



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Encouragement for the Single Life

Guest(s): Cheryl Martin

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello, everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, a radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk with psychologist and best-selling author, Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh, and if you've ever wrestled with the question of why God hasn't brought the right person into your life yet, well, today's program is just for you. Our guest today is Cheryl Martin, a Houston native who earned her master's degree in broadcast journalism from Northwestern University. She went on to work as a news anchor, reporter, and producer at the *BET* Network and *NBC* and *ABC* affiliates in Washington, D.C. That was before leaving broadcasting altogether to become an author, national speaker, and founder of the nonprofit organization called Excellent Living. Cheryl has something refreshing to say to single women who are tired of waiting, wondering, and worrying, and that message is this: your desire for marriage is God-given, and it's good, but it doesn't have to define you just right now. In a message delivered at a women's conference, she lays out five practical principles for living as what she calls a first-class single, a woman who is whole, purposeful, and fully trusting in God's timing. Now the message you're about to hear does touch on topics not suitable for younger children so listener discretion is definitely advised. Now So let's get into this dynamic presentation, "Encouragement for the Single Life" with our guest Cheryl Martin on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Cheryl Martin: How many single women are in the audience this afternoon? Single, never been married, divorced or widowed. If the truth were told, you're single not by choice, but my circumstances. You're waiting for Mr. Right, you thought you had found him, but he didn't get the memo. It's nothing wrong with this desire to be married. God has wired us for relationship. He put that vacuum there. So if God created this vacuum, if there's nothing wrong with the desire for marriage, what is a woman to do? This is a question I've asked myself many, many times over the years. And as a Christ follower, I begin to say to the Lord, since I am not married, I don't want to endure my singleness. I want to enjoy it. So I begin to think about this. If I am single, I decided one day, "Lord, I want to be not just an average single. I'm Your child. I want to be first class." First class. First class means exceptional, not mediocre. So then I began to ask myself, from God's perspective, what would a first class single look like? Because if you're going to be a leading lady, God's leading lady, you've got to follow His script of what a

first class single looks like. I didn't want to languish, so as a result of studying His Word, going through my own life experiences and the experiences of others, I came up with some principles. This God's leading lady who is single will first of all pursue God and not a guy. That sole hunger that I was talking about, God specifically placed that, that vacuum that only He could fill. He wanted us to have a relationship with Him first before we have a healthy relationship with a man. Many of us are getting it backwards. We put God on the back burner when we meet a man and then we can't handle what he's dishing out. We're looking for him to feel that vacuum that only God could fill.

He wanted to present to a man a whole woman. I'm not looking for my other half. It takes two whole eggs to make an omelet. If one egg is rotten, you got a rotten omelet. First things first, that vacuum God put there for Him. He says, let Me affirm you. Let Me make you whole. He says you are fearfully and wonderfully made. In other words, you are a fine woman. So if you have allowed God to love on you, guess what? You won't get so excited because a man told you you're fine. You already know that. You're not desperate as if you've never gotten a compliment. The God of the universe has already said. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. I have crafted you exactly the way I want you. But I want you first and foremost to be passionate about Me, your Creator. That's why there are a lot of desperate, clingy, needy women looking for a man to fill that void and he can't do it. This was so important for women to be whole that when Jesus was here, As important as His mission was, even though He had fed thousands of people, His heart went out to one needy woman in Samaria. Jesus said to her, if you drink of Me. "If you drink of Me, you will never thirst again." Drink of me. Don't have a surface relationship. The God we serve is a jealous God. No one should occupy the top tier of our hearts, but God. It said in the Old and New Testament, "You must love the Lord your God with your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind." All means all. Number two, this God's leading lady will recognize that her singleness is not a mistake or a holding pattern, but a wonderful opportunity to be the successful woman God wants you to be. This is a perfect opportunity for you to develop holistically. God is a God of balance. He wants us to develop educationally, socially, physically, and spiritually. This is a time if those dreams are there to work them, to get that degree. If you can afford a house, don't wait on him. Live in the present, recognizing it's not a mistake. This is the time, Lord, I want to be all that You want me to be. You don't have a lot of the distractions. Wherever you are, be all there. If you want to travel abroad, this is the time to do it. If you want to go back and get that master's degree, this is the time to do it. It is not a mistake. And you know what I've discovered in reading the Word? The ultimate matchmaker, if you look at some of the greatest matches in the book of the Bible, those women were busy working. They were not at home watching TV eating Krispy Kreme donuts. Depressed about their state. Ruth could have been depressed. A young poor widow living with her mother-in-law who was a widow. They could have both had a pity party every day. But they had pursued God first. Ruth was working. And it just so happened her God led her to the field of a wealthy man. I love this story. She caught his eye and we know the story, but she was busy as a single, not focusing on what she didn't have, but what she

