



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Lift Up the Word, Light Up the World – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Kathy Branzell

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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:** Hello and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and today is the 73rd Annual National Day of Prayer. By the way, if you're planning on watching tonight's event, be sure to check out the live stream that's linked on our Facebook page. The broadcast gets underway at 8:00 PM Eastern Time. Now, as believers, we know that prayer is key to our relationship with God. As our Heavenly Father loves to hear from us, we are encouraged to constantly be in prayer, but it does matter that we earnestly bring our petitions to the Lord. As James writes in James 4:3, "You ask and you do not receive because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." Now, today's guest here on Family Talk is Kathy Branzell. Kathy is the president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. She'll be joined in studio by Gary Bauer, our Senior Vice President of Public Policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. So now to further introduce today's guest, let's join Gary Bauer and Kathy Branzell for the special edition of Family Talk.

**Gary Bauer:** Well, hello everybody and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Gary Bauer, the Senior Vice President for Public Policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute, and also the host of the Defending Faith, Family & Freedom Podcast here at JDFI. And of course, I'm honored to be serving alongside my good friend, Dr. James Dobson. Today is the National Day of Prayer and we need it, we need it all over America and we need it right here in Washington DC where I spend most of my time. You, I'm sure, have heard of the power of prayer. We all should think about that for a moment. Prayer is our spiritual connection with God and it's crucial. It's crucial to our daily relationship with the Lord. And to help me dive into this subject deeper is the president of the National Day of Prayer, Kathy Branzell. Welcome back to Family Talk, Kathy.

I know you're friends with Jim and Shirley Dobson. They send their regards to you. And before we begin our conversation, I wanted to take a brief moment just to mention to our audience, I know you know this, but Dr. Dobson's wife Shirley was chair of the National Day of Prayer Task Force for 25 years. I'm sure you two have crossed paths many times and prayed together many times. It's an

incredible legacy that Shirley has and you're building on all of that. But anyway, any opening comments you'd like to make or send Shirley's way or as we begin this conversation about the National Day of Prayer?

Kathy Branzell: Oh, well, hello Gary, and thank you for this opportunity to be here. And I love the Dobsons and honor them so much. I don't know that Americans today realize their incredible influence and significance to America, to the church, to families for decades and decades. And I am so grateful how they touched my life, my family's, my children, and how we raised them. Amen. But I am deeply grateful to her every single day when I get up and go to work for the 25 years of her just pouring her life out like a drink offering before the Lord. And so National Day of Prayer is what it is today because of her diligence and her excellence and her love.

Gary Bauer: Well, that's very kind of you to say. And over the years that I've been in Washington, and Jim and Shirley would come to Washington many times, but they would always come on a National Day of Prayer and we would meet together and it was always an extraordinary event and it's a very partisan city, but there are believers on both sides of the aisle and on the National Day of Prayer, for the most part, people would put aside their differences on political matters in order to turn their hearts toward God. But let's assume that for some reason there are listeners to the show today who don't know what the National Day of Prayer is. I hope that's not true, but maybe there are, or maybe they just need a reminder. So give us a... If you were talking to a complete stranger that hadn't focused on this, how would you describe the National Day of Prayer and its history and so forth?

Kathy Branzell: I tell them in 1952, the Reverend Billy Graham stood on the steps of our capitol and he challenged Congress and he challenged President Truman to put into law a national day of prayer. Well, they took him very seriously, and in a matter of weeks there was a unanimous vote from Congress and President Truman signed this day into law. How blessed we are that prayer is on the law books of the United States of America. Amen? And so it could be any old day that's hard to prepare for. Moms and dads out there, think about if Christmas, you had a two weeks warning that Christmas was coming instead of it being a set day. So Ms. Vonette Bright early in the seventies, she wanted there to be a specific day. They worked and worked on this. And then in 1988, our friend, President Reagan signed it into law, amended the law that it would be the first Thursday of May every single year.

And so Vonette took those reins and ran with them. And then I loved hearing Shirley tell the story of how she was called by Vonette and said yes, and with a very few dollars in the bank and one volunteer, Shirley took us all the way into this now, and we have our national observance in Washington DC along with the broadcast this evening.

