



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Making the Most of Ordinary Days – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Shirley Dobson and Gloria Gaither

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome once again to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and on today's program, we're revisiting a treasured conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson, his wife, Shirley Dobson, and their dear friend, Gloria Gaither. Back in the early 1980s, these two women wrote a beloved book together called *Let's Make a Memory*. 22 years later, they teamed up again for a new offering called *Making Ordinary Days Extraordinary*. Their message is a timely one for busy parents, that the small, simple moments with our children often become the ones that matter the most. So sit back and listen now, even if your day's been rather hectic up to this point. You'll hear Dr. Dobson talking with Shirley Dobson and Gloria Gaither about making the most of ordinary days right now on Family Talk.

Shirley Dobson: Jim, the point in this book is that parents are just frantic today to get everything done. Bosses expect more out of their employees now. And, you know, the pace of living is just so much faster. And the whole point of us doing this book was to make simple things because parents don't have time to sit around and think of something creative. So all they have to do is just flip through this book. There will be a very simple idea that doesn't cost anything that will make a memory in their family. It will last a lifetime.

Dr. James Dobson: Gloria, what are some of your favorite suggestions within the book?

Gloria Gaither: Probably the all-time big winner in our family over all these years and now with my grandkids is the cornstarch clay. It has been whipped up in all kinds of places: on vacation, in rented cottages, out at our log cabin, at home in my kitchen. And it's just a combination, and the recipe is in this book, of cornstarch and soda, which you always have around the house. You can divide it in parts, put food coloring in it, or you can use cookie cutters. You can roll it out like dough. You can shape hangers. You can poke holes in these. If you want to make flat ornaments, you can put them in the oven real quick and dry them out. We have done everything under the sun with cornstarch clay.

Dr. James Dobson: The kids like making the clay, too.

Gloria Gaither: By the time they're two, I've got them up on a stool helping to stir the clay at the stove with my arms around them so they don't get hurt. We used to save baby food jars and do a collection of what we called soil diaries. And I would just pack a bunch of baby food jars in my bag. And wherever we went, we've got red soil from Georgia. We've got sand, white sand from Florida. And here they all lined up. We put little gingham tops and tied ribbons around the tops of the jars when we got home. And they all have little labels. And even yet, there's all these pretty little jars and all these pieces of soil that we brought home all over the world.

Dr. James Dobson: Gloria, what I hear you saying is that especially with regard to your grandkids now, you prepare for those visits, whether they are vacations or whether they're coming to your house. You have thought through something for these kids to do that will make a memory.

Gloria Gaither: I just keep this stuff in case and a lot of times they happen on the spur of the moment, but they always know that at grandma's house, there's going to be stuff. And there always is stuff to do.

Dr. James Dobson: Shirley, you used to have tea parties with Danae, and she absolutely loved them. Describe them.

Shirley Dobson: Well, when she was about four years of age, we'd take all of her stuffed animals, and we'd put them on...she had a little table in her bedroom with four little chairs, and we'd put the mouse and the bear and the rabbit in these chairs. And then I would take out my fine China cups, breakable saucers. And I would make the tea, and we'd have a little tea party. It was a way of teaching manners to her, but also just it's a sweet memory, and she remembers it to this day.

Dr. James Dobson: I also enjoyed doing something with Ryan. He was really heavily into guns. He had all of his toy guns. And we would take his little guns, and I would put his stuffed animals all over the house. We'd turn out all the lights and then come around with a flashlight and look for big game. You know, we'd go big game hunting and he loved that. A simple little thing. Like you said, Gloria, it doesn't have to cost much. It can be very, very simple. But kids at three or four or five years of age just love those things.

Gloria Gaither: Bill's favorite thing is camping out under the dining room table, which is about as much roughing it as he can take actually. But he loves to put a great big blanket over the whole huge dining room table and then they get peanut butter sandwiches and crawl in under there with the kids all bring their toys and then they camp out under the dining room table. Then the kids are begging grandpa to have a camp out under the dining room table. Dads are very, very important in this process. They may think of different things to do with the kids than the moms might. Bill's always coming in from the yard to the back porch where the kids are sitting or playing and making some strange noise, and he has gotten from that some really unusual nicknames like Uncle Moose and whatever animal he's trying to be and he makes funny noises and especially at night so

that the kids are half scared and half know that it's got to be Papa. But it's very important. I think play is how children learn. It's their work. So we should take place seriously.

