



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Choosing the Extraordinary Life – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Dr. Robert Jeffress

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson again, and you're listening to Family Talk. Yesterday, I was so honored and pleased to have one of our most popular guests back in the studio with us. I think he's been here five or six times, and this is once again, an opportunity to plumb the depths of this man's mind, and especially to refer to his book. Dr. Robert Jeffress is the senior pastor of the 13,000 member First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, and he's the author of many, many popular books. I urge you to get them one by one because there is something for everybody there. He is talking about the Christian way of life in all of its context.

Dr. James Dobson: Yesterday we talked particularly about the culture. This comes from chapter two of his book; it's called *Choosing the Extraordinary Life: God's 7 Secrets for Success and Significance*. Chapter two is determined to influence your culture. We could have talked about that for another month because it is so relevant, but there are six other secrets that we could talk about. We're not going to have time to deal with all of them. I would like to start, Dr. Jeffress, with an overview. What are you trying to say to people about an extraordinary life?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: You can get out of the rut you're in right now. I talked yesterday about that Chicago sewer worker who was asked why he did what he did. He said, "Well, let me think here. I dig the ditch to earn the money, to buy the bread, to get the strength to dig the ditch." Unfortunately, that's the way a lot of Christians live their lives. They get up in the morning, go to work, come home, eat dinner, watch a little TV, go to bed and start the process all over again. I think God has more for us in life than that. The real extraordinary life is when we discover our unique purpose and how it connects to God's unique purpose.

I use Elijah as an example. He's the backdrop of these seven secrets. The Bible says, Elijah was an ordinary man like you and I. He had doubts, he got discouraged, he had bouts with disobedience, and yet God used him to make an extraordinary difference in his culture, and he wants to do the same with us. The most foundational secret, Dr. Dobson, for living that extraordinary life is to discover your unique purpose in life. I mean, we all know God has a general purpose, but He has a unique purpose for us. I say it this way, God is writing a unique story in your life to tell His story. And in the first chapter, I use that word

story as an acrostic for the five principles for discovering God's unique purpose for your life.

Dr. James Dobson: Since you're talking about Elijah, let me go to one of the stories in his life a little farther along than what you were talking about. This is after he had confronted the prophets of Baal. Jezebel was trying to get him, she wanted to kill him. He had obviously exhausted himself from that encounter. I mean, his very life was on the line, and here he was representing God Almighty and the Lord broke in on him and the fire fell down from Heaven and burned up the sacrifice, despite the fact that it had been soaked in water.

Now, this is my question to you. After that was done, Jezebel was after him and he started running and he tried to get away. If he had been exhausted before, he was far more so after a short period of time, and he was so worn out that he sat down and was depressed. He said, "I have to die sometime. It might as well be now." He was hungry and who knows what else was going on in his mind, but he was discouraged. You're talking to people right now who have no sense of mission, no sense of passion or purpose, and life is humdrum for them, and you're offering them an extraordinary life. What would you have said to Elijah at that moment of discouragement?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I would've said, "Read chapter six of my book about your life."

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it hadn't been written yet.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: It's really funny because I do cover that in a whole chapter called, "How to Handle Bad Days," because extraordinary people, if you're going to have that extraordinary life, you've got to realize bad days are going to come. You've got to know not how to avoid them, you can't avoid them, but you can learn to handle them so they don't paralyze you. Take Elijah, I mean, isn't that interesting? He had this great victory on Mount Carmel and then he fell into a funk. I mean, I think he was emotionally exhausted after that battle, and because of that, he lost perspective. To me, it's interesting that 800 false prophets couldn't phase him on top of Mount Carmel, but when he was tired, he sits under the juniper tree, he says, "Just take my life, Lord." Now, if he had really wanted to die, Jezebel would've finished the job off for him, he didn't have to run. But I think he lost perspective.

I talk about how to handle bad days in your life. And I'm not just talking about bad days. Some of our listeners are going through a bad season of life in which disappointment upon disappointment has built upon itself and they're wondering if God is through with them. I talk about in this chapter about the importance of restoring yourself physically when you're exhausted. Elijah slept and slept. Our mutual friend, the late Howard Hendricks, used to say, "Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is take a nap." Elijah did, he needed to eat. And remember the angels brought him the cake to eat. That's the first example of angels food cake in the Bible anywhere. But he did that.

There is a physical component, there is a spiritual component. He hid, he was away with God. God revealed Himself.