Gary Bauer: That's a great history. And in itself, the whole thing seems like an answer to prayer. The very fact that we have the National Day of Prayer was something

that people were praying about for many years. I still remember growing up when I got up one morning and the Supreme Court had taken school prayer out of the school. And even today, I look back on that and think, "My goodness, what was the church doing?" I mean, I think we were all caught by surprise that something like that would happen. And I don't want to get off into all that today, but we certainly see what the cost of that has been. I mean, we took God out of the schools and all kinds of really bad things has taken His place in the schools. So it really isn't important that the nation stay focused on prayer, not just on this special day, but every day of the year. Now, every year there's a different theme. What is the theme this year?

Kathy Branzell: This year the theme is Lift Up the Word, Light Up the World. And it comes from the heart of what you just said, Gary, for, it was this holy frustration in prayer where I went to the Lord and said, "Everybody's just talking about the darkness. The darkness. America's getting darker, our schools are getting darker, our neighborhoods are getting darker." And God said, "Yes," Just spoke into my spirit, "That's on you. That's on you." This happened on my watch and he didn't put a dimmer switch on us. Darkness is the absence of light. And so I didn't speak up loud enough, I didn't step in all those cases when people are like, "Oh, I don't want to be that person. Oh, I don't want to make waves. Oh, I don't want to cause trouble." Well, now we're in trouble, right? Yes, we were the absence of light.

And so with this theme this year, Lift Up the Word, Light Up the World. We're lifting up the word who became flesh and dwelt among us, Jesus Christ. And we are lifting up His word, the scriptures, and lighting up the world. Darkness doesn't stand a chance on the National Day of Prayer.

Gary Bauer: What a great thing to say. And I hope you're right because there's so many dark things going on in the country and right here in the nation's capitol, which is really ironic because when you drive around Washington and almost all the monuments etched in the stone are these references to the Bible and quotes from our Lord and things that the Founding Fathers believed. And yet, there's so many things going on in the Capitol that just seems to completely ignore those things. There are new Christians out there every day. What would you say to them about prayer? The Bible and prayer are sort of the owner's manual of being a Christian.

Kathy Branzell: Exactly.

Gary Bauer: You read one as God's inspired Word, and the prayer is talking to the guy that built the car. So explain to me as if I were a new Christian, why prayer is important.

Kathy Branzell: You put it so well. Life did come with an instruction manual and that's our Holy Bible. So read it, study it, pray it, live it. Believe, believe, believe, all of His promises are yes and amen. Get your identity from what God says about you and who you are in Him. And that said, prayer is not complicated. It's a

conversation. And so Jesus says, "I'll never leave you or forsake you." So Gary, if you came and spent the entire day with me, if you were here from the moment I woke up until the moment we said good night, I would talk to you all day long. We'd see something beautiful and I would point it out, you would do something kind and I would say thank you. We would share in conversation about things we saw. I would talk to you about things I need, especially if I know that you have a way of helping me.

Gary Bauer:

That's beautiful. I consider myself a history buff. I always try to throw little historical stories and speeches and all the rest of that. And one of the things that really jumps out when you read American history is how often from the very beginning, even before we became a country, when we were still just the colony of England, how often the leaders of the colonies and in later our country, have prayed, prayed prayers of thanksgiving, have prayed in moments of great crises. And for most of that history, it didn't matter what party you were, Franklin Roosevelt was probably the most liberal president we had had up until that moment. And in World War II, he went on national radio as D-Day was taking place and he literally led the whole nation in a prayer over the radio.

It's about six minutes long and it's beautiful even when you read it today. And yet today, prayer, sometimes there's an effort to make it sound like it's controversial or that there's a place where it shouldn't be. And I wonder as the role you're playing with the National Day of Prayer, it seems to me Washington DC would be a lot better place if there was a lot more prayer going on in every government building. But what are your thoughts about that?

Kathy Branzell:

Well, I have good news. Today, people from both sides of the aisle gathered and we sat in a room where I opened by saying, "I know we're all sitting in a room full of people that we don't agree on everything with, but what we could agree on today was that we need God and America needs prayer." I was so excited leading up into even the weeks, weeks and weeks before National Day of Prayer, I had congressional members calling me saying, "We're so excited to be back in session this year." Both the House and the Senate for the first time in almost a decade, were in session today, at our request. They changed the calendar so that they would be in session for the National Day of Prayer this year. And I had congressional members calling and saying, "We're so excited to be with you. What time are we supposed to be there?" And so we are grateful for that.