did have. How many of us moan, we have a negative litany of what we don't have rather than I need to maximize this moment. God did not forget me. There is something He wants to accomplish in me as a single.

Number three, this first class single God's leading lady is going to honor Him in her dating. She's going to set boundaries before she meets Mr. Right. So you need to know what you're about before you meet the man. You need to know your boundaries. You don't let him set the boundaries. You need to already know how far you're going to go. And this woman knows sex is off limits until I do. Now I know society if you watch the music videos and listen to the love songs, it would imply that everybody's doing it. But again, this woman first rate, exceptional. She understands that God would never ask her to disobey Him to get the package that He has for her. Does that make any sense? See, this woman understands that if God denies us something, it's for our good.

Number four, as God's leading lady, you will not be paralyzed by your past. Maybe you've been a sexually active single. Maybe you've had children out of wedlock. Maybe you've had abortions. Maybe you have been that other woman. I've got some good news for you. And I'm excited about this news. God still has a great plan for your life. So if you've been paralyzed by your past, you can't get over what you've done. How many children you have, God still has a plan for you because Jeremiah 1 says, and I love this, "Before you were formed in your mother's womb, I knew you." Sometimes I just park right there and think about the awesomeness of the God we serve. He knew you before you were even conceived, but it doesn't stop there. He not only knew you, He had already carded out your assignment. He knew the mistakes. He knew the blunders. And He says, "My plans for you are good." I don't care who has written you off. God has not written you off. That's the good news. God has not written you off.

Each day getting stronger. Going to Him, say, Lord, make me a whole woman. You have validated me. I know who I am in You. And then number five, this woman, number one, pursues God. Number two, her singleness is not a holding pattern. She's just not languishing. Waiting for a man, but she wants to fully develop to be everything that God wants her to be. Number three, she's going to honor God with her dating. Number four, she will not be paralyzed by her past. And then finally, number five, she trusts God to give her His best in His time. She trusts God. She says, Lord, I'm going to wait on You. Whatever Your package is for me, I'm trusting that You know what is best. I'm not going to write the script. So many of us, we've already decided, I want to be married by XX. And if we're not careful, a counterfeit will come.

I have a dear friend who shall remain nameless, she set a time limit, used all the Scriptures the wrong way. You know, Mark 11, 22, "Have faith in God if you believe." She bought the wedding dress, booked the church, asked people to be in the wedding. The only problem, she was not dating anyone, but she was believing God. Because the Scripture says, "If you ask for what you will." See, we women can think about something long enough. We're good at that. Get the

fantasy going. Get a couple of sisters to believe God with us. That's not faith, that's pretension. That's presumption. And God will not move on presumption.

You can have an all-night prayer meeting. You can fast 40 days. That's not faith, that's presumption. And it's when I gave her Scriptures, she had Scriptures to counter. Rightly divide the Word. And a group of us just prayed and asked the Lord to touch her heart. And finally she put aside those plans and canceled the appointment at the church. But this woman says, "I am going to trust God that in His own timing He's going to give me what He deems best. It may not be what I had in mind I didn't want the script that I have but has it been good for me? Yes. It has humbled me, made me more sensitive and caring and more Christ-like because I've been crushed. The only I have to depend on is Jesus."

