



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Man to Man– Part 1

Guest(s): Rev. Gordon Dalbey

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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. I'm Roger Marsh. Few relationships shapes a man's life more than the one he has with his father. And when that relationship is broken or even absent, well, it can leave wounds that follow a boy well into adulthood. On today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we open up with a recording of two young boys who sent this message to their dad shortly after he had left their family. And we'll hear Dr. Dobson's response.
- Speaker 3: Dad, I went fishing with a fishing poll of mine. And I caught a turtle. Happy Father's Day. Happy Father's Day, Dad. Daddy, I love you. Say Daddy. I wish you could come to our house and stay there forever.
- Dr. James Dobson: If that doesn't put a knot in your stomach, I really don't know what will. Tender, innocent words from two little boys whose dad never returned home. The stories are a little different and the circumstances change, but there's so many men today who have gone through something similar when they were young, and as a result, they're still the walking wounded. They still have trouble forming relationships. They still find it difficult to reveal who they are. And they have problems with male identity as a result of something that happened many, many years ago. We're going to talk a little bit about that subject today. Some time ago, we invited Reverend Gordon Dalbey to be with us. He has a very strong desire to help men discover their male identity and understand their role in the home and in society. And he expressed some of those views in an outstanding book called *Healing the Masculine Soul*. And it has been helpful to many, many men through the years.
- Roger Marsh: Reverend Gordon Dalby is a Harvard trained pastor, former Peace Corps volunteer and a speaker. His book, *Healing the Masculine Soul*, helped pioneer the Christian men's movement in the late 1980s. Gordon spent decades ministering to men who are carrying the weight of a father's absence. And on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, he'll explore why that wound cuts so deeply and how God can restore what has been lost. Here now is Dr. James Dobson to begin today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's start right with your title and with your purpose here. Healing the masculine soul implies that the masculine soul needs healing. It must be sick.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that what you're saying? And how so?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Yeah, absolutely. These days, it probably doesn't take a whole lot of insight to look around our society to see that we men are really struggling today. Whatever issue you look at, it seems like even you take an issue like pornography, for example. Most of the effort at that, and certainly appropriately so, I've been to a lot of rallies and that kind of thing against pornography. To pick at the places that are selling and everything like that, marvelous. We've got to be doing these kinds of things, but very rarely do you hear anybody ask, "Wait a minute, it's men who are buying this stuff. What's the wound in the men that makes a man in particular so afraid of a real live, flesh and blood woman? Why are we so afraid to relate to a real woman? What's that fear within us that makes us turn instead to a page of paper?" But we men are really hurting around the country.

And most of the time you see, unfortunately, we men are not very skilled, frankly, expressing our feelings at times. We act it out more than we'll talk about it. Prisons, for example, are just filled with men these days. And you almost have to ask at some point, why are there so few men in church? The statistics are about one third of church members are men. And so many men in prison. What is it about the masculine energy somehow that we men don't know how to appropriate in a godly way? We're misusing, we're misfocusing. And I would say that the great wound there, if we want to get right to the source of the great wound is that we don't have relationships with our fathers to encourage us to be men. Every boy cries out to his daddy in his own spirit, his own heart. Daddy, show me how to be a man.

And the great tragedy in our society today is most men don't know how to reach out to their sons because they haven't been reached out to. And so they don't know how to reach out to the boy and encourage him and draw them close to him. A boy, if he boy looks to his dad like Jesus said in John 10:30, "I and the father are one." And the great question and tragic for our society today is how many men today can say like Jesus, I and the father and my father are one. I don't hardly know any man in my generation who can do that.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you referring to a kind of wimpish nature?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Well, I'm saying that we men don't know how to move in masculine strength today because we haven't had that inner confidence that comes with bonding with the father and with the male community.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you refer in your book to the soft male.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you mean by that?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: I mean that a man who's unable to move ahead with life, goals and direction, who doesn't have an inner sense of his own self as a man, who knows that he belongs in this world as a man. As a man, he's been given certain gifts and talents and strength that God, his creator father has given him and called him to put the use in this world to bring the kingdom in this world. Most men don't know that. We're just floundering around because even a little boy, for example, needs a father. If a little boy is building a mud fort or something, needs a daddy to come up and say, "Son, that looks good. I like that." But we don't have fathers who know how to reach out unfortunately to the sons to give them that kind of approval and encouragement.

