



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** What the Bible Says About Being a Man

**Guest(s):** David Jeffers

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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 Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. What does it really mean to be a man of God in today's culture? With masculinity under attack and the role of the father more confused than ever before, men across America are searching for answers. Well, on today's edition of Family Talk, Dr. James Dobson sits down with David Jeffers, a retired Army master sergeant, blogger, and author of the *book Man Up! What the Bible Says About Being a Man*. David's path to biblical manhood ran straight through personal failure, a crumbling marriage, estrangement from his own father, and a career that looked like success on the outside while his home life fell apart. But that is also where God met him. Let's listen into this conversation right now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.
- Dr. James Dobson: I want to introduce a new friend to you. He's not only going to be a friend to you, but he has just become my friend. One of the great pleasures in doing this radio broadcast is that it's given me the opportunity to meet and get acquainted with a huge number of people and every one of them has been unique and I've learned so much through the years about the human personality, what people care about, what their concerns are, how they feel about their families. There's just an encyclopedia of information that's come from these people that I've gotten acquainted with. And I want you to meet another one as I said today. His name is David Jeffers and I want to tell you how I came to know him. He's a former master sergeant in the United States Army. I think he was there for 22 years.
- In recent years, he has become a blogger and an emailer and a writer and that led me to write him and thank him for something that he had done. He wrote me back and we became what you might call distant friends. And I've invited him to come and be with us today to talk about his book, but I've only met him today a few minutes ago face to face. David, you're everything I expected it to be. Welcome to Family Talk.
- David Jeffers: Thank you for having me, Dr. Dobson. As I was telling you, I feel like I've come full circle because it's been 23 years in this journey I've gone on seeking the Lord after having gone through a divorce of how to be a man and searching the

Scriptures. And one of the things that I was given to read was your book about when God doesn't make sense.

Dr. James Dobson: You said you really did not know how to be a man.

David Jeffers: I did not.

Dr. James Dobson: When you got married.

David Jeffers: Not what God decided

Dr. James Dobson: You spent 22 years in the military.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: Why was that book in particular, *When God Didn't Make Sense*, helpful to you?

David Jeffers: Well, I think the biggest thing, and I've shared this a hundred times if I've shared it once with people. The biggest thing I learned from your book was God's timing is always perfect, but it's usually three days late for us. At the time I was-

Dr. James Dobson: It comes out of the story of Lazarus.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: Jesus didn't get there on time.

David Jeffers: Right. At the time I was the head of the senior non-commissioned officer academy for the aviation branch at Fort Worth.

Dr. James Dobson: You were a master sergeant.

David Jeffers: At the time I was a sergeant first class. I wasn't a master sergeant yet. So I was a platoon sergeant level and it's a platoon sergeant school. And I had a lot of access. I can make things happen with a phone call. I made things move fast, quick. But when I read that and in the army, we have a saying hurry up and wait. But I didn't get that sense from what you were saying. It was I needed to wait on God because God's plan is perfect.

Dr. James Dobson: He's got His own timetable.

David Jeffers: That's right. And it's like, why don't you just wait on God and let Him unfold this plan for you because you've made a mess out of your life. You're almost 40 years old. You're clueless on how to be a man that you know God wants you to be. I mean, I had my own definition of a man. Society had its own definition of a man. By all accounts, I looked a success by my career, but my career did not mirror my home life.

Dr. James Dobson: In fact, your commitment to the army, I don't want to upset anybody here, but your commitment to the army and your giving everything you had to it really undermined your relationship with your wife.

David Jeffers: It did. And there was a lot of red flags that told me this is crumbling before you. You can look at a building and see things falling out and you think this building's looked pretty bad. And so what do we do? I put some paint on it to cover up the cracks. And that's not what I needed to do. And then when it finally caved in on me, reality took over and it's like-

Dr. James Dobson: Did you feel like a failure?