It says about David in the Old Testament, after he had a particularly bad day when his men were killed and all the houses were burned down, it says, "David strengthened himself in the Lord." You've got to learn how to strengthen yourself spiritually. But then there is an emotional component to his spiritual and emotional strengthening. The Bible said it was time for Elijah to get out of the cave and go reconnect with people. Dr. Dobson, you've probably seen this, but I've seen people, Christians who are going through a difficult season in their family or in their work, they'll come up to me and say, "Pastor, we're going to take some time off from church because we're going through a difficult time." I think about what our friend David Jeremiah says, he said, "The only person who thinks you ought to take a sabbatical from church when you're going through difficulty is the devil." I mean, that is his strategy to isolate you and then attack you.

Anyway, that's what we talk about in *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*. One of the chapters is "Extraordinary People Learn How to Handle Bad Days."

Dr. James Dobson: There's a modern day example of what you're talking about where the legendary football coach at Notre Dame, Knute Rockne, he said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." In a way, Elijah got too worn out to fight anymore. He was depressed because he was really cowardly at that point. God had already showed him His power, and it was obvious that he was speaking for the Lord and yet he was whining. Fatigue will do that to you and me too.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: That's right. Again, Dr. Dobson, we cannot avoid these seasons of life, they are going to come. But extraordinary people learn how to handle these bad seasons of life without being paralyzed by them.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well, that's one chapter. There's seven here.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Let me go back if I could to what we were talking about because I find so many Christians are going through life without any purpose. Or maybe they have young adult children and their children are saying, "How do I find my purpose in life?" I'd like to use that word story, God is writing a story in your life to tell His story, to help our listeners maybe to discern what their purpose is or what the purpose of their children is.

That word S in story stands for start with Scripture. If you want to know God's will for your life, start with the Bible. Now, admittedly, you're probably not going to find your vocation in the Bible unless you're into tax collecting or shepherding. But the idea is you at least get a general sense of what God is trying to do in the world.

Then the T stands for talk to others. Proverbs 13:10 and 20 says, "In the multitude of counselors, there is victory." Many times God uses other people to reveal his will to us. When I was in the ninth grade, I had a speech teacher named Miss Fry, she was one tough old gal. I mean, she dressed in the Army boots, she scared us to death. Sometimes when we were up, ninth graders making our speech, she'd stand up on top of her desk and yell, "Speak louder, speak louder." Well, one day she asked to see me after class. She said, "Jeffress, you're going to be a preacher someday, and that scares the beejebers out of me because you could sell anybody anything." But Dr. Dobson, that's the first time anybody ever envisioned that I was going to be a preacher.

Dr. James Dobson: No kidding.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Years later, after I had started the ministry, I got worried that Miss Fry had died and that she had stipulated in her will that she wanted me to preside at her funeral service, she was so convinced years later I would be a pastor. But talk to others. Listen to what they say to you.

Then the O in story, the acrostic, stands for obey your passions. Many ways, the best way to know what God wants you to do is to ask the question, "What do you want to do?" Sometimes we think God's will is the most unpleasant thing we could think of. No, many times the desires, the passions we have in our heart come from Him. Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he'll give you the desires of your heart."

Then the R for story stands for recognize your unique gifts and abilities. Philippians 2:13 says, "God is working in you, giving you the desire and the gifts to achieve his purpose." Dr. Dobson, you had an interest in medicine, but you also had a gift in medicine. If you fainted when you saw blood, you probably weren't cut out for medicine. God gives you gifts and our listeners can ask themselves the question, "What is it I do in life that just seems to come naturally? What is it that when I do it, other people say, 'You were born to do that.'" Recognize those unique gifts and abilities.

Finally, the Y in story stands for yield to God's leading. Once you recognize your passion and your gifts, there comes a time when you have to yield to God's leading. From the time I was five until I was age 15, I thought I was going to be a television producer. When I would go to the library, eight or nine years of age, my parents would drop me off at the Dallas Library to do my homework. Instead of doing homework, I'd pull down broadcasting journals to read about it and business journals. Well, when God called me to the ministry, he didn't change my desires and gifts, he just redirected them. I think God does the same in all of us. The unique gifts and abilities you have and passions are not there by accident. God has a unique story he's telling in your life, and that's one of the secrets we talk about in *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me role play with you. I'm a person listening, and I've got a lot going on in my life, and most of it's not good. I'm speaking as hypothetical, and I say to you, "Dr. Jeffress, you don't understand. God cannot use me because of the horrendous sin that's been in my life. I have messed it all up. I mean, from early as a youth, I did things that I'm embarrassed about today, and I just cannot believe that he's got a place for me because I have already disqualified myself." What's your answer?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I'd say there's great hope for you. If you think you're too big of a sinner to be used by God, you're not nearly as good of a sinner as you think you are. Paul was the chief of sinners.