Dr. James Dobson: Is this different, Gordon? Suppose how it was a hundred years ago. You think the role of men has changed, the self-concept of men has changed?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Yeah. I think a hundred years ago, prior to the industrial revolution, most boys actually went to work with their daddies. Even four or five years old, you're old enough on the farm to do some chores and you're around your father all the time. I remember one man in his late thirties I was ministering to once and he was just so lost in life. And I began to ask him, "Do you have any experience you remember with your father?" He said, "Actually, yeah, we had to pray about it." And the Lord began to reveal and draw back out of his memory. Once he was just laying down with his father, he was must be about five or six years old and his brother was about seven or eight years old and his dad had one of them in each arm. He says, "I can remember laying there with my daddy. And it was just a wonderful kind of sunny day. We're out in the grass and we'd done some chores around the house." And he said it was like there was a brown ooze coming out of my father and coming into us boys. And it just made us feel good. It was just a wonderful feeling just to be that bonded. There's that physical bond with the father, which-

Dr. James Dobson: I talk often about my father and my relationship with my dad. And I have people write or people who see me on the street who say that, "I long for what you had with your dad. I never had it with me. I never knew my dad. My dad rejected me. My dad abused me physically or emotionally or sexually."

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Let me give you a story of Father Richard Rohr, a Catholic priest, does a lot of teaching on this. I picked up from him where a nun was ministering in a prison, a men's prison. And one of the prisoners came to her and said, "Sister, can you get me a Mother's Day card?" And she said, "Well, fine, sure." She went down to the local store, bought one, gave it to them. And as often happens in institutional settings, the word traveled like wildfire. Well, the next thing you know, she had guys, hundreds of guys asking for Mother's Day cards. Well, she was a smart lady. She got on the phone to Hallmark cards and can you help me out? I said, "Sure, sister." They sent her 500 Mother's Day cards. She had them

stacked up in the chapel. She had men lined up all through the cell blocks to get their Mother's Day card.

She gave them out a long days, but she felt great about it. Next thing you know, she's looking at her to calendar and she says, "Aha, here comes June. Father's Day's coming up, back on the phone to Hallmark." Sure enough, sister, they sent her 500 Father's Day cards. She said she held those cards in the chapel and she waited. Father's Day came, Father's Day went and she waited. And she said, "To this day, I have every one of those cards." Now you see, what is that saying? In the Scripture, in Malachi four verses five and six, the last verses of the Hebrew covenant, the last words God has to his people before the coming of Jesus. He's saying, "This is what to look for people. Here's what's coming. I'm going to send you the prophet Elijah and he's going to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers.

Otherwise, I would smite the land with a curse." Otherwise, another text says, "Bring destruction upon your country." What are we seeing? We're seeing men in prison who have no relations with their fathers. And these are the men with taking the God-given masculine strength, misfocusing it into destructive places, you see. And that's what we're seeing. That strict Scripture is just alive and true to this day.

Dr. James Dobson: If you watch Monday Night Football, you'll see the cameras honing in on the players and invariably they say, "Hi, mom." I've never seen one of them say hi, dad.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Yeah, it's very rare.

Dr. James Dobson: Why not? Why not hi dad? I mean, dads are the ones that are interested in football. Well, maybe dad isn't there. Maybe they don't know who dad is.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: That's the problem. Dad is just not there. And unfortunately, see where that really bears down hard on us is men because we grow up with that longing in us to be one with the father. I believe that's given to us by God. That's part of who we are. The male child wants to be one with the father. And I believe the father God uses that longing with us, even the brokenness to reach us. It's that broken, that wound in us from the father, our earthly father that will drive us to the heavenly Father sooner or later if we're open to that.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you remember about your dad? Is he still living?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Kind of relationship do you have with him?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Oh, my dad is a marvelous guy. He was a career naval officer.

And I can remember scenes of my dad. Some of the wonderful scenes I can recall when he would come home from sea when he stationed Philadelphia Naval Shipyard before I went to school about four or five years old. And he would come home. You see, and he'd put his Navy hat on the table, go to hug my mom. And I would rush to pick that hat up. You see and put it on my head. It would come down over my ears and chin and everything, but I'd angle it just right to get this huge hat over my head. And I'd long to be like my daddy, a naval officer. And it was a great crushing blow to me later in college when I was colorblind, it turned out. And I couldn't be a naval officer. And I figured I'll never be a warrior like my father. And it wasn't until many years later that the Lord revealed to me that there was another battle in the spirit that he has called me to be a commander in that. We talk in my family, at least I talk about not the Lord's army, the Lord's Navy.

