



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** What's It Like Being Married to Me? – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Linda Dillow

**Air Date:** June 24, 2025

**Announcer:** Hello everyone, you're listening to Family Talk, the 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, the broadcast ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, I'm Roger Marsh and on today's program, we're bringing you the conclusion of a powerful conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his guest, best-selling author, Linda Dillow. Linda has spent decades helping couples strengthen their marriages through her writing and speaking ministry. Her books have sold 1.5 million copies in the U.S., and have been translated into many different languages. In her book, *What's It Like to Be Married to Me?*, Linda challenges wives to take an honest look at themselves and their role in the marriage relationship. On today's edition of Family Talk, Linda will share inspiring stories of women who have overcome tremendous challenges in their marriages by turning to God. She'll also offer practical wisdom about handling conflict and creating a marriage that honors the Lord. So let's join Linda Dillow right now as she begins by sharing about some remarkable women who've become her personal heroes as we begin today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Linda Dillow:** In the book, Dr. Dobson, I share stories of some women who are my heroes. There are heroes out in the world. No one knows their names. Some of the heroes are women who have lived with very difficult woundedness in their life, whether it's from sexual abuse or from their husband having an affair or being involved in pornography. I share about women who really turned to God and said, "All right, I hate sexual intimacy, but would you change me?"

God did some amazing things in these women's lives, and I have to ask myself, "Okay Linda, your husband hasn't erred in this area. You weren't sexually abused, but if you tried as hard to please your husband and to grow in this area as this woman with all of her woundedness did, just think where you'd be." These heroes of mine challenge me.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Any man with any sense at all will be romantic with his wife and will talk to her and treat her with great love and affection, and then his joy will occur after bedtime.

**Linda Dillow:** Right.

Dr. James Dobson: If you try to separate those two, it really does not work.

Linda Dillow: It doesn't work, but you keep preaching it, Dr. Dobson. That's a good word.

Dr. James Dobson: I've been saying it for about 40 years.

Linda Dillow: That's a good word. That's a good word. Because my husband and I had the privilege to minister in eastern Europe and Russia under communism and meet believers who lived in such difficult circumstances, one of the questions I asked myself, and I ask this about my marriage, is, okay the Scripture says to me, "To whom much is given, much is required."

We live in a free land. We have space in our homes where we can have some privacy. In eastern Europe, they had none of those things. I remember going to a see a woman. She said, "Linda, I figured out since the last time you were here how to have a special time with my husband. At night after dinner, we go down our apartment block and we walk in the mud around the apartment block and talk together."

I hung my head and I said, "God forgive me." It's so easy for me. I have the space. I have the time. I have the money to go out for coffee with my husband. I have much, and yes, I'm blessed to have a man who loves the Lord. God requires more of me, and I want to be faithful.

Dr. James Dobson: We're talking to Linda Dillow, and the title of her book is *What's It Like to be Married to Me and Other Dangerous Questions*. You've got a lot of dangerous questions in here. Tell me, or better yet, tell the men who are listening if they should read this book. Is this only for women, for wives, or is it for men, too?

Linda Dillow: Dr. Dobson, you read it. You can tell them. I think that a man can pick the book up and as he reads it, say, "Okay, God, I want you to prompt me to ask myself these same questions."

Dr. James Dobson: I'll match her stride by stride.

Linda Dillow: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: She's trying so hard. That's what I love about women, you know that?

Linda Dillow: They really do try.

Dr. James Dobson: They work so hard at it. They really do.

Linda Dillow: I know, and I like that about them, too.

Dr. James Dobson: You talk in your book about a 30 day plan to come to terms with the issues you've raised. What is that plan?

Linda Dillow: This is something that Nancy Leigh DeMoss, a wonderful single woman who writes, is on the radio, speaks, and she gave a 30 day challenge to married women. Now, she didn't give it to the single women. She gave it to the married women asking them to only speak positive, encouraging words to their husbands for 30 days and also to speak those positive encouraging words about their husband to other people.

I don't think a man will ever change if he is criticized and continually told how rotten he is and maybe he is rotten, but that isn't going to make him want to change. We're changed when we feel that someone loves us. The German philosopher, Goethe said, "If you treat a man as he is, he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as if he could become, that bigger and better man, that is who he'll become."

