



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Hearts of the Fathers: Modeling Leadership That Lasts – Part 2

Guest(s): Dr. Charles Crismier

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to another classic edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and on today's program we'll listen to part two of Dr. Dobson's enlightening conversation with his guest, Dr. Charles Crismier, author of the book, *Hearts of the Fathers*, as they discuss how important a father is through his family. Dr. Crismier was a private practice attorney and a pastor before he founded the ministry, Save America. Dr. Crismier was an attorney in private practice and also served as a pastor before he founded Save America Ministries. He started the ministry to restore America's eroding foundation of faith and freedom.

On today's program, Dr. Dobson speaks with Dr. Crismier more in depth about the role of dads and how godly parenting makes the healthiest families. Dr. Crismier pleads with men to stand up and be the spiritual leaders of their families as time is short before the second coming. Here now is part two of this thought-provoking conversation right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, let's go back to what we were talking about last time, about this responsibility that fathers especially have. Mothers have a similar responsibility, but it's different.

Dr. Charles Crismier: It is different.

Dr. James Dobson: They'll try to tell you that there's no difference between males and females and that's baloney. God made me-

Dr. Charles Crismier: It's also malarkey.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well, you have gotten a picture of this responsibility that fathers have to their children and you have written about it in your book, *Hearts of the Fathers*. The subtitle is *Leaving a Legacy that Lasts*. As a matter of fact, if it lasts, it lasts for an eternity.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's worth pouring your life into. So at the end of the program last time you were talking about your daughter, Nicole, and you began teaching her to love God and understand who he is-

Dr. Charles Crismier: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: When she was two or three years of age. Now, they say a child can't really understand something like that. I found the Lord and went to a little altar in our church when I was four, so don't tell me it's not possible.

Dr. Charles Crismier: And when I was five, and my wife, when she was five.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, well there are many documentations of that fact spiritually that a child can get a hold of a spiritual concept at a very young age. You were working on that.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you think Nicole was taking from that?

Dr. Charles Crismier: Oh, I think she was picking up tremendously. And actually I began before age two or three, I began when she was an infant. Oh, yes. I began when she was an infant because even doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists know, have proved that children assimilate so much more in their very early years than later years.

Dr. James Dobson: Even if they can't articulate it, they're hearing.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Exactly. Hearing the Word of God. And I wanted them to hear it from Daddy. I wanted them to hear it and I also wanted them to feel my touch. For instance, we would sit in the evening on the stairs leading to their bedroom and the girls would gather around.

Dr. James Dobson: You have three?

Dr. Charles Crismier: I have three. And so this is when they're really young and they would just gather around daddy sitting there on the stairs and I would share with them the Word of God. Now, what I did not do generally was just read the Word of God. I read it to them in a way that it was living, that they knew that this was something experiential for dad, that this was a living thing, not some just dead letter. Now, there's nothing wrong with reading the Word of God. I believe in doing that and I've done that with my daughters. But in those earlier days, I would share with them the accounts of Scripture and I would sometimes dramatize them.

For instance, one thing that they will all remember is talking about the Words of God, there, I think it's Peter, he said that we should be clothed with humility.

For God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. So humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due season, casting all your care upon him for he cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary, the devil as a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour.

It wasn't for the purpose of just trying to be dramatic, it was for the purpose of helping them to catch the living reality of the Word of God. And when I would share these things with them, I had fatherly arms around them. You know the song like I do, "He touched me. Oh, He touched me. And oh, the joy that floods my soul." I wanted my girls to know their heavenly Father loved them by the touch of their father's hand.