David Jeffers: Absolutely. Absolutely. I felt like a failure. Then I felt betrayed. Then I felt angry. Then I felt depressed. We were talking at lunch that you go through this cycle and that's what I tell men who are going through a divorce. You're going to go through a cycle of emotions. You need to ride them out and wait on the Lord and just seek Him because the first thing you need to know is how to be the man God desires you to be. And that's what led to this book. I started getting these ideas for chapters. The actual chapter titles all came to me first.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me read them.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: Stand up, wake up, rise up, armor up, study up, look up, pray up, sober up, build up, make up, train up and show up.

David Jeffers: That's my favorite chapter of the last one. The truth is it's clear in the Bible who we're supposed to be. Biblical masculinity and Godly leadership, I think men are so confused about that because they're not reading their Bibles. And that includes the men in the pulpits across America. The churches across America are being affected by society. It's supposed to be the other way around and it's not happening. We're being affected by society because we as laymen who serve the Lord and those who are called to preach the Word are not in the Scriptures and they're not studying God's Word and they're not preaching the truth of it.

Dr. James Dobson: Having spent all that time with men and understanding where they're coming from, what were you thinking about the culture and what's happening to men and this assault on masculinity?

David Jeffers: Masculinity is so despised. I mean, they call it toxic.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

David Jeffers: A toxin is deadly. If you have a toxin in you, it makes you sick. It can kill you. If you try to publicly pronounce your love for Jesus or you stand for-

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, you'll be ridiculed.

David Jeffers: Right. If you stand for biblical marriage, if you stand for life both unborn and elderly, something that's historically proven the founding of this country, the traditional values that this country was founded upon, you're right. We get ridiculed. But for the everyday American male who says they love Jesus and want to be a man of God, that's your biggest fear is ridicule. Well, it's time to man up. It's time to stand on the truth.

Dr. James Dobson: That's what you mean by the title of your book.

David Jeffers: Yes. You need to stand up to that. Learn the truth of the Word. Stand on it, proclaim it and let the chips fall where they may. You're going to get ridiculed anyway.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

David Jeffers: You're going to get ridiculed anyway, so why not get ridiculed for standing on the truth of the Word of God?

Dr. James Dobson: Dave, tell me more about that military experience where you worked with so many men. You can't be in that kind of intimate relationship on night and day you're together, you eat together, you are housed together and it's just you learn something about one another. So what do you carry over from that to what we're seeing in the culture today?

David Jeffers: Well, I think the biggest thing I saw in both my leaders and my soldiers was this servanthood. If you're going to make the military career, you have to have a devotion to duty. That translates to becoming a man of God. You have to have a devotion to the Lord. You have to have a devotion to His Word.

Dr. James Dobson: Dave, you lost the son in Iraq, didn't you? In combat situation.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: What was that experience like for you?

David Jeffers: Well, it was very difficult, obviously. He was my only son and as he grew into a man, he became my best friend.

Dr. James Dobson: Was he a careerist?

David Jeffers: He was going to be. He talked about it, but then again, he had seen so much combat and so much violence. He had told me, "Dad, I don't know if I can do this anymore." And I said, "Well, take care of yourself, your soul, your spirit and your wife. Let the Lord show you what..."

Dr. James Dobson: How old was he?

David Jeffers: He was 23 and a half when he was killed.

Dr. James Dobson: How'd you get the word?

David Jeffers: His mother, my first wife was notified by the army and she called me ahead of time. She didn't want them just showing up on my doorstep. And it was funny because I was at work and my phone rang and it was her and I knew immediately the Lord had prepared me. I had had this dread, Dr. Dobson, since January, and he was killed in September of 2007, that something was going to happen to him, that he wasn't going to make it home this time. And I just remembered the movie; I think it was *Facing the Giants*. Anyway, in there, the coach can't have children, and he finally goes out and struggles with God, wrestles with God all night and just finally says, "If you never give me a son, I will still love you." And I finally got to the point that I'm not living in fear anymore of losing my son. And I told the Lord that if you take my son home, I will still love You.

Dr. James Dobson: You said that before...

