



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Jesus Followers – Part 1

Guest(s): Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel- Ruth Lotz Wright

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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: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and I hope you had a very merry Christmas. Thanks so much for joining us today. I'll let Dr. Tim Clinton introduce today's guest here in just a moment. We have two very special women with you that you probably know and I'm sure you're going to enjoy hearing from. But first I have a question for you. Have you considered making a donation to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute? During the month of December we have a special matching grant in place for all of the month, and so there's only a few days left for you to take advantage of it. Every donation you make during the month of December will be matched instantly for double the impact. If you consider making a donation, please visit drjamesdobson.org. Everything you need to know about Family Talk is right there on the homepage. Again, that's drjamesdobson.org. Now, today's conversation was originally aired in the beginning of this year. It's part of our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection. Let's listen to today's conversation right now. Here is Dr. Tim Clinton.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In 2014, Dr. Dobson released his book, *Your Legacy*. In the book, he talks about how an inheritance is something you leave for someone when you die, but a legacy is what you leave in someone. Dr. Dobson and I agree that parents have the biggest influence on their children's lives. As moms and dads, we need to take that responsibility seriously. I've often heard it said that children are our only eternal possession, which makes the privilege of parenting the highest calling and the greatest responsibility. Today we have a couple of very special guests joining us to talk specifically about raising Christ followers. They're Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of the late Reverend Billy Graham and Anne's daughter, Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright. I'd like to briefly introduce our guests and then we'll jump right into today's broadcast. Anne Graham Lotz was called the best preacher in the family by her father, Billy Graham.

She's an international speaker and the best-selling and award-winning author of numerous books, including *Jesus in Me* and *Just Give Me Jesus*, and is president of Angel Ministries in Raleigh, North Carolina and a former chairperson of the National Day of Prayer. Anne actually took over the National Day of Prayer after

Shirley Dobson left. Shirley felt that Anne was the perfect person to carry the mantle of National Day of Prayer. Rachel Ruth Wright is the daughter of Anne Graham Lotz and the granddaughter of Billy Graham. She teaches a weekly bible study at the University of North Carolina. She shared God's word at numerous events around the country. She also serves on the board of directors at Angel Ministries. Rachel Ruth feels called to encourage others to fall in love with Jesus through the teaching of his word. She graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas. She's married to Steven Wright. They have three daughters, Bell, Sophia and Riggin. Anne, Rachel-Ruth, thank you so much for joining us here on Family Talk.

Anne Graham Lotz: Oh, it's a pleasure. Thank you for having us.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: It is. Thank you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As we get started, Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, send their regards and I know that they wanted me to ask you, Anne, and for our listeners on a little bit about how you're doing.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you. Dr. Dobson and Shirley are precious friends and one of the greatest honors of my life was when Shirley called and asked me to take her position as the National Day of Prayer chair of the task force. And so I consider them just dear forever friends. So to be on their program is a blessing. And you can tell them for me that I'm doing well. I think all that I've been through the cancer surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, my age is caught up to me. So, I'm acting more my age than I did before, but still God is blessing and He's so faithful to see us through hard times, isn't He?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Anne Graham Lotz: If we didn't have hard times, how would we know the depth of His power, His strength, His love, His faithfulness. So, I'm very grateful that He's brought me through to this point.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, I know they have a deep love affection for you. Now on to Rachel-Ruth, it's great to have you on the broadcast too, daughter of Anne, and I feel like I know you, I've read all these stories in the book, but the new book, *Jesus Followers: Real Life Lessons from Igniting Faith in the Next Generation*, written, co-authored by Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright. Rachel, so glad to have you. It's a delight.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know you have deep affection for your mom. It must be fun being able to spend some time and come alongside her in the ministry.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: It really is. God is so good. My mom, I felt almost like it's a Paul Timothy situation, because mom has so invested in me and counseled me and taught me, she's so wise. And so it's been such a blessing. And then to be able to come together and do this book has been really, really special. So I've loved it and I love writing, but especially about something I'm so passionate about. And so I have such a heart for this younger generation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know there's a lot of concern out there about the today's generations, people saying when they hit college or what have you that we're losing them. What a work for such a time as this, because a lot of people are concerned about how do I pass my faith on, or how do we influence our families for Christ for such a time as this? You guys open up talking about passing the baton of truth. And let me start with you. You open up, you look at the whole issue of Adam and Eve and their two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain kills Abel, but even though he's dead, the scripture says his voice still lives on and the influence of Abel into, what? Seth and then Enoch and more, but the baton of truth, how important is it? What's it all about?