- Dr. James Dobson: Now you said last time, and I totally agree with this, if you want to introduce your children to Christ, you begin as a man by loving their mother. They're linked.
- Dr. Charles Crismier: Exactly.
- Dr. James Dobson: And that's the first step.
- Dr. Charles Crismier: Well, it is said the best gift a man can give...
- Dr. James Dobson: If you're seen yelling and threatening or hitting or hurting the mother, that has a tremendous impact on kids, especially little girls.
- Dr. Charles Crismier: It really does. And I had three little girls. And I'm very thrilled that just this last week my middle daughter sent me a text about how I raised her to honor the Lord. She's now 40, 41 and struggling in some areas, but expressing how she was raised to know the Word of God, to love the will of God, to want to do His will. And that has been the great goal of my life, more so than success in law practice, more so than success as an author and writing books, more so than getting a big audience for my radio program. If I fail with my kids, I failed. Y
- Dr. James Dobson: I believe that with everything that's within me. And I feel the same way about it. When you were in my Sunday school class and the church that we were attending, a fundamental church that was really trying to serve the Lord, we were there, I think you were too, we were there Sunday morning, Sunday night with our kids and often when the doors of the church were open, we were there. If you are casual about your relationship with the Lord and the study of the Scriptures and so on, your children will see that. And if you are too busy on Sunday or if you're an Adventist, on Saturday, if you fail to devote yourself to that cause, you run a huge risk of being very, very regretful as an old man.
- Dr. Charles Crismier: No question about it. Only one life, which will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last.

Dr. James Dobson: That was on the wall of my grandparents' house. I remember seeing it. There was a little sign about two feet wide that was hanging there. And as a child, I sat and looked at it and thought about it.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Something is just kind of burning on my mind right now, and that is what Christian wives yearn for. I've been involved in this for a long time like you have. When I was practicing law as a trial lawyer, 80% of my clientele came from the broader body of Christ. 40% of my practice was in family law in Southern California, the largest family law court in the nation. Since then, I've been involved in pastoring in various roles for 30 years. I've been on the air pleading these causes for 23 years. What I have discovered, Jim, is that the number one cry of Christian women is, why can't or won't my husband be the spiritual leader in our home? It breaks hearts.

Dr. James Dobson: I affirm that. I affirm that.

Dr. Charles Crismier: And they don't know what to do with it. They can't do anything with it because the moment they say anything, they're deemed to be badgering. So all they can do is pray. But God, in His mercy and in His grace, here on the near edge of the second coming, I believe through this book, *Hearts of the Fathers* and perhaps other venues and voices that God is making a final plea to men. It's your time. Now it's your time to come up to the plate to be a standup man for God. And it shows you how to do it.

Dr. James Dobson: It's all in the Word of God. You can find everything you need to know right there in that Scripture.

Dr. Charles Crismier: In the Word of God. So what this book-

Dr. James Dobson: From that you find books that are consistent with that word.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Exactly. This was the easiest book of my nine books to write. You know why? I didn't have to do a lot of research for this book.

Dr. James Dobson: You lived it.

Dr. Charles Crismier: I lived it and I sat before the Lord and I had a unique privilege. It was as if He gave me the opportunity to crawl up in His fatherly lap and to communicate His fatherly heart in a desperate moment in which He wants to extend His mercy and His grace for these final hours of history.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me play a role with you.

Dr. Charles Crismier: All right.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Is this the psychologist coming out?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, that's what it is. What do you say to the guy who says to you, "Chuck, I know what you're saying is right. I appreciate it, but you don't understand what kind of life I live. I'm a lawyer, I'm a doctor. I'm a businessman who is just trying to get my business off the ground. I never have a minute to myself. I am working so hard to try to be successful at this. I don't have time to pray a lot for my kids. I have to let other people do that praying for me. And I get to church when I can, but it may not be fairly regularly and I think God is going to understand and take care of my children."

I got a better illustration of this. "I am a young pastor and my church demands everything from me. Somebody is always in the hospital, somebody is always in need, and I have that sermon every Sunday morning and many other times and it drains everything I've got out of me. I believe God will take care of my children if I do what He asks me to do in His church." What's your answer, sir?

Dr. Charles Crismier: My answer is, you're living in a fool's paradise. It ain't going to happen that way. If we don't have our priorities right before God, how can He bless us? Now, we may think that we have to do certain kinds of things to get ahead. What we don't realize is that in God's economy, if we'll do it His way, He can bring about fruit and the end result even beyond what we could have asked or thought doing it our way. Somehow we have to make the first thing first.