David Jeffers: Before.

Dr. James Dobson: He was killed.

David Jeffers: Before he was killed in January and it brought great comfort to my heart and he was an infantryman. So I mean, the fact that he got killed in combat was not totally out of the spectrum of what he was doing.

Dr. James Dobson: You knew that could happen.

David Jeffers: Yeah, I knew he could do that. I was an army first sergeant. I'm a retired army for sergeant. I knew that was the thing. Of course, it was a shock, but I remember Becky calling me and she was distraught and she said, "Daddy, I know he wouldn't come back if he could."

Dr. James Dobson: He's in a better place.

David Jeffers: That was so comforting.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, we're talking today to those perhaps of women and children and of husbands who have lost the person they love the most and how do you get them through it?

David Jeffers: I just tell them that the grief, it gets less traumatic over time. I mean, you never stop grieving them, but if you know they know the Lord and you know the Lord, you'll be with them again. That he's no longer beaten and battered both

physically and spiritually by the combat that he had. I remember this. We were talking in August before he was killed about six weeks. He said, "Dad, I'm just not right mentally. I'm going to need help." I'm like, "Well, get help then, but make sure you get some spiritual counseling, Christian counseling." And then he said, he goes, got really quiet and he said, "Dad, I've lost count of how many people I've killed."

Dr. James Dobson: Oh my.

David Jeffers: All the years that I've been around Vietnam vets and guys who've been in combat, I've never heard one of them say that when they would talk to me about it.

Dr. James Dobson: He must have had a tender place in his heart.

David Jeffers: Oh, he did. And it had scarred him.

Dr. James Dobson: Was he a man's man?

David Jeffers: He was.

Dr. James Dobson: Were you proud of him?

David Jeffers: Yes. Incredible young man.

Dr. James Dobson: Did he know the Lord?

David Jeffers: Oh, yes. In fact, it was funny we did *Measure of a Man* together when he was in Iraq and we would study it and write and talk and he told me that he said, "Dad, I read the Psalms and the Proverbs that you taught us, and I have that in my book to get into the Word." He said, "I do that every day." And he said, "All I can do, dad, is read the five Psalms and the Proverbs that you taught me and ask God to help me to protect my men and to let me be honorable and not dishonor God." And I said, "Eddie, if that's all every man of God did in America, this country would be completely transformed."

Dr. James Dobson: Did you say he had a wife?

David Jeffers: Yes, sir. Her name's Stephanie and she was a young widow way too early.

Dr. James Dobson: On behalf of many, many in our listening audience, I want to say thank you for the sacrifice you made in giving your son in battle. I mean, that's a tough road.

David Jeffers: Well, before his first tour in Iraq, he was killed in his second tour, and we were sitting at my breakfast table and he was getting ready to deploy and I just looked at him and I said, "Are you sure?" And he goes, "Not you too, dad." Because his mom had been giving him grief. And I said, "I want to hear it from

you. Look me in the eye, man to man and tell me." And I'll never forget what he told me. He said, "Dad, this is my generation's fight. They came to our homes. They attacked our land. I'm going into the infantry to kill terrorists." And that's what he did.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's go back to the content of your book.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell us what you meant by wake up.

David Jeffers: Well, when we wake up in the morning, we should be starting our day with the Lord, that we should read the Scripture. We should wait on God's voice to talk to us, that we should prepare ourself for every day. Obviously, we need to put our spiritual armor on and that's another chapter in the book, but the sword of the spirit, the only offensive weapon that we have is the Word of God. I mean, just look what Jesus did. Well, what did He do every morning? He got up, He went to His quiet place, He went to His prayer closet and He sought the Lord's face and that's what we need to do. Wake up in the morning and start your day in the Word. "Oh, well, I don't have time or I can't fit it into my schedule. I can't afford the time." You can't afford not to do it. This is a journey we're on. It's a quest. My pastor called it a quest in the afterward. And as fathers and grandfathers, we're in what he described as the middle mile of life.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, describe that. What is the middle mile?