Shirley Dobson: Another idea in the book for single dads I think would be fun, and that is hop along the penny trail. That's where you just take a penny, and you take your kids out, and you have the youngest one flip it first, heads or tails. Tails, you go left. You can say, we're going to go a block, or you can say, we're going to go two blocks this way. And then when you get to the end of the two blocks, you give another child and have them flip it again, and if it's heads, they go right. And it takes them all over the city. And then you look for things like, let's find the coolest car or let's find the, you know, the ugliest pet or the cutest pet. And then you just come home and talk about the things that you saw on this unscheduled little walk.

Dr. James Dobson: Danae and I used to look for Volkswagens. In those days, they were everywhere. That's because you drove one for a while. We did. We did. And she would try to see the Volkswagen before I did and we would count them, you know, and this is when she was three or four or five years of age. And she loved that game, too. I also used to take Danae on Saturday to the local school and play in the sandpile with her. She loved it when her dad played in the sandpile. And I would make castles and I taught her what a moat was and what a drawbridge was. She still talks about that today. She was five years old. She still talks about it today.

Shirley Dobson: Again, we hope that our listeners enjoy this book. We hope they'll implement it.

Dr. James Dobson: Gloria, the title of the book is *Making Ordinary Days Extraordinary*. What makes a day extraordinary? Is it just activity? What is it that makes it special?

Gloria Gaither: You make it special. What we're talking about is a parent's gift of themselves. And that's always translated for kids in time, in doing something together where they're focused in on them. Whether it's a game that you bought, but you stop and play it with them, what they really need is you. I know they're begging for \$100 tennis shoes, but what they really want is you.

Shirley Dobson: My hairdresser, I was talking to him about this book. And he said, "I'm so busy. I get home late. I'm tired. I mean, how do you implement these ideas?" Well, one thing you can do is you have to put it on the calendar. It's not just going to happen. I mean, pick one day in the weekend of that month that you're going to do something as a family, that you're going to make that an extraordinary Sunday.

Gloria Gaither: I guess I'm kind of a fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants person, and Shirley's a better planner than I am by far. But one of the things that I love in this book, and it's more indicative of how I operate, is spontaneous walks that happen with kids. A walk doesn't take any planning at all. And you get the dishes done, and the sun's not quite down yet, and you go for it. I always grab a lunch bag. I keep a bunch

of lunch bags in the pantry. And we each take one and find treasures on the way. And when we come back, we do things with them.

One of the things is pretty soon we'll be having the leaves starting to turn on the trees. And we collect bright colored leaves and we come home and take the iron and press them between two sheets of wax paper and then trim them anyway we want, poke holes in them and hang them. I have a side light to our back door and we hang them. I have permanent nails up there above the side light where we can hang things and we make stained glass. Things like that that don't take a lot of planning fit my kind of life better because I've had to find that home is portable. I've raised kids in green, stinky dressing rooms, in basketball arenas, and I've raised kids on buses and in motels. And if it can't be done without planning, it probably doesn't get done in my life. And my life has just been crazy. But I really do keep a craft bag packed so that I can do these things.

I love what Shirley just said about planning, however. We blocked out a week to have a vacation at home. And Bill and I told our secretaries, do not book anything that week. We want to stay home and we do not want to be interrupted. And we all did a family vacation at home. And we just didn't book anything. So our house is fun enough and our yard is fun enough. And, you know, we can take the paddle boat and go fish on the creek. But the thing is, stuff happens. And it gets nickel and dimed into lunches. And can you have breakfast with this person? And could you do this one meeting at 2 o'clock? And you're right. Sometimes you just have to get real intentional about it.

Dr. James Dobson: What you're saying, Gloria, is that you really can't use the excuse of being busy. You can find a way to do this if it's important to you.

Gloria Gaither: You do stuff you care about.