I feel as women we have power. The power is in their husbands' areas of weakness that God gave him: his need for respect, his need for a companion, his need for a sexual partner. Boy, it's hard. I grew up with an alcoholic father. I watched it firsthand of what it's like to live in a situation like that. I lived as a child, not as a wife, but it's horrible.

It's just devastating, and yet I would say to a dear woman who has been so wounded, I want her to be at peace. I want her to be at peace with God and with herself and if she says, "God, show me how to love this very unlovable man," I believe she'll be at peace.

Dr. James Dobson: Linda, you made reference to a Scripture in Genesis that refers to the wife's role as a helper. That's offensive to some people, but it's right there in the Word.

Linda Dillow: It is in the Word. I got very excited studying about being a helper because in the Hebrew, it's the word *easer*. It's a name that God applies to Himself when He says, "I, the Lord God, am your helper." He takes one of His names, helper, and gives it to the woman and says, "Just as I am a helper to you, I ask you to be a helper to your husband." The very sad thing is that the way we use the word *helpmate* or *helper* today, it sounds very dreary.

Dr. James Dobson: It sounds subservient.

Linda Dillow: It sounds subservient. It sounds like you're a house frau wearing an apron and just saying, "Yes, sir." What we see in Scripture is it's a place of strength, just as God, our helper, is our strength, that to be a helper to our husband is really a position of strength.

Dr. James Dobson: In the early part of this book, you talk about a time when you did it right and a time when you did it wrong. I think it would be helpful to look at the contrast between those to get a perspective on perfection and what you're really talking about.

Linda Dillow: Dr. Dobson, there were a lot of times that I did it wrong, and there still are times I do it wrong. When my children were younger and we were ministering in eastern Europe and Russia, my husband took long trips. This was before email. Because of him ministering in communist countries, we couldn't call. He would be gone for three weeks at a time.

In our home in Vienna, Austria, we had a coal furnace and it did not like me. It just did not like me and he would show me how to do it, and no matter what I did, it went out. It just went out. I found myself after several trips he would come home and some of the first words out of my mouth were, "That furnace, it just will not work for me." Well, I haven't seen him for three weeks, and that's not the best way to welcome someone home. That was doing it wrong.

We planned an anniversary trip. I remember it well. Oh, I remember it well because it was one of the first times we went away without the children and they were parceled out one to this home and one to this home. I ran to the store to get a couple of last minute things, and my husband, who is a very, very bright man, able to do many things, but fixing things in the house is not on that list of things he can do.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm glad there's somebody else.

Linda Dillow: As I ran to the store, he decided to fix a leak, a slow leak in the bathroom. In the half hour that I was gone, that slow leak he tried to fix became a gush. By the time I got home, there was water all over the whole house.

Instead of going away on our anniversary trip and having a romantic walk by the river, there were neighbors in my home that he had called for who were sopping up water. We spent the whole night pulling up carpets, hanging them over the fence. It was just a nightmare.

In the midst of all of this, my wedding ring that was on the dresser in the bedroom was lost. It was my anniversary, and there was no romantic walk by the river. I was crying holding a flashlight going around the house trying to find my wedding ring.

The next morning, I could not believe what the man said to me. He said, "Let's just bring all the carpets in off of the fence, pile them, the sopping carpets, in the middle of the living room floor. Let's just forget it all and go anyway." I just looked at him. I just thought, "You are kidding. I want my wedding ring and I want to see if my carpets are salvageable." He says, "No honey, we've still got three days left of our time alone. Let's just go."

I went in the bathroom and shut the door. I said, "God, the last thing I want is a romantic walk by the river. I just want to stay home and get this mess cleaned up and find my wedding ring." I said, "But God, my husband said let's go, and so I trust You to change my heart as I do what my husband says."

Dr. James Dobson: You actually went.

Linda Dillow: I went. I came out of the bathroom.

Dr. James Dobson: There are some things that take you over the edge.

Linda Dillow: I was over the edge, but the truth is, every 10 minutes on this five hour drive, I thought about my carpets. I thought about my wedding ring. I wanted to cry. Every time I said, "But God, I love this man and he wants to go, so will you please change my heart?" It took all five hours, but do you know, we had the most intimate communication on that time away and I've always believed that God blessed because I made a very hard choice for me and I went with him.