David Jeffers: We're in our 40s, we're in our 50s, we're family men. Some of us are grandfathers. We're trying to raise a family. We're trying to become strong men of God. And it's in that period in life where we learn the most about life, where we learn the most about ourselves. And it's in that quest. It's in that middle mile where we either galvanize what it means biblical manhood or we lose it. I know plenty of men past my age who are still on spiritual milk and they miss that middle mile. They miss the galvanization of biblical manhood and they've not been able to pass that down to their grown children.

Dr. James Dobson: What a tragedy that is.

David Jeffers: And they still don't even know how to approach it. It's one of the things I talk about. It's never too late. Even if you're in your 70s, 60s, it's never too late to start influencing the life of your adult children, even if it's just by your example.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. They will only have one father.

David Jeffers: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And even if you have missed the opportunities before to take the time to be with them, to care for them, to love them, you can still say, "I love you. "

David Jeffers: That was the first thing that God had me do. 1997 when I said, " Lord, I'm ready to follow you. "He goes," Okay, good. Reconcile with your dad you've been estranged with for 20 years." And God knew though that was my ball and chain, that bitterness of my soul and my anger towards my father, I would never get to where He had planned for. So I did it. I reconciled with my father and I witnessed to Him and prayed the sinner's prayer with him. It was just a sweet seven years.

Dr. James Dobson: Did he find the Lord?

David Jeffers: He did find the Lord because he knew he had messed up. He abandoned us. And I told him I forgave him and I love him and that I wanted him to know. I said, " Dad, this does not have to be the end of the story. We have eternity to live. We could have the greatest family reunion in Heaven. "And he goes," Well, I hope that's so." I said, "No, I don't want you to have a hope so. I want you to have a know so."

Dr. James Dobson: How long did your father have to live when you had this conversation?

David Jeffers: Three months.

Dr. James Dobson: What did you say to your dad when you came to him to reconcile and he had not been a good father?

David Jeffers: No, I told him I forgave him and that I loved him and that the past was the past and I don't want to live in the past no more and that I want to spend the rest of our days that we have on earth as father and son.

Dr. James Dobson: Had you been angry with him?

David Jeffers: I hated him.

Dr. James Dobson: What had he done to cause that?

David Jeffers: He left us. He just left us, abandoned us.

Dr. James Dobson: Was alcohol a problem?

David Jeffers: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: How difficult was it for you to go to him?

David Jeffers: Well, once I got there, I wasn't. At first when God first told me, I'm like, "Oh, I don't know." But it just made so much sense. It just made so much sense.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you ask him for forgiveness?

David Jeffers: Yes. I told him, and he knew I hated him. And all the times that he probably wanted to come back to me, I slammed that door shut in his face, but then I knew-

Dr. James Dobson: Who brought you back to the Lord?

David Jeffers: My divorce did. I have failed at life. I'm great in the army, but the army's not life. The army's a career. My best man, Bill Malley in my wedding, my second wedding, he invited me to church and I went to church with him and actually they were having revival and on the second day of revival I found myself flat out face down weeping saying, "I just give up, God." I finally gave up and surrendered my life and said, "I'm ready. I'm ready for this to happen."

Dr. James Dobson: You were in the military at that time?

David Jeffers: Yes, sir. Yeah, this was at Fort Rucker. And again, my career is super great, but my life was complete wreck and that's when I said, "Okay, it's time to stop messing around." And I had godly men around me and they helped me.

Dr. James Dobson: What are you teaching in your Sunday school class?

David Jeffers: Right now we're shutting out of the gospel of Mark. Just having a great time studying God's Word. That's something I would tell you too, man. If you're attending church but you're not attending Sunday school or Bible study, get in with a small group, that's where you grow as men.

Dr. James Dobson: David, let me role play with you, okay?