Anne Graham Lotz: Well, I use the illustration of a relay race and one of our favorite events in the Olympics, or I guess any track meet is the four by 100 meter relay race. And you're going to have different teams, but in each team they have four runners and each runner runs a lap, but he is gripping a baton in his hand, and he runs as fast as he can. When he comes up to the second runner, the second runner's already running and he passes the baton forward, that second runner grips the baton and he runs as fast as he can. He pass to the third runner, then the fourth runner, whoever the team that runs the fastest and the team that passes the baton the smoothest is the team that wins. And so, I take that and overlay it on Genesis five, because in Genesis 5, there were 10 generations that were listed that lived in such a wicked world that it provoked the judgment of God and the flood.

And I pulled out from that list of 10 men, four that I felt had characteristics that we could apply to ourselves. We need all four. And the first one was to be a witness, and that was Abel, as you've already mentioned, because he sacrificed the way God told him to, a blood sacrifice in order to be accepted by God. His brother refused. He wanted to come to God in his own way, and Abel gave his life basically for an Old Testament version of the gospel, and that's why his blood still speaks. And then the second one was Seth and Enoch, and in their lifetime people began to worship and call on the name of the Lord. So witness worship walk, that was Enoch. He walked for 300 years and walked with God and he started walking, so interesting when his son was born. So he was overwhelmed with raising a son in a wicked world, and that's when he started walking with God and then kept on walking until he just walked right into God's presence.

And so our daily walk is something that needs to be a part of our lives. And the last one was work, which was Noah. And Noah not only walked with God, he not only worshiped and he was a witness, but Noah was somebody who did

everything exactly the way God told him. And if he had not, we wouldn't be here. So God used his work to present, in a sense, you can say this salvation to the whole world. And when he provided the arc and invited everyone to come in and be saved from the judgment that was coming, but no one accepted his invitation except his family. But as a result of his work, his family was saved. So I'd just take those four men and introduce each one of Rachel-Ruth's sections of stories with one of their stories. And then she's written stories that emphasize the witness, the worship, the walk, and the work. And she's done a fabulous job. It just comes live. You just feel sucked into her stories. But what she's done is illustrate how you live that out within the home.

Dr. Tim Clinton

Yes. Rachel-Ruth, you've been on the receiving end of quite a legacy. Dr. Dobson talks about the difference between an inheritance, something you give to someone and a legacy, something you leave in someone. And you tell a lot of stories. But talk to us about the significance of legacy, Rachel-Ruth, and what it means to you, especially as you raise your own family.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Yeah, it has been something that I think I've thought about, prayed about since I first had my first child in the hospital. I was desperate wanting her to know about Jesus. I have three girls and so I've always, I've just wanted them to love the Lord. In fact, I love the book of Joshua and at the end of the book of Joshua, when Joshua is, I just picture him as this old, old man and they probably had to help him up to stand. And he gets all these men in front of him and he just challenges them. Don't go back to the gods across the river. He said, worship the Lord. And then I feel like they must have looked at him with these blank stares. And then he looks at me, he said, as for me in my house, we will worship the Lord.

And that's how I've always felt. I just want for me and my house, I want us to love the Lord. I want to pass it on. I want them to have that love for Jesus. And it can't just be words out of my mouth. It's got to be the way that I live. And I think that is one of the keys to leaving a godly legacy. It's not just taking them to church, which is important. It's not just telling them about Jesus or reading Christian books to them, little story time things at night. But it is actually living it out. You're authentic in the way that you live and you watch the things that you say, you're careful with what you say. You are kind to people who aren't kind. They watch all these different things that go on in our lives. And I think that's what can make a difference in... And I think one thing I know as a parent is there's no perfect formula. We just have to live for Jesus with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And then we just pass it on to our children and then it's up to them to choose to follow. And no matter how great you do it, it really boils down to them choosing. And we just pray that we've done enough to quicken their hearts to want to follow Jesus. But we have to be authentic ourselves. And so it is a passion of mine. And I think it's very important because we are losing this next generation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There's a lot of brokenness in the world.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And in counseling we've learned this, that families tend to reproduce themselves for good and bad. And some people listening are recognizing they're putting pieces together. Hey wait, this is the Graham family, the Lotz family. We're going to talk about that in a moment too. But what if I've got this burning desire, I want my kids to know the Lord. I want them to follow in the ways of the Lord. I'm struggling, I'm lost. What you guys have put together is a prescriptive plan on how to strengthen your own personal faith walk to see the narrative and then to also, what? Pass it on and make sure that that baton gets passed in a way that it doesn't get fumbled or dropped.