Dr. James Dobson: You find a time for it if it's really that important. Shirley, do you remember the night that you made Chinese food with Ryan?

Shirley Dosbon: He came home from school one day and he said, "Mom, I know cooking Chinese food is a lot of work, but if you'll cook Chinese food tonight. I'll help you. He said, I'll go to the market with you. We'll get the vegetables and I'll help you cut them up." And I said, "Okay, Ryan." So we did that. So we spent quite a bit of time together chopping up all these vegetables. And we had a really good time, a lot of good conversation. And so we had this wonderful Chinese meal. And if you remember, you came home from work and we just ate until we thought we couldn't hold another bite. And then turned to Jim and I said, "Boy, I'm sure glad this isn't the night we're invited to Fu Kong Lee's house." And Jim said, "Shirley, I think this is the night." I said, "You've got to be kidding." We ran to the calendar. Sure enough, it was that night, and we were 30 minutes late. And so we called him on the phone, and we said, you know, we got tied up, but we're on our way. And so we went over to Fu Kong Lee's house, and she had cooked a nine-course Chinese dinner and invited other people to come. So anyway, we politely took a little bit of everything.

Dr. James Dobson: She'd say, you want some more, whatever it was. And I would say, no, thank you. I'm really full. And she would spoon it onto my plate. And we just sat there and ate. I'm telling you, you know, we should have told them. We should have just been honest. We were a year later. But we faked it. And I've never been so full. I didn't even think I could walk out of that house that night.

Gloria Gaither: You know, another story about food before we forget this topic. I have this raspberry cake I have made ever since our kids were tiny. And everybody loves it. There has never been one single crumb left to have the next day. It just is always gone. So every birthday, we have raspberry cake. But this is a funny, emotional moment when they cut Suzanne's wedding cake and they took out the first piece, and there was this bright raspberry-colored cake. I mean, it wasted us all. It was like, oh, she's got raspberry cake for her wedding. And that was just such a beautiful salute, I think, to a family memory that we had all done as a family since she was a tiny little girl. And it started because she has a birthday on the 15th of December. And I made up my mind that it wasn't going to get mixed up with Christmas. So we never used Christmas wrapping for her birthday presents. And I wanted to have something that wasn't Christmassy for her birthday. So that's how the raspberry cake started.

So when she, in this June wedding, cut the cake and it was her birthday, it was like a wonderful way to say thank you, Mom, for making my day always special. And it was also that she had loved it so much she wanted to share it with us.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you cry?

Gloria Gaither: Yes. I bet you cried.

Shirley Dobson: Now, Gloria, you know everybody in Radioland is going to want your raspberry cake recipe.

Dr. James Dobson: We're coming down to the end of the second program here. And I would like to just try to put into words. the way I feel about this book and this project, because we're at a stage of our lives where that activity with children, at least our children, is a memory. We made a wonderful memory with them. And as we look back on it, it is the warmest experience in my life to have had that privilege of raising two human beings, teaching them about God and introducing them to His principles and helping them learn to carry His responsibility and reaching out to others and all those things that we tried to do. Taking them to church. There were times when I had been out speaking the whole week and I came home so worn out that I could hardly crawl into bed. And we got up on Sunday morning and we took those kids to church because that's what we did. And it's paid off. And those kids, they're grown now and they love the Lord. And as I look back on it, there is not one single memory that I can add to that legacy. It's all in the book. Everything is done. I can't go back and change one thing. There were days when we didn't do it right. You know, we've given examples here of when we did things right. It didn't always go that way. There were times when we were simply too tired, too busy. There were too many demands and I regret it today.

What in the world was I doing that was more important than that? You know, to make time for those little kids when they were small and even in the teen years when they didn't need us quite as much. You know what I'm trying to say?

Gloria Gaither: You know, Jim, you've said just a really vital thing just then because I think we tend to think we need to do this because the kids need it. I've got to find time to do this because the kids need it. The truth is we need to find time because we need it to. And when we look back at our lives, the things we did with the kids will be some of the most important days and important moments of our whole life. Not that the kids needed it. We needed it. Kids give us perspective, and they put things back right. Kids know what's eternal, and they'll tell you if we listen.