Dr. James Dobson: That's impressive.

Linda Dillow: That was a time I did it right, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, let me tell you a time I did it wrong. The kids were small and I was speaking all over everywhere in addition to a full-time job at the university. When I would go away for a weekend to speak, I would speak from Friday night and then the next morning, Saturday morning, all day long.

When people took breaks to go to the bathroom, I stood at the front of the auditorium and answered questions about people who were having family problems and difficulties. It always wore me out. Somebody would take me to the airport who had an eight year old they wanted to talk to me about. By the time I got home-

Linda Dillow: You were exhausted.

Dr. James Dobson: I was absolutely exhausted, which is one of the reasons I stopped doing it. That's why I did the film series because I wanted to stay home. I couldn't be a father or a husband, I'd come home so tired.

I came home from one of those trips, I'd been in Atlanta. I got back to Los Angeles. I got to my front steps and I heard a helicopter, and I looked up and there was a helicopter going around our neighborhood with a light shining down. I didn't know if there was some burglar or something they were looking for out there.

I was just standing out there. I must've stood there for 20 minutes. Shirley's been waiting for me to come home. She's been handling these kids all weekend by herself. She was anxious to see me. I come home and I don't tell her what I'm doing. I just pull in the driveway and I stand out in the front yard for 20 minutes.

I was also on edge. We had an unnecessary conflict, some people would call it a fight, at that moment, after I had been out there for a whole weekend telling

people how much I loved her. The contradiction there was enormous, but life puts you in those situations. You have to have a lot of maturity to know how to handle them.

Linda Dillow:

I'd love to share with you about one young woman who really challenged me. I loved these young women that sat around the table and did the pilot study. I surveyed 500 women and then I did the pilot study with just a manuscript and a bible study with a group of older women and a group of young women.

I wasn't prepared for the emotion that would be there as they read aloud their marriage purpose statements. I had no idea. What it showed me was women are so busy. They're just so scattered, they don't have time to think deeply about who they want to become as a wife. I had challenged these women to do that.

One young woman, Renee, started reading her marriage purpose statement and she started crying. She started reading it again and she started crying again. Her friend next to her said, "I'll read it for Renee." I said, "I think Renee can do it." Renee finally got through it, and then she looked up at the women and she said, "I read this out loud last night to David and when I read it, I thought, 'Oh, I'm so far from this,' but he looked at me like, 'Honey, you're already on the way.'"

I'd like to read you what she wrote and what she read to David. It's a statement of who you want to become as a wife. "I pray that one day soon, I can be this person for my God and for my husband," as read by David. "You raised me up so I could stand on mountains. You made me want to be a better man. My head turned only in your direction and your laughter made me stare with delight. Your confidence made my breath escape and your passion for God and me was so great. Your heart always growing, the capacity never full. The kindness you showed was unconditional. You were perfect from your head all the way to your toes. You raised me up more than you'll ever know. The Lord was her love and I was her lover."

Renee read that to her husband, David, and it meant so much to him. Two days later, Dr. Dobson, David flew to Haiti to help with Compassion filming in the villages and when the earthquake of 2010 hit Haiti, he had just walked into Hotel Montana. Renee had just read this to her husband. This was one of the last things he heard his wife speak before he got on that plane. She called the members of the Bible study and said, "They can't find my husband. They can't find David after this earthquake."

All of the women in the bible study were wearing their Gripes Be Gone bracelets, and they would call me all week long, "Okay, Linda, my friend Renee doesn't know if her husband is dead or alive and I just griped to my husband about how he loaded the dishwasher. Oh, that is really significant in life. Watching our friend go through this makes me really think about how I'm loving my husband."

Dr. James Dobson: Did they ever find him?

Linda Dillow: They found him, but he was not alive, a month later. We all walked with dear Renee that month. At his memorial service at a church here, the pastor called Renee up on the stage and said, "Now Renee, you've been studying about marriage, right? You wrote a marriage purpose statement and it was one of the last things you read to your husband. Would you read that for us here?"