David Jeffers: Okay.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm going to tell you who I am and then I want to ask you a question. Suppose I am a guy who says to you, I don't have any idea what you're talking about, all this Jesus stuff. I can't imagine there's a book here that's 2000 years old. I can't really understand a lot of it and I don't know how it applies to my life, but what you say sounds good to me. You've obviously found something to hold onto. You've obviously come to peace with yourself and in your family and even though you've been through ups and downs, there's something there that's meaningful to you. I don't know how to find it. How do I start?

David Jeffers: Well, I always like to answer a question with a question. First of all, are you truly seeking? If you're truly seeking, you can find God. Dr. Adrian Rogers said that a man not truly seeking God can't find Him any more than a crook can find a cop. He doesn't really want to find him. So if you really want to find God and find out what I'm talking about, then I want to introduce you to the man Jesus. So I would recommend that instead of trying to read the whole Bible from the beginning, grab the gospel of John and just read it.

Dr. James Dobson: It's a good place to start, isn't it?

David Jeffers: It's a great place to start. Just read the gospel of John. You're going to learn all you need to know about Jesus. And if you really do want to come to know Him, there's this verse in there where He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me. "

Dr. James Dobson: Continuing with that role playing there is reference in there that I don't understand. It's called repent, repentance. What does that mean?

David Jeffers: Here's a simple analogy. You think you know the way to your friend's house, but you know you're on the wrong road. Now, are you going to keep going down that road knowing you're going the wrong way or are you going to stop and turn around and get back on the right way? That's what repentance is. You're on the wrong road in life right now, sir. And you need to stop and turn and repent and turn from your way of what you thought was the right way and turn to the way Jesus Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Every man has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

David Jeffers: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: And repentance means saying, "Lord, I recognize that I'm wrong. I have done wrong.

David Jeffers: I'm on the wrong path.

Dr. James Dobson: "And I ask You to forgive me and I promise to do the best I can to follow You. "

David Jeffers: Yes. If you do not seek His heart and saturate yourself in His Word, it's going to be hard to get there. You have to do that. It takes determination, diligence and discipline. Those are three things you have to do.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's what you did.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir. And I'm so grateful for it. Not perfect. I make mistakes, but the Lord shows me, He chastises me pretty quick and gets me back right.

Dr. James Dobson: Boy, you really got a dose of it, I tell you, because you put it in the things you write and the things you believe. It's for real.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir. Because He's for real. He's for real.

Dr. James Dobson: So in essence, with all of the turmoil that's gone on in the culture and particularly now and the families that are upside down and there's an attack on the very essence of what it means to be a man, you can recalibrate. You can

start that over. You can say, "Lord, You lead me. I'm going to depend on Your word, the book as a guide and You show me to the things that I need to know."

David Jeffers: Seek the Lord, seek the Scriptures. You will find the answers.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, keep writing and keep teaching.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: Keep hanging on.

David Jeffers: It's a total joy.

Dr. James Dobson: Stand up, wake up. Straighten up.

David Jeffers: Man up.

Dr. James Dobson: And man up.

David Jeffers: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: The title of the book is *Man Up! What the Bible Says About Being a Man*. Thank you for making this trip.

David Jeffers: Thank you for having me. It was a total joy.

Dr. James Dobso...: Well, it's been a joy to have you, David, and let's stay in touch.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes, sir.

Roger Marsh: David Jeffers spent 22 years learning how to lead men into battle, but it took a broken marriage and a prodigal walk with God to teach him how to lead himself. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, featuring a conversation with David Jeffers, author of the book, *Man Up! What the Bible Says About Being a Man*. If you missed any part of today's broadcast or if you want to share it with a friend or a loved one, go to [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net) and if David Jeffers book caught your attention, you'll find a link for that there as well. Now, if you want to go deeper in learning about your role as a father or a husband, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has you covered. We've developed the Strong Dad's email series, a practical, biblically grounded resource built around Dr. James Dobson's decades of research on the irreplaceable role fathers play in the lives of their children.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh thanking you for joining us today here on Family Talk and from all of us at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, please know how much we appreciate your prayers and 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.

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