Dr. James Dobson: You have five grandchildren. Grandparenting is a little different than parenting, and yet, boy, it is so important, isn't it?

Gloria Gaither: It's a lot of fun.

Dr. James Dobson: You make a contribution to those kids there that really can't be made by parents in the hubbub of everyday living.

Gloria Gaither: Yes, and I think they think. You know everything, and you are a bottomless resource of everything they need, wisdom, stuff to do, fun. Grandma can fix it, whatever it is. I heard someone say a long time ago that the generation gap is only between succeeding generations and I think that's really true. I think there's seldom a generation gap between children and their grandparents because you, by then, are smart enough to become a kid again.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's what it takes, doesn't it? You get out on your hands and knees with those kids that you were talking about.

Gloria Gaither: Well, I got inline skates for my birthday.

Dr. James Dobson. Inline? I got to see that. That I have to see. We loved bicycles, didn't we, Shirls?

Shirley Dobson: We did. And speaking of how tired you were, I remember that Sunday that you'd been on a trip and you'd come home and you really needed to rest, but you took Danae out on a bike ride in the afternoon. And, of course, it didn't turn out as well as we'd hoped because if I remember right, her foot got stuck in the spokes, and both of you went head over heels on the pavement.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, in fact, Gloria, that story is in your book, *What My Parents Did Right*.

Gloria Gaither: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: Danae shared that.

Gloria Gaither: Yes. It's a great story.

Dr. James Dobson: She was only two years old, and she stuck her foot into the spoke. She was sitting on the bar in front of me, and the two of us went head over heels and landed in the street. Cuddled her up in my arms and ran to the house crying myself. And both of us were crying and took care of her and nursed her. And fortunately, her foot was not broken, but it was sure sprained. And I just remember it as, unbelievably, a very warm time, even though it was a very painful time.

Shirley Dobson: I would just like to add to what Gloria said, that when you come to the end of your life and you look back, it won't be the plaques on the wall or the achievements. In your case, Jim, the books that you've sold that you'll remember. It's really who loved you and who you loved and what you did in the service of the Lord. Those are the things that are going to count.

Dr. James Dobson: Everything else is wood, hay, and stubble. Gloria, any last thing to the parents who are out there about this book?

Gloria Gaither: I just would say two words. Think forever.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Gloria Gaither: There will be a lot of voices calling for your attention and at the end of the day, you're going to be tired, and your back will ache, and you will sometimes lie there in bed and say, what made me so tired? And trust me, if you can come up with one or two things that will live forever, you've done a good day.

Dr. James Dobson: Gloria, you and Bill wrote an incredible song. "We Have this Moment to Hold In." Quote the lyrics of that song.

Gloria Gaither: We have this moment to hold in our hands and to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand. Yesterday's gone. Tomorrow may never come, but we have this moment today.

Dr. James Dobson: Could you sing that acapella?

Gloria Gaither: No, I'm not a singer. I just would really like to urge you to let yourself be interrupted. I really would like to repeat what I said about kids know what's eternal. And when they're pulling on you, sometimes they are telling you something really important. I remember one time Benji caught me in the middle of it... It's a long story, and I'll make it really short. But it was one of those days, and Shirley knows what I mean by one of those days. And we had supper late, and I was exasperated, and I was not in a good mood, and nobody else was. And dinner was a disaster, and the phone rang, and I was disgusted at Bill because he kept getting up to answer it instead of letting it ring. And finally everybody got out of my way, and I'm unloading the dishwasher, and I'm slamming the dish towel, and I'm thinking, you know, now I still have all this other stuff to do, and I've got to do a load of wash, and everybody's deserted me, and I need to clean