We don't dare. But my grandfather was a steel worker who worked 60 hours a week in the steel mills. Marvelous guy, big, strong, husky guy. And I know that as a man, I've had to go back to my father's hometown in Conshohocken in Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia, walked those old cobblestone streets from my great-grandfather and grandfather worked and worked in the mills and began to sense what kind of a masculine heritage I have, you see.

Dr. James Dobson: Is there a close relationship? And are you making the point that not only does your self-concept as a man relate to how you interacted with your father, but the kind of work that you do?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Oh, absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: 100, 200, 300 years ago when labor was intense, when men worked on the farms and they were very masculine in the kind of roles. There was less difficulty with identity.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Well, of course, in that sense, the boy could go to work with the father and could stand side by side the dad. See, there's something that can't be transmitted by words even. It's got to be by proximity. You got to be physically close to the man somehow. I don't understand it. It's a mystery.

Dr. James Dobson: Someone said, "Tie a boy to a good man and he almost never goes wrong."

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: I could believe it.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's true. For my dad and myself, it was through hunting and fishing primarily that I identified with him. It's that time together when my mother and everybody else was gone, they're just the two of us out there talking and sharing ideas and the excitement of hunting squirrels and quail.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: In one sense, you will never know what that means because the man who doesn't have that is in a whole different ballpark as he grows up wondering,

“Am I really admitted to the company of men? Am I really a man?” In my teachings, I have four basic role models that we men look to ourselves. We look at ourselves, say, “Am I really a man?” If a man really judges himself, and I believe we do all the time, there are basically four roles that we judge ourselves by to see if we measure up. And the world has one perspective on these things and the biblical faith has another perspective. First, am I son of the father? Do I measure up to dad's standard? Of course, in the world, that means can you be just like your daddy? If he's a farmer, will you be a farmer?

But in the biblical faith understanding is that Jesus has come to bring us to the Father who's called us uniquely to grow into manhood in the image of the Father God. Secondly, lover of a woman. I'm trying to think of a nice way to put this. Every high school kid and a high school guy in his gym class knows other ways to put this, but it's can I win the affection of a desirable woman basically. And the world, of course, has one idea, just turn on the TV and you get a pretty perverted idea of what that world has in mind for that. What does it mean to be a godly, in a godly relationship with a woman? Thirdly, as a warrior. And the world's perspective is, can you fight and win? Can you, on the third great playground, every boy knows what that means.

Can you bully people? Can you punch him out fast and they punch you out, the Rambo idea. And what does it mean to ... And where the apostle says in 2 Corinthians 10 that the weapons we use in our fight are not the world's weapons, but God's mighty weapons, which were used to destroy strongholds. What is a warrior of God like? And fourthly, as a provider or as a worker, can I struggle at a job? Can I work hard to job and succeed? And the world's perspective is, can you scramble up the ladder and burn yourself out and step on people on the way to make it? And the scriptural perspective, I think Colossians 3:23 where it says, “Work as unto the Lord.” What does it mean that God has given you a vocation of vocal literally a calling and called you with certain gifts to put them to use to serve Him in this world?

Dr. James Dobson: So men today assess themselves in these four dimensions.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: I believe that.

Dr. James Dobson: And they don't like what they see. What are the characteristics of a man whose soul needs healing? What are you seeing in today's masculinity that bothers you?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Well, one of the things is a man feels like he doesn't belong, not in this world even because there's ... And translation, as a boy, there's been no company of men to welcome him. Unlike other societies in the world, I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Nigeria and the men take responsibility for the boys in the village to have a whole rite of passage. I call it a sacrament, to draw the boys into fellowship with the men. And the father is integral to that and the old men of the village as well. Most men today don't feel like they belong. They don't feel like they're one of the men. And that kind of cripples us in a way because we're

always wondering, what do I have to do to make it as a man? Do I have to hit another home run? Do I have to sell another contract?