Dr. James Dobson: He called himself that.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: He did. He said, "It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am foremost. And yet for this reason, I found grace in order that in me as the foremost Christ may demonstrate his perfect patience as an example to those who would believe." What he was saying was, "If you think you're too sinful to be used by God, look at me. I'm exhibit A of a sinner saved by grace." I mean, Dr. Dobson, Paul was guilty of blaspheming the name of God. He was guilty of murdering and torturing Christians and yet God took Paul as an adult and saved him and used him as a vessel.

Dr. James Dobson: And God chose him before he was born.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: He had a role for him to play. It's in the Scripture.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Absolutely. God is gracious enough and able enough to forgive any and every sin. The first place for you to start with, if you're looking for that extraordinary life, is at the cross of Jesus Christ. To kneel before Christ, ask his forgiveness for your sins, and you become a new person.

Dr. James Dobson: I would ask the person who feels like I just spoke, just echoed that they're not good enough, that they have abrogated anything that the Lord might do in their life. I would ask them, "Are you waiting for the Lord to knock you off a horse like He did with Paul?" It may be necessary for Him to do that and it may come at a time that you have already created sin and you've got it deep within you and you regret it. The Lord is compassionate, He will not only forgive, look what he did for David. David killed a woman's husband in order to take his wife.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And had sex with her, Bathsheba. How could God forgive that?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Yeah, but He wiped his iniquity clean, the Bible says. Abraham, multiple wives, lying and cheating. Look at Moses, killed a man. I look at Paul. All of these are examples because as Paul said, it's in our weakness that the power of God is perfected.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, we're flawed. Sometimes I think we're too flawed because I look inside and I don't like what I see as to my own imperfections. But if you have to be perfect in order to follow this Lord, none of us is going to qualify.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Now that's exactly right. We're all disqualified. But that extraordinary life begins with the grace of God and then asking yourself the question, "What is it that God would have me to do next?" This book is titled *Choosing the Extraordinary Life* because an extraordinary life, Dr. Dobson, is a choice we make. You look at an extraordinary life, an extraordinary life is made up of extraordinary years, made up of extraordinary months, weeks, and even days. I would just ask our listeners right now, if you want to get on the path to an extraordinary life, ask yourself the question, "What would God have me to do next?" If God were sitting down with you for a cup of coffee and He were to say to you, "I love you so much. I'm so proud of you. You're doing great, but there's one thing in your life we need to talk about. Something needs to change."

Dr. James Dobson: Wouldn't you love to have that conversation?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: You know what I have found is, most everybody I talk to and paint that scenario, they know exactly what that one area is God would want to talk to them about. We already know it. Why not start doing that one thing God is calling you to do or stop doing that one thing God says stop doing, so that you can get on the road to that extraordinary life?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, there is so much in this book, there's seven secrets. What have we dealt with, two, three?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: We've dealt with two. But unleashing the power of prayer, that is so key. Living your life with an end in mind, that's talking about legacy. Learning to burn the ships, making that all in commitment. All of these things are illustrated by the life of Elijah.

Dr. James Dobson: You gave that illustration on your sermon; I listen to you.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Oh, my goodness. That makes me nervous.

Dr. James Dobson: No, it's wonderful. You made reference to burning the ships. I know what that is, many people don't. Explain it.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: The Spanish explorer, Hernan Cortes, in the 16th century when he landed on the beaches of Veracruz, Mexico, he and his men had to make a 200 mile journey from Veracruz to the capital of Mexico to claim the country for their country of

Spain. But Cortes knew that the 200 miles were cactus filled, snake infested miles. He knew at some point the men would be tempted to turn back in retreat. So he made the order there on the beach at Veracruz, burn the ships. In other words, possibilities of retreat were completely eliminated, they had to go forward. I said, "If you're going to have an extraordinary life, you have to have that all in, burn the ships moment."

Elijah said that to the Israelite on Mount Carmel. He said, "How long are you going to waver between two opinions? If Bael is really God, serve him with all of your heart. If Jehovah is God, serve Him with all of your heart. But make up your mind today." If we're going to have that extraordinary life led by God, we've got to decide that we're all in. You've seen this in your practice, Dr. Dobson. If a couple thinks that divorce is an option, they're going to take that option at some point in their marriage most probably. But if they burn the ship and say, "That is not an option," then they're going to go forward in their marriage. That's true in every area of life and it's certainly true in our relationship with God.

Dr. James Dobson: Shirley and I have been married for 58 years. We have never even contemplated the possibility of divorce. First of all, because we love each other and the greatest thing that's ever happened to me, other than finding Christ has been Shirley. But a lot of people don't have that advantage and did not marry the right person. But they are still determined to go the distance.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: The famous line about that, somebody asked Ruth Graham, "Did you ever consider divorce, you and Dr. Graham?" She said, "Divorce, no. Murder, yes."