Dr. James Dobson: I agree with that answer, and I have studied the history of great preachers, great ministers who made the mistake I'm talking about. I won't name them now, but most of them had the belief that if I do God's work and I don't reserve anything of myself, I pour myself into the lives of others, winning them to Christ and building this church and doing what He asked me to do, He is obligated to take care of my children and He will get them to heaven.

Dr. Charles Crismier: I disagree with that.

Dr. James Dobson: I wish that were true. I really wish that there was a kind of an agreement with God where He would make up for the fact that you didn't have time for your kids. Look at David in Absalom. Look, there's so many examples of it. Adam and Eve.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Over and over again.

Dr. James Dobson: And we must decide what the main thing is and then be guided by it.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Fathering is a non delegatable duty.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Charles Crismier: It cannot be delegated to a pastor. It can't be delegated to a youth minister. It can't be delegated to your wife. It is a duty that God gives to fathers. And if we renege on that, how in the world can we expect our children to respect the Father when we don't respect the Father in terms of what He expects of us? So all of these things work together. It's said that 70% of pastor's wives claim that their marriages are not good. Well, there's a reason for that.

Dr. James Dobson: 70%.

Dr. Charles Crismier: 70% of pastor's wives claim that their marriages are not fulfilling. It's because of the very reason that you're suggesting. One of the problems, Jim, is that we have misunderstood the nature of ministry as God expected it. Jesus said, "I'll build my church. You make disciples." We've decided, no, we would rather build churches and we don't make disciples. So now we have all of these megachurches across the land in an undisciplined nation. How is that possible? Jesus said, "The Great Commission is not rooted in making converts. The Great Commission is rooted in making disciples, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded." We've gotten it all upside down. So what happens is that undue pressures and expectations are put on a pastor to do the impossible. The people are supposed to be trained to do the work of the ministry. Isn't that exactly what the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians chapter four?

No. There's a synergy, an unholy synergy that has been taking place and pastors kind of love to have it so in one way because it gives them all the focus. The people love to have it so because they can delegate all the responsibility. It's not pleasing to the Lord and it's defiling our families. It's defiling ministry families, it's defiling ministry marriages. How in the world is a pastor, who is experiencing this kind of situation, how in the world is he going to be able to go with any degree of confidence and integrity before his congregation and speak on these subjects? It doesn't happen. You could say that deviancy is being defined downward even in the house of God. It's time. This is the moment of truth. We're in the valley of decision, Jim. I just really believe that God, in His mercy and in His grace is saying, look, this is fish or cut bait time. You either is or you won't be a father after my heart.

Dr. James Dobson: You talk in this book about fatherlessness. That's not just divorce and abandonment.

Dr. Charles Crismier: No.

Dr. James Dobson: It is failing to be a father at home.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Exactly. So it's a twofold thing. You've got the cultural aspect, which right now, 40 some percent of our children are fatherless. They're born without a father. 40%. In the black community, it's 72%.

Dr. James Dobson: I remember when it was 25 and I gasped at that.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Yes. Right. And the unfortunate thing is that those percentages are holding true even in the evangelical church. That's what's so astounding. The spiritual aspect is that we as fathers are called to father. We're called to fatherhood. It's not just producing children. We're called to be, what should we say, in loco parentis to the Father, God the Father. In other words, we're to stand in His fatherly role. We are His hand extended as the Heavenly Father to do His work on this planet.

Dr. James Dobson: A few minutes ago you were talking about the dilemma that women are in when their husbands refuse to be the spiritual leader of the home. And what are they to do? They're trapped. They can't nag him to take this responsibility. And I tell you, when I was speaking around a country, as I did for many years, that was the one question most likely to be asked of me of wives and mothers as saying, "I grieve over the fact that my husband is not the spiritual leader in my home."