And so lots of prayer that I believe will even... It was launched today. It wasn't just about today. It's a launching the National Day of Prayer, you knew, Gary, is a celebration and culmination of 364 other days of prayer. I know that the Holy Spirit fanned the flame in our hearts and our need, our desperation for God, and reminded us we can cry out to Him at all times.

Gary Bauer:

I know you keep informed about what's happening in the country, in your role, you have to do that. And we have so many big issues. In spite of everything that's been done to try to deal with it, we still have a need for racial

reconciliation. You've got the breakdown of the family, just unbelievable things happening to America's children. There's a terrible story out of Washington DC in recent months about younger and younger children just involved in horrific crimes and so forth. And one of the things that is so apparent to me, but I'm not sure it's apparent to everybody, is that none of these problems, none of them can be solved without the active involvement of Christians, without biblical values being restored, and without prayer being used regularly to address these things, many of which are the product of Satan's devious plans. So do you agree, Kathy, that without prayer and a return back to faith, America is not going to solve the big problems that it's facing?

Kathy Branzell: Oh, absolutely. 100% agree with that. Scripture tells us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding. Right? In all our ways, the translation is acknowledge Him, but in the original language it's inquire of him, in all your ways inquire. See, that kind of turns things in our Western mentality because inquire happens first, but we often think of acknowledging somebody at the end. But He says, "In all your ways, inquire of Him and He will make your path straight." And our path will never be straight until we remember that the Lord is our shepherd.

Gary Bauer: Yes. So prayer is not like a letter to Santa Claus, right? I mean, you don't just pray for all the things you want and then get upset if you don't get them. So what are some of the categories? I think one thing that I sometimes had to remind myself of is that prayer ought to be an opportunity to praise God for His greatness and to thank Him for all the things He's already done for us,

Kathy Branzell: Right, right. Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise, right? Everybody has somebody in their life, that person that only calls you, that only comes to you when they want something. Like they show up in your doorframe at your office and you're like, "Oh, what do they want now?" And so we don't want to have that kind of relationship with God. And so we praise Him for who He is. It also teaches us about our relationship with others. We love one another because of who you are. I love you, Gary, because you're my brother in Christ, not something you do for me. I thank you when you express kindness or do something for me, but we love one another because of who we are. And so knowing God's attributes, that just strengthens us, that takes us back to our National Day of Prayer theme a couple of years ago, to exalt the Lord who had established us.

And so in that exalting, it reminds us how big and powerful and wonderful our God is. And there's a strengthening and a blessing even in that. And then living with a grateful heart and saying thank you, power in that as well. We don't want to be takers and takers and takers and not stop to run back to Jesus like the leper who was healed to say thank you. And that's just a lifestyle.

Gary Bauer: I don't want to get too personal, have you... So if you'd rather not deal with this, don't. But has there been a time in your life when you took something to the Lord in prayer and it clearly worked out in the way that you had prayed, and it

was so evident to you that God's hand was in that, that He had heard that prayer and was blessing you by answering it.

Kathy Branzell: Hundreds and hundreds of times. But specifically, and a lot of people have heard this story, was I had a brain tumor for 14 and a half years.

Gary Bauer: Goodness.

Kathy Branzell: And prayed and prayed and prayed, of course for healing. And that is an example of persevering in prayer, a lesson in endurance. And in the end, completely handing your life over and saying, "My life belongs to you," and my God numbers my days. But after 14 and a half years in getting ready to say goodbye, there was nothing more that they could do for me, I was healed in a moment. And it happened in Colorado Springs, and we were in a meeting at Every Home for Christ when I was healed. And that tumor, after 14 and a half years, that was awaiting surgery in just a couple of weeks, disappeared in a moment. And that is an answer to prayer right there. And so here I am. That was in 2008.

Gary Bauer: Wow.

Kathy Branzell: And God still had things for me to do, right? Here I am today. So thank you, Lord.

Gary Bauer: That is really an amazing story. I got chills listening to you say that, to be wrestling with that health problem all those years and then to be healed from it is amazing. But I'm glad you went on to talk about it because of course, we all have times when prayers aren't answered in the way that we wanted them to be answered and because of the sin of man, they're suffering in this world. And so the ultimate blessing or the ultimate fruition of all this is when we're reunited with our maker and stand at the throne and then in all the questions we have about some suffering or some disappointment or some loss will be evident to us and explained to us. I have to be honest with you, Kathy, I don't know how people get through life who don't know how to pray or don't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Kathy Branzell: I don't either. He is our hope. He's our anchor of hope. There are a lot of hurting and helpless people. Gary, you keep talking about Washington, D.C., what a lonely place. I spent a lot of time in Washington. I lived there for several years. It's a very lonely place. And there's, a lot of it is a lack of relationship because there's a lack of trust. And so we pray for them. And our first and foremost prayer for anybody of influence, whether in government or military or education, the church, all of those, arts, entertainment, media, our first prayer for them is salvation. And that they would come to a loving, following personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Gary Bauer: Now, am I right about this? You have a program where people, not just on the National Day of Prayer, but anytime of the year can contact you with a prayer request for you and your prayer warriors to pray over and for them?

