dobson reading from a love letter that he wrote to Shirley when they had been married only 21 years, and his words paint a beautiful portrait of enduring love, capturing the joy, the challenges, and the deep intertwining of two lives over decades of marriage. You'll hear him speak tenderly how he can read her face like a book, and even how the smallest gestures that she makes speak volumes after years of shared experience. And then as we conclude today's broadcast, we'll hear Shirley take the microphone to honor her husband sharing intimate stories from their then nearly 50 years of marriage together and offering a glimpse into the character of the man behind the ministry. We thought it fitting to revisit this celebration as the Dobsons would've marked 65 years of marriage together yesterday. And of course, with Dr. Dobson's passing, this broadcast becomes even more poignant. That's coming up on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Let's pick up the presentation now with Dr. Dobson continuing to read from a letter that he wrote to his wife, Shirley.

Dr. James Dobson: You have become me and I become you. We are inseparable. I've now spent 46% of my life with you and I can't even remember much of the first 54. Not one

of the experiences I've listed can be comprehended by anyone but the woman who lived through them with me. Those days are gone, but the aroma lingers on in our minds and with every event during these 21 years, now 50, our lives have become more intertwined, blending eventually into this incredible affection that I bear for you today. Is it any wonder that I can read your face like a book when we're in a crowd.

The slightest narrowing of your eyes speaks volumes to me about the thoughts that are running through your conscience experience as you open Christmas presents, I know instantly if you like the color or style of the gift because your feelings cannot be hidden from me. I love you SMD. Remember the monogram shirt? I love the girl who believed in me before I believed in myself. I love the girl who never complained about huge school bills and books and hot apartments and rented junkie furniture and no vacations and in humble little Volkswagens. You have been with me encouraging me, loving me, and supporting me since August 27th, 1960, and the status that you've given me in our home is beyond what I have deserved. So why do I want to go on living? It's because I have you to make the journey with. Otherwise, why take the trip? The half-life that lies ahead promises to be tougher than the years behind us.

It's in the nature of things that my mom will someday join my father and then she will be late to rest beside him in Olathe, Kansas, which has occurred overlooking a wind-swept hill from once he walked with Benji and recorded a cassette tape for me describing the beauty of that spot. Then we'll have to say goodbye to your mom and dad. Gone will be the table games we played and the ping pong and the lawn darts and Joe's laughter and Alma's wonderful ham dinners and her underlined birthday cards and the little yellow house in Long Beach. Everything within me screams no, but my dad's final prayer is still valid. We know it can't always be the way it is now when the time comes, our childhoods will then be severed and cut off by the passing of the beloved parents who bore us. What then my sweet wife? To whom will I turn for solace and comfort?

To whom can I say I'm hurting and know that I'm understood in more than an abstract manner? To whom can I turn when the summer leaves begin to change colors and fall to the ground? How much... you all have to forgive me. How much have I enjoyed the springtime and the warmth of the summer sun, the flowers and the green grass and the blue sky and the clear streams have been savored to their fullest, but alas, autumn is coming. Even now I can feel a little nip in the ear and I try not to look at a distant lone cloud that passes near the horizon. I must face the fact that winter lies ahead with its ice and sleet and snow to pierce us through. But in this instance, winter will not be followed by springtime except in the glory of the life to come.

With whom then will I spend that final season of my life? None but you, Shirils. The only joy of the future will be in experiencing it as we have the last 21 years hand in hand with the one I love, a young miss named Shirley Deere who gave

me everything she had, including her, including her heart. Thank you, Shirils, for making this journey with me. Let's finish it together.

I apologize. I did not expect that to happen to me, but it sort of fits with the emotion of where we are today. I love you all. I'm grateful for the time we've spent together and the end is not yet. And I want to ask Shirley to come. I don't know how she's going to follow that. Would you welcome her today?

Shirley Dobson:

Thank you. Oh my. That is going to be hard to follow, Jim. That was a very special weekend and I'll never forget it. Well, this is quite a historic moment, 33 years of ministry and it just seems surreal. And Jim said earlier that he'd been doing a lot of thinking about what he should talk about today. And I also have been doing a lot of thinking about it. And I could have gone in a lot of different directions today with my remarks, but I just was recalling all the times that my husband has shown such love and respect to me publicly as he has today and also on the radio. And I just wanted today to pay tribute and honor to the man that I will have spent 50 years with August 27th of this year. I met Jim when I was a sophomore in college and he was a tall, blonde, Texan and captain of the tennis team.

And I'd had my eye on him for some time and I was hoping there was going to be a way that we could meet. And I had seen him buzzing around campus. He had this old red Mercury convertible and I would see him all around campus and he always had a big load of girls in the car and they were laughing and their hair was blowing in the wind, and I thought, I think Jim is pretty wild, but he also looked like that he was having a lot of fun. So later on when I got to know him, the thing that I really loved about him is I had such a good time with him. He had a great sense of humor and he would just make me laugh so hard. And after we were on a date one night, he brought me back to the dorm and we were sitting out there talking and I told him that I was the head cheerleader in my high school. He said, "Oh, you were?" He said, "Can you still do any of the routines?" I said, sure. So he said, "Well, let me see one." So I got out of the car, I walked to the middle of the street. It was 11 o'clock at night. There were no cars. And I began my cheerleading. I said, "Go back. Go back to the woods. You haven't. You haven't. Haven't got the goods."