See what a lot of us don't understand God doesn't do anything without purpose. There's a reason for it. We have one agenda. God has another. He said to me, "I'm fitting you for Heaven. Forget your reputation. I use everything to conform you into my image." So this woman waits on God. It's a challenge for us as women. It's a great temptation for us. To get busy and get ahead of God and to get anxious, especially in our society when very few women are willing to take the stand to be a leading lady in their singleness. You don't know how it bothers me when men tell me, they can't wait to tell me when they were dating a so-called Christian woman who exhibited un-Christlike behavior. They couldn't wait to call me. "Guess what? I met her at your church."

My prayer is that there will be an army of women that every single woman in here this afternoon will make a vow to really trust God. Because when you don't do it God's way, in essence, what you're saying is I don't really trust God. I trust Him to a certain limit. But if you asking me "a no man go marry me unless," what you're saying is you're putting the limits on God. You may say, There are no single men in my church." You attend a church of 50 people I think our God is bigger than that. He's bigger than Jacksonville. This woman takes the limits off God and say, "You know what, God, it's not my responsibility to figure out how You're going to do it. I just know You're going to deliver on time." That's all I'm concerned about. You get him here. Purpose in your heart of every single woman walked out of here. Say, "Lord, maybe I didn't get it right. I haven't gotten it right. But I want to be a first class single. God's leading lady as a single. I'm going to do some reprioritizing." Pursue that relationship and say, "Lord, I'm not whole in this area. Fill me up here." It's okay. I did that with the Lord. Lord, I'm still hurting here. I would say, "Lord, I'm 30% healed. I'm 50% healed. I'm 60. I need You to fill me." I kept going to the cup. "Fill me with You so I won't be desperate. I won't be needy. I won't be clingy. So I won't just want a man, a body." I'll be discriminating. Go to Him. "Lord, I'm needy. Help me." And He will. Purpose to honor Him in your dating. Say, Lord, what is it you want me to accomplish right now in my career? Have a plan. I'm going to be busy.

These last couple of years have been the most gratifying years of my life. I have been deliriously happy and full of joy. Excited. So I know this works. I'm not giving you something that doesn't work. I tried it first before I brought it to you.

Full of joy and excitement about what He's doing. Why the Scripture says He's able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ever ask or think. Wonderful plans if we would just try Him and do it his way. You've done it your way, half-stepping. Why not make a commitment to give Him all? I reaffirmed my commitment to these principles again just the other day. You have to remind yourself sometimes. I said, "Lord, I just want to reaffirm, I trust You. No matter what it looks like, I trust. What do I know about You that you are trustworthy. That You cannot lie. That all of Your ways are right." And I reaffirmed in my heart just the other day, "Lord, I trust that you're going to give me your best, even if your best means a man or no man. You have to get to that point. Marriage or singleness forever, whatever pleases You. See, I'd rather be single than to wish I were. But I made that commitment. I trust You. And I challenge you to join with me and to get other women that you can be accountable to who are on the same page. We're going to be first class together. Sister to sister, you can walk this journey with other women, not somebody saying, "Girl, you gonna do what?" Find somebody of like mind. Iron sharpens iron.

Roger Marsh:

Five principles. That's all it takes for you to go from enduring your singleness to embracing it. You're listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, featuring an encouraging presentation from author and speaker, Cheryl Martin. Now to learn more about Cheryl or her book called *First Class Single*, and also information about her ministry, Excellent Living, go to jdfi.org. You'll find information about both the book as well as her ministry. And of course, you'll get a chance to hear this program again. That's jdfi.org.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanking you so much for spending time with us today. On behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we truly appreciate your prayers and ongoing financial support. 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.

With today's Dr. Dobson Minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: When I was 16 years old, I started flirting with rebellion at home. My dad was a traveling evangelist at the time, and he was gone a lot. And that left my mom alone to deal with my antics. I'll never forget the night we had a major clash. She went to the phone, and she called my dad. I was around the corner listening, and I heard her say simply, "I need you." My dad was a very popular minister in those days, and he had a four-year slate of engagements lined up. It made no difference to him. He immediately canceled his commitments and came home. We spent my last two years of high school hunting and fishing together and getting in touch again. It was a sacrifice he and my mom were willing to make, and because of it, they pulled me back from the edge. Are you willing to sacrifice when your kids are in need?

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