She was crying and she shook her head, and he read it to the audience, and you could've heard a pin drop. All of these people gathered to celebrate David's life, because I think every wife and every husband was thinking, "Wow, do I take my marriage that seriously? Do I really think about who I want to become?" How sad that David didn't come home, but how beautiful that that was one of the last things he heard from his wife.

Dr. James Dobson: The way life is, being tentative and unsure and uncertain, we can't take a single breath for granted.

Linda Dillow: We can't.

Dr. James Dobson: I think it's really helpful for husbands and wives to say to each other frequently, "Every day is priceless. Every day. We can't waste one of them in conflict."

Linda Dillow: No, we can't.

Dr. James Dobson: We really can't.

Linda Dillow: Or in griping and complaining and tearing one another down. Dr. Dobson, I'd just like to challenge every wife and every husband that's listening today to take some time and just ask God to just whisper to them, "Who do you want to be as a marriage partner 10 years from now?"

I encourage the women, every anniversary, get out your marriage purpose statement and get on your knees and read it out loud to God and just say, "Okay God, this is who I want to become. Will you show me this year of my marriage how I can grow to love my husband more?"

Dr. James Dobson: That is a great place to end. Linda, you are a very gifted communicator and the Lord has given you very significant insight on the relationship between a husband and wife. You have put a lot of that wisdom into this book, *What It's Like to Be Married to Me and Other Dangerous Questions* by Linda Dillow. I feel like we could go on, don't you? There's a lot more in this book. Are you writing again? Do you got another book in you?

Linda Dillow: I didn't think this book would ever be written. God will show me that, but Dr. Julie Slattery and I are working on a project called Authentic Intimacy.

Dr. James Dobson: She's here in the studio with us sitting over in the corner quietly. She's got a mind of her own and she could very easily have stepped in here and had a lot to contribute. Thank you for being with us.

Linda Dillow: Oh, thank you for giving me the privilege. It's been a joy.

Roger Marsh: Linda Dillow's challenge to examine ourselves honestly in marriage does take real courage. But I hope that today's conversation here on Family Talk has inspired you to do a bit of reflection as well. On today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, Dr. Dobson's guest, Linda Dillow has been discussing principles found in her book, *What It's Like to Be Married to Me?* Now if you'd like to share this message with someone who needs encouragement, or if you'd like to listen again for yourself, go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk) and once you're there, you'll not only find the audio for this two-part conversation but also information about the book, *What It's Like to Be Married to Me?*, written by Linda Dillow.

You know, the biblical principles that we've heard today here on Family Talk are exactly the reason why we exist. We are committed to helping preserve and strengthen the institution of marriage because we know that healthy, Christ-centered families are the foundation of a thriving society. When marriages flourish, children grow up securely, communities become stronger and our culture reflects God's righteousness. Right now, you have an extraordinary opportunity to multiply your impact on families all across America through the ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Now through June 30, a group of generous ministry partners has offered to match every donation to Family Talk dollar for dollar. That means when you donate \$50, it becomes \$100. When you donate \$200, that instantly becomes \$400. Your support helps us continue bringing biblical wisdom and practical help to couples and families who are struggling. To parents who need guidance and to families who are seeking simply just to honor God in their homes in a secular culture. Now you can make a special matching gift today online when you go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). You can also give a gift over the phone when you call 877-732-6825.

Keep in mind, as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount to Family Talk today, we'll be happy to send you a copy of Dr. Dobson's book, *Your Legacy*, along with the companion DVD. Now this resource will help you build a spiritual heritage that equips your children and grandchildren with an unshakable foundation of faith. Just visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and make your request known. You can also call us at 877-732-6825 to make your donation and special resource request.

Finally, with Independence Day just over a week away, I encourage you to sign up for our special "Faith of the Founders" email series, a production of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. You'll discover the remarkable role that faith played in America's founding by reading this series. And you'll also learn how our founding fathers understood that only a moral people could remain truly



free. Now these inspiring stories will strengthen your appreciation for our nation's Judeo-Christian heritage and you can receive your copy absolutely free. Go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and sign up for our "Faith of Our Founders" email series.

Well I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of Dr. James Dobson and all of us here at the JDFI, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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