Well, I came to the grand finale. I leaped up in the air, curled my legs under me, and when I came down, my knees totally buckled, planted my face in the asphalt, bloody knees in all. And Jim just was bent over. He was howling. He thought that was so funny. I thought it was funny too. So we just both ended up just bent over and laughed. I fell in love with Jim long before he fell in love with me and right away, I noticed qualities about him that I really admired. He was self-confident and he had a powerful sense of direction and seemed to really know where he was going. He said he intended to get a Ph.D. from a major university and then he was going to be a Christian psychologist in private practice. I knew he had the brains, determination, and discipline to achieve those goals.

Other guys would tell me about their lofty dreams. They were going to be a doctor, they were going to be a lawyer, or their plans are really vague and I didn't really believe their spin. But Jim, there was something about Jim. I knew that he was headed somewhere and I knew that he meant it. I saw his talent for writing in those days and I loved the little romantic notes and things that he did for me. One night he took me back to the dorm and about an hour later, one of the girls knocked on my door and she said, "Here's a Coca-Cola from Jim." When I popped open the lid, he had written a little love note and it was curled in the neck of the Coca-Cola, and I thought that was so creative. And all the girls, I'm not kidding, the girls in my dorm are really jealous of all the creative romantic things that Jim did.

I also noticed that he was a man of sterling character. He felt very strongly about all the moral issues. To this day, I don't think very many of us can say this about anybody or ourselves, but to this day, I have never known him to tell me or anyone a lie. I was a little bit more flexible about little white lies if there is such a thing. For example, I would tell guys that I didn't want to go out with that asked me for a date that I had a date and things like that. So I didn't think an awful lot about truthfulness. But after we were married, I found out just how strongly Jim felt about the truth. One day he asked me to make him a tuna sandwich, and those of you who know Jim Dobson real well know that he wouldn't touch mayonnaise with a 10 foot pole.

He got sick on it when he was a little child, and he's never liked it ever since. Now ladies, I want you to tell me how do you hold a tuna sandwich together with chopped pickles and chopped onions if you don't put just a little mayonnaise in it. So tuna has a strong smell, so I thought I'll just put a teaspoon of mayonnaise in here. He'll never know it. So I put the plate in front of him and he said, "Shirley, did you put mayonnaise in this tuna salad?" I said, "Jim, I know you don't like mayonnaise."

He probed a little further. He said, "Did you put mayonnaise in this tuna?" I said, no. So we had our sandwich, and when I got up from the table, the spirit of God just began hammering on my conscience. I was so troubled in my spirit that I had lied to him. The conviction grew heavier and heavier. I knew I'd done wrong and I felt terrible about it. And I asked the Lord to forgive me for telling my husband a lie. And then I knew I had to go and confess it to him and tell him what I'd done. And I'll never forget what he said. He said, "Shirley, a marriage is built on mutual trust. And if you lie about the little things, how can we trust one another about the big things?" He said, "Your lie was a little thing, but it has bigger implications for our relationship." And since then, since that time, I have tried to live my life by those principles of mutual trust and honesty. I've discovered that sometimes it isn't easy living with a very good man.

If one word would characterize Jim Dobson, it's the word integrity. He takes the positions he does not because they're popular, not because they're easy, not because they're politically correct, but because he believes it's the right thing to do. I know him to be a man of great courage and conviction, a man of great

passion and compassion, and his dedication to Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of his life and the word of God, his compass. Going back to our college days when we were engaged H.B.'s mother, which is Jim's aunt, said to me, the Dobson men make great fathers and husbands, and she was right. I have said many times, of all God's kindnesses to me, giving me my husband has been one of the greatest blessings in my life. I have seen him in all kinds of situations. He is not one person on the radio and another one at home.

He is who he is and who you hear him to be on the radio. He is a good and godly man. And I believe that is why God has blessed this ministry and blessed him because of his life. There has never been a scandal at Focus on the Family. And someone said just this week, we have never had to go to bed wondering if he was going to do something terribly wrong. And speaking personally, I have never had to worry in my 50 years of marriage to him that he was going to be unfaithful. For one reason, and he said this, if he ever did cross that line, I'd know it in 10 minutes. No, I'd know it in two minutes.

You are the best of the best and I really mean that. We have been so blessed to have the friends that we have and the employees and to our beloved constituents, I want to thank you for your loyalty and support, but most of all for your prayers. You have openly shared your lives with us and I would just like to close by reading a really quick letter from one of our constituents that we got not too long ago. She said, "Dear Dr. Dobson, I've been a listener of your broadcast for 19 years. Because of you, Dr. Dobson, I had a Christian father figure who came into my home four times a day on KKLA. Your soothing voice brought wisdom with every broadcast as a new believer in the early 1990s. As a newly married woman and later as a mom. Because of you, Dr. Dobson, I began a homeschooling journey 18 years ago before it was popular or heard of.