Dr. James Dobson: That's a well quoted point. Your illustration of burning the ships, I remember it's not spoken this way very often by ministers. But when I was a kid, they talked about coming to Christ requiring you to burn the bridges so no turning back, Lord, no turning back. You remember that song?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I have decided to follow Jesus. We still sing that invitation.

Dr. James Dobson: No turning back.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: No turning back.

Dr. James Dobson: In order to have an extraordinary life, you have to make a commitment not only to your spouse if you're married, but especially to the Lord Jesus Christ. It may take you into dangerous territory. We were talking about that last time.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Never the mind, you do it anyway. You do whatever God calls you to do.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I say in the last chapter, though, Elijah, when he came to the end of his life, he's caught up in the whirlwind. He was a foretaste of what the rapture's going to

be. He was caught up, leaving his protege Elisha there by the Jordan River. I thought, "What did he have in his mind as he was lifted up into heaven and looked down on the earth he was leaving behind?" As he looked back, he didn't have a perfect life. He had some regrets, but he had a short list of regrets and a long list of people he had impacted for God. Dr. Dobson, that's going to be true of you when God calls you to heaven. I can't imagine the people you've influenced for Christ. That's the way we all ought to live. It's the old saying, "only one life, will soon be passed, only what's done for Christ will last."

Dr. James Dobson: At the start of the program last time, the first question I asked you, being the pastor of 13,000 people at Dallas First Baptist Church is, what's your greatest joy? What gives you the greatest satisfaction? In terms of first, Focus on the Family and now Family Talk, my greatest satisfaction has come from having one guest right after another who have important things to say that enhance my life and my Christian walk. You are at the top of the list of those who have been here. I've talked to most of the well-known speakers, pastors, writers, and those that have been very influential in the culture and in the kingdom. And having the opportunity to get better acquainted with people like you and becoming friends with you has meant a lot to me and that's certainly true in this case.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Well, Dr. Dobson, as we say in Texas, thank you for allowing us to hitch our wagon to your star. You've been great to share your platform with us in giving us a chance to share what God is doing in our ministry. We love you and we pray for decades of more life and service for you and Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: I used to live in Fort Worth right next to you there.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: And some of your kin are still in Wichita Falls where I used to minister.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that right? Well, the house that we lived in, in Fort Worth has been torn down and an eight lane freeway goes through there and I'm deeply offended by that because I thought they would make a memorial of that house. No chance of it happening.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: We'll see if we can get a stretch of that super highway dedicated to you.

Dr. James Dobson: Thanks for being with us for both these programs.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: We'll do it again. Keep writing.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: Well, we hope you have learned a lot from Dr. Robert Jeffress and Dr. James Dobson over the past couple of days here on Family Talk. I hope you'll share this broadcast with your family and friends as well. Now, if you didn't have a chance



to hear part one on yesterday's broadcast, you'll find a link on the broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). There you can also see about information on Dr. Robert Jeffress's book called *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*. Go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org), then click onto the broadcast icon at the top of the page.

Now another way you can get in touch with us is through our many social media accounts. Like and follow us by searching for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk whenever you go to your favorite social media accounts. Our accounts are full of engaging and godly content that you will definitely want to share with all of your friends. You can listen to our radio broadcast, you can download Dr. Dobson's newsletter or read any of the articles that we've posted. We exist to support you and your marriage and your family. So the next time you're looking for encouragement on social media, search for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

I'm Roger Marsh, thanks so much for listening today. As we wrap up today's broadcast, I want to remind you to get out and vote in the midterm elections this November. We must make our voices heard to protect our values in this failing culture. For more information and to get our informative voter guide, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and you can learn more about the key races all around the country. That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and get our informative voter guide. Pray, engage, and vote. We hope to see you at the polls this November.

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

Dr. James Dobson: It's never easy to maintain an intimate long term marriage, especially today when divorce rips apart one out of every three families. The pressures of living will also carry you and your spouse away from one another unless you're willing to work to preserve your relationship. In some ways, that effort is like trying to channel the mighty Mississippi. If the beautiful river had its own way, it would take a shorter and steeper route to the Gulf of Mexico. Near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the government is fighting a tremendous battle to keep the Mississippi on course. Billions of dollars and thousands of man hours are being invested in the effort to tame the river. If that campaign fails, life in the entire region will change. Farms will disappear, and homes will float downstream.

Now, in some ways, that struggle is a metaphor for the battle to save the family. Without considerable effort and expenditure of resources, the banks will overflow and the landscape will be ruined. How will you beat the odds against marital conflict, infidelity, divorce and custody fights? It can be done, but there's no time to lose. Reinforce the river banks, brace up the bulwarks, bring in the dredges and deepen the bed. Keep the powerful currents in their proper channels. Only that measure of determination will preserve the love with which you began.

Roger Marsh: Hear more at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).