Do I have to date another woman? What is it? And of course we never get there. So we always feel very insecure in that sense. I was teaching not long ago to a hundred young men. It turned out it was a conference and through a snafu in the scheduling, only the younger men could come. And we had a hundred young guys and I polled them. I said, how many of you had a father who pulled you aside when you were 12, 13 years old and said, "Son, you're growing older now. You're going to be thinking about girls a lot. You probably already have been. Let me share with you a few things I've learned and some important things about this that you need to know. " You know how many guys out of a hundred raise their hand?

Dr. James Dobson: How many?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Three. One of those guys halfway raised his hand. He said, "Now, I'm not sure about this, but I said, That's it. We'll take it. We'll take it. If you even have a doubt, that's in, you're in. Three out of a hundred. That's what I get everywhere I go around the country.

Dr. James Dobson: What a sad commentary.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: That's what's happening, you see. And do we wonder then why we get in trouble with our sexuality? Anything else a man would do? If you're taking a job for a year, you spend at least a week having an older, someone in the job teach you, you'd read something, a book about it or something and you'd have training. We think that relating to women and families, well, we just get married and you just do it. Well, and we wonder why we get in such trouble when there's no older men you see who have walked that path. One of the things we men have not learned to do and is to fight for the woman. We know, I don't want to say well, but we were probably fairly accustomed to fighting against the woman many times. We don't how to fight for the woman. For example, had a couple come to me for help one time and I thought they were in such difficulty.

Finally, I thought maybe a trip to Disneyland would help them. So I said, why don't you go to Disneyland? And the next week they came back to me. The man came in my office. He flopped down. He was gritting his teeth and he was angry. He just could hardly spit. And then the woman was just, you looked at her eyes were just so sad and she was quiet. And I said, "Well, gee, Sam," that's not his real name. "How did it go?" And he burst, it was awful. He said, "We didn't even get out of the driveway before she was on my case. She was yelling at me, telling me, go there, go there, do this, do this." And pretty soon he was just getting so angry. I turned to Sally, that's not her real name. I said, I can give her a chance at least.

I said, "Sally, gee, what do you see? How do you see this?" And she sighed and she said, "It's true." She says, "I was awful." What? And he kind of looked at her funny. I looked at her funny, "Well, gee, what do we do now?" And I'm just saying, "Okay, Lord Jesus, come on. What you're doing here?" And I turned to Sam and I said, "Well, what did you do when your wife started yelling at you like that and coming down?" I said, "Well," he says, "I shut up. I figured if I just sat quiet long enough, she'd quit." And when I tell this story to women, you just see eyes roll up in their heads and they said, "Gordon, do men really think like?" I said, "Yes, we do." I said, "And what happened?" She got worse. And of course the women say, of course she got ...women know that ... And I was puzzled.

He was puzzled. And here was this woman sitting just crushed beside him, his wife that he loved, but he was so frustrated. And finally, I prayed quiet. I said, "Okay, Sally, what did you need from Sam? What'd you need from him?" And she just sighed and she looked at him. She said, "Honey, I was out of control. I needed your help to get me back into control. I needed you to stop me somehow." See, she needed strength from him. She needed him to fight for her. And his jaw drive said, "But, but ..." And she says, "I know what you're going to say. You're going to say, if you'd have spoken up, I'd have jumped on." She said, "And maybe I would have, but I needed you to hang in there with me and not give up."

Dr. James Dobson: There's nothing more frustrating to most women than to be greatly irritated and angry at their husbands and have them not respond, just sink into silence. I mean, they'd rather you get up and scream and yell. Of course.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: He abandoned her. But now you see, here's the thing, as a man, see, we're raised with the macho image. What is the macho guy? The macho guy is basically two characteristics. He's violent and he's alienated. That's the lone ranger. I don't care how good the guys were according with. Usually they got silver bullets or something. They're violent and they're alienated. And the lone ranger, of course, even a mask on didn't know who he was. Talk about identity problems. So with the violent ... Well, this guy was a Christian, so he knew he shouldn't be violent, but because he hadn't surrendered his man, because no even Christian man had come to him and said, "There's another way." The only option open after he said, "I'm not going to be violent. What else is up? I'll be alienated. That's all I know to do. And that seems to be safe. At least I'm not hitting the woman and I guess that's got to be good enough."