Because of you, Dr. Dobson, I was able to minister to my neighbor using your, *When God Doesn't Make Sense* book. Her beloved toddler had just drowned in the Pacific Ocean and she was searching for answers. Because of you, Dr. Dobson, my husband and I had tools to help our children along the uncertain path of puberty using your *Preparing for Adolescence* CDs and books. Because of you, Dr. Dobson, I had the opportunity to read *Bringing up Boys* and gain a greater understanding regarding the needs of my sons, allowing them to get dirty, be active, and loud. Because of you. Dr. Dobson, I had the privilege of sitting at the feet of countless guests and learn about life, first and foremost, spiritually as well as socially, economically, physically, morally, mentally, and emotionally. Because of you. Dr. Dobson, our family, is now on the scariest adventure of all, adoption.

We are currently pursuing a special needs child from China between the age of three to seven years old. You have to know that my husband and I are in our forties by faith, we move forward in obedience. Neither my husband or I had spiritual mentors, neither of us have family members who are saved. You can't imagine the challenges we face raising our children without a spiritually rich heritage. But listening to your broadcast has given us a virtual family, and I'm so

grateful. Thank you to Shirley for her efforts with the National Day of Prayer and for unselfishly sharing you with millions of us." And we've gotten so many of those lovely cards and letters of encouragement and thank you. And we just want you all to know out there in radioland if this is played, how much we love you also. And lastly, I want to give praise, honor and blessing to our Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to be a small part of His work here on earth. We have witnessed His faithfulness again and again. We will be continuing in ministry just in a different part of God's vineyard. I leave you today, Jim and I both leave you today with Philippians 1:3. We thank our God upon every remembrance of you, and may God bless you, and may He bless us all. Thank you.

Roger Marsh:

Shirley Dobson's closing words from the book of Philippians revealed the deep love and gratitude that she and her husband, Dr. James Dobson, carried for all of those who had been a part of their ministry journey when she said, "We thank our God upon every remembrance of you." And today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we've been remembering the life and legacy of our founder and chairman, Dr. James C. Dobson, who went home to be with the Lord last Thursday, August the 21st. This historic farewell message that you've been listening to today and on our last broadcast featuring Dr. Dobson and his wife, Shirley, as they were giving this farewell address and another media ministry that they helped found right up the road from here, they were getting ready to launch Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and this remarkable broadcast captures not only a transition point in their ministry journey, but also the beautiful testimony of a marriage built on trust, integrity, and unwavering commitment to Jesus Christ.

Now, if you missed any portion of today's program or if you'd like to go back and listen to it again, you'll find that in our archives at drjamesdobson.org. You know the letter that Shirley Dobson read from a faithful listener speaks to the heart of why we do what we do here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. For the past 15 years, we've continued the mission that began all those years ago: coming alongside families with biblical wisdom and practical guidance. Every broadcast, article, and resource we create is designed to strengthen the foundation of your home and help you navigate life's challenges with faith and confidence. Now that Dr. Dobson has gone home to be with the Lord, please know that the work of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute will continue and when you support us, you're investing in the future of America through the families that will shape tomorrow's leaders, we'll defend biblical truth and preserve our nation's spiritual heritage.

We'd like to thank you for your donation of any amount today by sending you a CD copy of the commemorative program you've been listening to. It's called "The Dobsons: A Marriage Made in Heaven," and it contains the entire recording of when Dr. James Dobson and his wife, Shirley, opened their hearts about their extraordinary journey together from their courtship in 1960 to the biblical principles that sustained them through nearly 65 years of marriage. This conversation is one you'll want to keep and want to share. Now, we'll be happy to send you a copy of broadcast on CD as our way of thanking you for your gift

of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. To receive your copy, simply go online to our secure website at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. You can also give a gift over the phone at 877-732-6825

Or you can write to us. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. And as we mentioned earlier this year, we are commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute and we are celebrating God's amazing faithfulness. And since you've been a part of this journey, we would love to hear your story. How has Dr. Dobson impacted your life or family over the years? We've seen many tributes on social media, but we want to make sure that we hear from you as well. Was there some wisdom on the radio that transformed your marriage or perhaps a book that Doctor has written, he wrote over 70 by the way, that gave you confidence as a parent? Well, whether it's a recent experience or a cherished memory from years past, we want to hear from you. Your personal story will be a meaningful gift for all of us, especially as we remember Dr. Dobson's life and legacy and will spur us on to continue this ministry into the future. Take a moment to visit drjamesdobson.org and share how God has used this ministry in your life. Or you can include your recollection when you mail us a gift of any amount at Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Grateful as always for the privilege of sharing these meaningful moments with you. And from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, may God continue to bless you and your loved ones 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.