Now, what are they to do? You said it. What are they to do? I want to offer a suggestion. My grandmother was a deeply committed woman. She only weighed 97 pounds and she prayed consistently for her family. She had six children, five boys, one girl. And she prayed for them every day and she would gather them around and she would say to them, "if I lose one of you, it would've been better that I had never been born." That's what my dad remembers about his wow childhood. But her husband, my grandfather was not interested. He was a moral man and it nearly damned him. If you shook hands on a deal, he would fulfill it regardless of what it is. He didn't cheat. He didn't lie. He wasn't a drunkard, he didn't do any of those things, but he had no time for God and especially had no time for the church because he saw inconsistency and hypocrisy in the church. And so he would not take that role like we're talking about.

She prayed for him. That's her answer to the question. She prayed for him consistently week after week after week. Now, my dad said he could hear I in the bedroom praying for him, long hours praying for him. He never felt the call and never responded to the call until he was old. He had a stroke near the end of his life and then he had another one. He was upstairs trying to recover from this horrible stroke, and his daughter, the youngest of the six, saw him. She looked over at him. She was arranging his medicines and trying to help him, and she saw him cry. Nobody had ever seen this strong man cry. She went over to him and said, "Daddy, why are you crying?" And he said, "Honey, go get your mother." Who knelt beside him and he said, "I know I'm going to die and I'm not afraid to die, but it is so dark. Will you pray for me?"

Dr. Charles Crismier: Whoa.

Dr. James Dobson: 40 years she had prayed for him. It was the first time he ever asked her to pray. She said, "Well, I pray." And she began praying for him. He gave his heart to the Lord. He died two weeks later with a testimony on his lips.

Dr. Charles Crismier: So never give up.

Dr. James Dobson: That's what I think the Lord calls for women to do. Pray, pray, pray and don't give up. God hears those prayers and it might be 40 years. That's not very satisfying unless you know the end result.

Dr. Charles Crismier: And during that time, model the faithfulness of a wife, the submissiveness of a wife as to the Lord, and to give no excuse.

Dr. James Dobson: That's why my grandfather said to her, "I don't care if you take these kids to church. I rather wish you would. You feel free to do that, but just don't try to get me there." And that's very frustrating for a woman to hear.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Profoundly. Speaking of legacies, we're all going to leave a legacy. Every one of us leaves a legacy. The question is, are we leaving a legacy that we want to leave?

Dr. James Dobson: Are you going to do that?

Dr. Charles Crismier: I am doing that.

Dr. James Dobson: And I am too.

Dr. Charles Crismier: I'm committed to it.

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, it's a pleasure talking to you. We started this conversation 40 years ago.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Oh, we sure did.

Dr. James Dobson: Speaking of 40 years, when I was teaching the Sunday school class. And my method of teaching was conversational, much like it is today, and you were there. And I have appreciated the way you've lived your life and what you've tried to do for the Lord and writing these books and proclaiming the name of Christ on the radio. Thank you and thanks for flying here from Richmond, Virginia to be my guest today. Let's do it again.

Dr. Charles Crismier: Well love to do it. It's been a privilege. Wonderful reunion.

Roger Marsh: Well, that was the conclusion of this two-part conversation about being a father, featuring Dr. Charles Crismier and our own Dr. James Dobson here on Family Talk.

Being a parent is not easy and we hope you found some renewed inspiration from this program as well. To learn more about Dr. Crismier, his ministry, Save America, or to listen to any part of today's program that you might have missed, you can head over to our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. While you're there, as I mentioned, you can listen to both parts one and two of today's conversation. And also, feel free to check out our other broadcasts as well. Again, our website is drjamesdobson.org. Remember, you can also reach

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Thanks so much for joining us today. I'm Roger Marsh and I hope that you'll listen again tomorrow for another installment of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Till then, God's richest blessings to you and your family.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Well, thank you everyone for tuning into our program today. You may know that Family Talk is a listener-supported program and we remain on the air by your generosity, literally. If you can help us financially, we would certainly appreciate it. God's blessings to you all.