So he alienated, pulled the shade and withdrew, not knowing that that was violence to the woman's soul, that was abandoning her in a moment of need. And of course, he was afraid of the woman's anger. And we began to ask, I asked this woman, I said, "No, all right now Sally, you got to help us men. What could we do as men? What could Sam have said to you that would have communicated struggle on your behalf instead of against you?" And we come up with a couple of things that she agreed upon. She said, "He could have said, 'Time out, you're really running at high speed right now, honey, period.'" Nothing

else. Therefore you're no good at ... No, just you're really running at high speed, time out.

Or he could have said, "I see that you're upset right now, word of knowledge or something like that." And he could have said, "Honey, I'm spending all my energy defending myself. I want to spend energy helping you and getting us back on track together. Now, if there's something that's went wrong, could we pull over the side of the road here and let's talk about it together? If not, could we put it aside and have a nice day together?" She said, yeah, that would have been nice.

Dr. James Dobson: He could also have said, get off my back. I mean, let's face it.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: That's true. That was also an option. But you see, he was afraid of the woman when she got angry. Now, I don't know if I have to tell you as a psychologist, I'm sure I don't, that when I questioned him further, I said, "What was it like as a boy growing up? Did your dad and your mom fight all the time? What happened?" They start to yell and finally dad would turn and walk out the door. And the mother was left with all this fury in her heart and her spirit and her body literally and turned upon the boy. "You're just like your father" and come down on him. And of course he was terrified. There's a three foot tall boy looking at a five foot woman. Well, now when he grows up, we have a six foot tall man looking at a 10 foot woman, literally his wife.

She's this 10 foot woman. That's what he brings to the relationship. And he's looking at this giant woman over him and he's terrified and all he can do is run away from her and she's begging him, "Honey, be strong for me, not against me, but for me."

Dr. James Dobson: Passivity among males then is a major concern in this perspective.

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Tremendous. See, the opposite of passivity, I prayed a lot about this as a man because I pray with man, the opposite of passivity that the Lord wants to give man is a spirit of responsibility. The passive man is not able to respond. He waits and reacts. The man of God is able to respond. He has response ability, the ability to respond because he has the heart of Jesus. He has the Holy Spirit within him and the power of Jesus. And he can say when there's an argument going on or whatever, say with a woman, he can just say in his heart, "Jesus, come on now you got to help me. You got to help us here. "And he'll be battling for the marriage, for the relationship and realizing that the enemy is not his wife, but the spirit of division destruction that would come and destroy what God wants to create between them.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Gordon, as usual, it's going to take us two days at least to talk about this subject. I really do like what I'm hearing from you. The *Healing of the Masculine* soul is the name of the book. Just with the minute that we have left or so, can you give us a feeling for the evangelical community, the church community

within the culture? Are you referring as much to the church as you are to the non-church or the un-Christian community?

Rev. Gordon Dalbey: Yeah, unfortunately. I've taught in a lot of churches, of course. And I remember once in a mixed group of singles, one of the women raised her hand. She said, "Why is it you said that a man needs to be strong and God comes to give a man strength in Jesus? "Why is it the men in the church? And she hesitated and everybody knew was coming. Why has he said the men in the church are not as strong as the men sometimes out there in the world?" Oh, we had to really struggle with that, you see, because what it means to be spiritual and where that comes from and our culture. But I think it's across our culture, yes. It's certainly the churches because the churches haven't dealt with men's issues. That's why men are not coming to church, you see, because the churches are not reaching out to the men and saying, "I know where you're hurting. You're hurting from your father and we've got good news for you."

Roger Marsh: Every boy longs to hear his father say, "I'm proud of you, son." And when these words never come, the silence can echo for a lifetime. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and Reverend Gordon Dalbey. Now, if today's program really resonated with you, or if you know a man who's carrying the weight of a father wound, I hope you'll share this broadcast with a friend. Remember, you can listen to it again or you can send it from our website at jdfi.net. Once you're there, you'll also find information about Gordon Dalbey's outstanding book called *Healing the Masculine Soul*. And parents, don't forget, if you have a middle schooler or high school student at home, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute is hosting a national essay contest with cash prizes of up to \$2,500. Now, the deadline is just around the corner, Thursday, April 30th, so don't wait. For more information, go to drjamesdobson.org/USA250. That's drjamesdobson.org/USA250.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening to Family Talk today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for part two of this powerful conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and his guest, Reverend Gordon Dalbey. that's coming up here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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