Kathy Branzell: Yes, that is correct.

Gary Bauer: How would they contact you and relay that?

Kathy Branzell: So they can go on our website, [nationaldayofprayer.org](http://nationaldayofprayer.org), and there's all sorts of resources there, but you can get in contact with us there. You can leave a prayer request there. And we have a team that is praying every single day. And so we invite you to leave your prayer request with us and know that we are going to be praying for you and with you, taking your request to the Throne of Heaven.

Gary Bauer: So tonight, there's going to be a televised event. Am I right?

Kathy Branzell: Yes. We are so grateful.

Gary Bauer: How will people be able to tune into that and what are they likely to see?

Kathy Branzell: Right. So you're going to see a lot of our national observance from today and also some videos that we did beforehand to pepper in. We're asking our audience to engage in prayer with us. Think of it as stepping into a prayer meeting with us around the world. So you can tune in on just about any of your favorite Christian television networks. It's on radio stations around the world. We'll also be streaming. You can see it on our website again, [nationaldayofprayer.org](http://nationaldayofprayer.org), social media streaming 8:00 PM Eastern Time. And if you're not in that time zone, just check your local listings. We are grateful. It is going to be televised in every country around the world.

Gary Bauer: Wow.

Kathy Branzell: So come to this worldwide prayer meeting for America.

Gary Bauer: As we're wrapping our show up today, could I impose on you to pray us out of the show? And if in the process you would want to offer some prayers for our country, that would be wonderful.

Kathy Branzell: I would. I would. I'm going to pray out of our theme verses from this year. Lord Jesus, I lift up 2 Samuel 22:29-31 to you, Lord, over our neighbor, our nation, and around the world. Lord, You are our lamp. Your way is perfect. The Word of the Lord proves true. You are a shield to all those who take refuge in you. And so Lord, we pray right now taking refuge under Your wings, under Your authority, walking in Your authority. We thank you that You are the shield that goes before us. And Lord, we put on our full armor and we march into battle for the souls of this nation and around the world, Lord, that all would come to repentance, that none may perish. And we thank You that we live in a nation

where on this day, the President must proclaim the day of prayer for our nation. Lord, may You be glorified in Jesus' powerful, wonderful name we pray. Amen.

Gary Bauer: Kathy, that was beautiful. Thank you so much. I can see why you're in charge of the National Day of Prayer. That was well said indeed. And thank you for being on Family Talk. I know Jim and Shirley look forward to talking with you personally soon. And thank all of you out there for listening to Family Talk on this National Day of Prayer. Be with us every day. And don't forget, you can still be part of the National Day of Prayer this evening by tuning into their special broadcast. God bless you all, and we'll see you soon.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a beautiful prayer from today's guest, Kathy Branzell here on Family Talk, and that was the conclusion of a powerful conversation featuring Kathy and our own Gary Bauer. If you would like to share today's special edition of Family Talk, be sure to visit our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). By the way, while you're there, you can also download the free PDF that's all about the National Day of Prayer. It's a helpful resource for you to grow deeper in your faith and to pray for our nation, not just today, but every day. Again, that website is [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). And be sure to check out the live stream of the National Day of Prayer event from Washington, D.C. We'll be streaming it on our Facebook page tonight at 8:00 PM Eastern Time. Be sure to check it out.

Right now during the month of May here at Family Talk, we have been blessed by some special friends with a matching grant. That's right. Each and every dollar we receive this month will automatically be doubled. Just think about it. Every dollar you donate to the JDFI will go twice as far to equip parents, educate kids, and strengthen marriages. Now, this is a \$300,000 matching grant and it will get matched quickly. So please consider giving a gift today to double your impact. You can make a secure donation online when you visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at the JDFI, thanks so much for listening today and for your prayers for us as well. May God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow deeper in your relationship with Him.

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