up the kitchen all by myself. And I was having a big pity party. And this little guy came down across our living room and into the dining room and into the kitchen where I was. He said, "Come out here, Mommy." And so I started, "I can't. I'm just one person." I mean, you know, you've heard the speech, and he had heard it before, too, and didn't feel obliged to hear it again. So he turned on his little heels and started back across the kitchen, across the dining room, and out the front door. And as he got to the front screen door, he turned back over his shoulder, and he said, "Okay, Mom, but you're going to miss it." Well, you know, kids know how to get to their mother, so I heard his little voice echoing, put the dish towel down, and shut the dishwasher and followed him across the living room and into the front hallway and opened the screen door. And when I opened the door, he heard me and he was about halfway down our hillside. And he turned, and his little face just broke out in a big old grin, and he just waved his hand like this, and there was the most gorgeous sunset you had ever seen. The black willow trees were silhouetted against that sunset, and the geese were restless flying up across it, and a jet stream had gone from the horizon diagonally across that sunset, leaving this beautiful magenta ruffle across the sky. And he looked back at me, and he said, "Look, Mom, there's a ladder clear to Heaven." And I just gathered him up in my arms, and we sat there on the hillside and watched the sun set and disappear. And you know how long that took? About maybe seven minutes.

Dr. James Dobson: You would have missed it.

Gloria Gaither: I almost missed it for dishes. And trust me, that would not have been a good tradeoff. But that little guy, he didn't know how to say it. He just sensed the stress in our family and at the table and in that room and knew that what I needed was a sunset and he was right.

Dr. James Dobson: How many of us miss the memory because we're too busy to notice it?

Gloria Gaither: And I almost was.

Dr. James Dobson: Shirley and Gloria, thank you for writing this book. This one's called *Making Ordinary Days Extraordinary*. Shirley, you want to make a memory with me tonight? We'll go out to dinner and we'll sit and talk and be dreamy-eyed again after all these years.

Shirley Dobson: I thought you were going to go home and make dinner, Jim.

Dr. James Dobson: That's no memory. That's a disaster.

Gloria Gaither: That might be a memory.

Dr. James Dobson: Make me Chinese food. How would that be? Gloria, would you tell Bill hello for us and give him my regards?

Gloria Gaither: I will do that.

Dr. James Dobson: I have great respect and appreciation for him and for the work that you all do.

Gloria Gaither: Thank you, Jim.

Roger Marsh: At the end of the day, our children don't need us to be perfect or to give them the world. What they really need most is simply us: our time, our attention, and the ordinary moments that become the memories that they will carry for a lifetime. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk as we've been revisiting Dr. Dobson's warm conversation with Gloria Gaither and Dr. Dobson's wife, Shirley Dobson, about making lasting memories with the children we love. If you missed any part of today's program, or if you'd like to share it with a busy parent that you know, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). You'll find parts one and two of this conversation.

Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we're committed to preserving and promoting the institution of the family and the biblical principles upon which it is based. Dr. Dobson literally gave his life to that mission. And today, we carry his timeless wisdom forward to reach a new generation of families. And we invite you to partner with us in that work. To make a secure donation online, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Or if you'd like to speak with a member of our constituent care team, you can call 877-732-7333. That's 877-732-6825.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to tune in again next time 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.

Hello friends, Roger Marsh here. In today's rapidly changing world, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute remains committed to our founding mission to preserve and promote the institution of family and the biblical principles on which it is based. Thanks to your prayers and faithful support, we're reaching millions through our daily family talk broadcasts, online resources, and policy initiatives. As President Reagan wisely said, freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. And that's why we are working tirelessly to uphold and strengthen families, and protect our God-given freedoms. Thank you for standing with us in this mission. Together, we're making a difference for generations to come.

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

Dr. James Dobson: A few years ago, my wife and I hired a plumber to install a gas barbecue unit in the backyard, and then we left for the day. When we returned, we both observed that the barbecue was mounted about eight inches too high. Shirley and I stood looking at the appliance, and our reactions were quite different. I said, yes, it's true. The plumber made a mistake. The barbecue unit is a bit too high. By the way, what are we going to do for dinner tonight? Now, I could have

lived the rest of my life without even thinking about that barbecue unit, but to Shirley, it was a big deal. Why? To a woman, especially a homemaker, the house is an extension of herself. That's why a husband would be wise to recognize this differing perspective and to remount the barbecue unit if that's what it takes.

Roger Marsh:

For more information on this topic, visit [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org).