Anne Graham Lotz: And if I can just interject for people, because I know there are people who can raise their children and the parents can be authentic followers and they've done everything they know to have passed on that baton. They can read our book and think they could've shared some things with us that we didn't know about. So they still can have a child who rebels. So I think we have to be careful in the Christian community, not to point fingers and not to condemn parents when they see a child who's not living for Jesus. So just to say a word of encouragement as we go into this for parents who maybe they haven't done it all right and they have a prodigal, or maybe they've done it all right and they have a prodigal, that this is just a moment in time and it's not finished yet.

Dr Tim Clinton: Anne, I'm so glad you said that because I agree with you. And some of our best parenting is on our knees alone, praying over and for our kids. And I want to come back to you just for a moment, and you grew up daddy Billy Graham. We're going to talk about your mom, Ruth Bell Graham and more, but talk about what you saw. Let's talk about this witness side, sharing the gospel, understanding the significance and the importance of it and sowing those seeds deep in our own hearts. What was it like at the feet of your dad?

Anne Graham Lotz: My father was gone. They estimate 60% of my growing up years. So he wasn't really present in the home the way my husband was with my children. But I think that the thing that my father passed on to me was his faithfulness to God's call in his life and his humility with which he served the Lord. He never had an inflated opinion of himself. It was amazing. He was genuinely humble and self-effacing. My mother was strong, feisty, great conversationalist, deeply spiritual. Her art hangs in my home. She could play the piano. She was so good mingling with people that she always sat at the president's table at a White House dinner. She was amazing. But one of the things that I remember about her, there's so many things, but my mother at night when I would go to bed, I would be up to my bedroom in their house was over her bedroom.

So I would go to bed at night and I'd see the lights from her room reflecting on the trees outside. I would slip downstairs and find her on her knees in prayer. And I didn't bother to stay because I knew I couldn't get her up off of her knees

until she was finished. But then in the morning I would get up real early sometimes to study for an exam or something and I would look out and the lights would be on reflecting on the trees. I'd go downstairs, she'd be at her big flat top desk. She had 14 different translations of the Bible that were open on her desk and she'd be reading her Bible.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Those visuals, Anne, you take us there, I can actually see. And my dad was a pastor for nearly 60 years. My dad also supplemented his income by driving a school bus. He picked up kids on the dirt roads and brought them to the main roads to be picked up by the big yellow bus. But there's this one place, it was Hunter's Garage, he would sit there. And I asked him one time, I said, dad, what do you do while you're there? Because I drive by and see him. And he always had his Bible in the steering wheel. And he said, I would read my Bible and Tim, I'd be praying for each of you kids by name. Every day that I went to school, I saw my dad in the same place doing the same things. And those things go deep into your heart and mind, don't they? These are caught and taught lessons. Rachel-Ruth, I'm going to come back to you for a moment. You had the privilege of growing up with two godly grandpas.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tell us a little bit about what you witnessed and what it started to do in your heart.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Well, I do, and I tell people this all the time. It is only by God's grace that He put me in this family. How did I get picked to be put in this family? And so I understand that and I feel very humbled by that. But my grandfathers were amazing, my grandmothers were too, but Daddy Bill, we called him Daddy Bill. He was such a southern gentleman, just so kind and sweet. And he loved to hold our hands. And in fact, the night before I got engaged, I didn't know it was going to happen. And we were up at his house and he was like, "Let me see your hand." And I was like, "What?" He goes, "Well, where's the ring?" "I was like, "Daddy Bill, I'm not engaged." And he was like, "Oh." And then the next night I got engaged, but he was so loving and so sweet and always wanted to ask me about my friends, ask me about what I was doing in ministry, what I was teaching in Bible study, and just very loving.

He was very loving and very focused on me. In fact, I wrote a story about it in the book, how he would give me his full attention. And he was somebody that people were always pulling at him for attention. But when any of the grandkids walked in or anything like that, and even my kids, he gave them his attention and was so sweet and kind and always brought everything back to the Word and to the Lord. And I don't ever remember a conversation with him, which were many, many, many conversations. Every single one was geared talking about the Lord in some way. And so he was an amazing example. And then my grandpa, my dad's dad was a pastor in the worst part of the Bronx in New York. He had been a wrestler in college. He was a big man and he was also one of those guys that was a street corner preacher.

So when you go to New York and sometimes you'll see these guys preaching on the corner, that was my grandpa. And he always carried a gospel tract in his pocket, but he attached a dollar bill to it because he knew they're not going to take the tract unless they see the dollar bill attached to it. And he always shared the gospel. I remember him coming into our house and he would have his Bible open and he couldn't see very well. So he would have a magnifying glass over it and just be reading it for hours just with that magnifying glass and his face right up to the glass because it was important to him. It showed me that it was important to him. And so he loved the word and he wasn't in the best environment, just a tough space. In fact, when my other grandfather, when Daddy Bill wanted to come visit him at his church in the Bronx, the taxi cab driver wouldn't even drive him to that area of the Bronx.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Really?

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: And grandpa, when Daddy Bill showed up, grandpa was like, I'm not preaching. You've got to preach if you're coming to my church. And Daddy Bill got up and he told us that he preached on the cradle, the cross and the crown. And so anyhow, they were just both giants of the faith in my life and such an example. And grandparents have an enormous, enormous influence on grandkids. Even if you feel like they don't care, they're not watching, they are watching and they don't forget. They don't forget the things, the examples and the things that you say to them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We're fighting time here on the first day together, Anne, Rachel-Ruth, it's been just amazing. I want to come back to you Anne to close or bow tie this particular piece. They say, if you have any value to God, if your family has any value to God, all Hell will be against you. Anne I want you to speak some life into those who are out there saying, listen, we don't have a perfect family, but I do love my family. I want God and my family. I want a legacy in my family. Bow tie this for us, would you Anne?

Anne Graham Lotz: I've heard Rachel-Ruth say, actually the best thing we can do is to love our children. And then at a certain age when they're in college and all that, we just let them go to God. And so if your children are younger, if they're still in the home, it's a whole different ballgame. In 2016, our men's team thought they had won or thought they'd won the bronze medal and turned out they were disqualified because they didn't pass the baton in the passing zone. And I think the passing zone for us is when our children are in our homes, you can pass the baton to your children when they're outside the home, but it's harder. So, if they're in your home, then I think you just, what Rachel-Ruth has just emphasized, make time for them, love them, enjoy them. Rachel-Ruth referred to my husband's father, he was a great one for having fun with his kids.

My husband was raised in a home where they loved the Lord and they certainly were bold with the gospel, but they had fun as a family, and we wanted to have fun too as a family. But I think the most important thing we can do is to develop our own personal relationship with Jesus as parents daily time spent in His

word, and it doesn't have to be a Bible study every day, but reading his word, just even if it's a verse, I take three or four verses every morning, working through Ephesians right now, and I just ask myself, what does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean in my life, and what's my takeaway? This morning He gave me a promise that I could claim for Rachel-Ruth and for one of her children in particular. I do that and then I talk to the Lord about what He seems to have said to me through the Word. And then I want to live it out during the day.

And so I think that's the most important thing you can do. But then when they're in your home, certainly you need to share God's word or then Rach-Ruth is a great one to make God's word exciting. So when she has Bible stories or shares God's word, the Bible just comes alive through the way she presents it to her children. So, they're never bored by God's Word. I think the most important thing we can do also is to, if we can, to bring our children to the cross at an early age. And we can't do that if we haven't been there ourselves. So I came to Jesus when I was seven or eight, I can't remember the year. I remember it was on a Good Friday. I'd seen a picture about Jesus on tv.

I knew He had died for me and I asked Him to forgive me out of my sin and come into my heart and be my Savior and Lord, and then prayed that for each of my children, Rach-Ruth prayed that for each of her girls, and her girls all came to faith and put their faith in Jesus before they were three years of age. So you say that's too young? No, it's not. You can bring your child to the cross, you tell them, you share the gospel and then bring them to the cross so that once they've received Jesus by faith and He comes into their hearts in the person of the Holy Spirit, then in a sense they're His responsibility. So, in all the ups and downs of life raising children and all the challenges we go through, God the Father loves them more than we do and He will watch over them, look after them, and if they stray, it's going to be for a time and then we pray that He'll bring them back.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We claim that Scripture, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when they're old, they won't depart from it." There's a lot more truth, a lot of stories and some strategies about how to keep that faith strong in our families and how to pass the baton well. Their new book, *Jesus Followers: Real Life Lessons for Igniting Faith in the Next Generation*. Our special guest today have been Anne Graham Lotz, bestselling author of *Jesus in Me* and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright. So great to have you all. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, the team at Family Talk, we salute you guys and thank you for joining us.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you. God bless you.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk and that was part one of Dr. Tim Clinton's conversation with evangelist, author and faith leader Anne Graham Lotz, along with her daughter and co-author Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright. They discussed the book that Anne and Rachel-Ruth wrote together called *Jesus Followers: Real Life Lessons for Igniting Faith in the Next Generation*. Now, today's interview along

with part two of this conversation are included in the 2022 Best of Broadcast collection. Yours today for a suggested donation of \$50. And new this year, we also have a digital download version available as well that you can access right now. Just go to drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. That's drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022.

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Announcer:

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