



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Lift Up the Word, Light Up the World – Part 1

Guest(s): Shirley Dobson

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello, everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: I'm Roger Marsh. Welcome to the month of May, and be listening at the end of today's program for a very special opportunity on how you can take part in our \$300,000 matching grant to support the ministry here at the JDFI.

Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and on today's program, we're going to focus on prayer and we have two very special guests who are going to be joining us to talk about the National Day of Prayer, which is coming up this Thursday, May the 2nd. Gary Bauer is in studio with me today here on the program. Gary, of course, is the vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. He's the host of the Defending Faith, Family and Freedom Podcast and a regular contributor. You hear Gary hosting the program quite often these days, especially as we talk about issues of public policy. And Gary, it's a pleasure and an honor to share the studio with you today.

Gary Bauer: Well, Roger, it's mutual. I'm glad to be with you and this is such an important topic. I mean, obviously in America, every day should be a national day of prayer, but having this specific day, and particularly the fact that we do some things on this, that's been the tradition over the years here in Washington, D.C., where our government leaders really need prayer, they need wisdom as they deal with all the problems our country is facing.

Roger Marsh: And especially since you had a position in the Trump administration just even a few years ago, I mean, you've seen this firsthand and now things have kind of deteriorated in our nation over the past five, six years for the absence of prayer.

Gary Bauer: I did serve on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and it has been remarkable to see all the emphasis there was just a few years ago. I mean, it really kind of permeated the country. I don't want to get at all political, but I can't tell you the number of times that in the previous White House I saw people spontaneously pray. It was really an amazing thing and I know that Jim and Shirley have prayed with former president Trump a number of times. But look, there are prayer meetings in Washington involving members of both

parties and on Capitol Hill and in the executive branch and all through the bureaucracy. I just wish there were more people attending them because all the big problems facing our country can't be solved without Christians, without biblical values, and without prayer.

Roger Marsh: Well, one of the reasons that of course the National Day of Prayer is so important to us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute is the role that Mrs. Dobson played as the chair of the National Day of Prayer Task Force for 25 years. And Gary, you watched that all come together with Bill and Vonette Bright having that chance meeting with the Dobsons back in 1989 and Vonette leaning over to Shirley and saying, "I think you should take over from me." It was an exciting time then. And look at the legacy the National Day of Prayer has grown to under Shirley's leadership.

Gary Bauer: It's unbelievable. I was blessed to be one of the early leaders of the Family Research Council and that happened around 1989, and I can tell you that over the years when Jim and Shirley would come into Washington, they always left the city better than it was before they got here.

Roger Marsh: Well, it's very appropriate then that today here on Family Talk, we're going to hear a conversation that Mrs. Dobson had with the radio host on the Christian radio station there, the premier one, WAVA, in Washington, D.C., talking about her 25 years on the National Day of Prayer. And we have a special resource too, before we get into that clip. We have a special resource that we put together. It's a free PDF called Pray Up America, and it's the PDF of the prayers that Mrs. Dobson wrote about in her book called *Certain Peace in Uncertain Times: Embracing Prayer in an Anxious Age*.

And we'll have that link up at the end of the program so you can click on and get those prayers for free and get prayed up and be ready to engage in the prayer warrior mode that you'll be in when the National Day of Prayer happens. You'll find that at drjamesdobson.org, if you're not listening there already. Gary, this is going to be a great conversation we're going to get into. Talk about why the voice of Shirley Dobson is so important for us to hear now, knowing everything she went through and the fact that she did not enter into becoming the Chair of the National Day of Prayer Task force lightly. It wasn't just a flip decision that she made.

Gary Bauer: No, Shirley has had God's hand on her, I believe, her entire life, and she has a way of talking about Christ and the gospel and doing it in a way that brings people toward the cross instead of pushing them away from the cross. She's a lovely lady, very easy to be around and there's not some hidden agenda. In Washington, D.C., people are always looking for the hidden agenda. What's in it for me? What's in it for you? The whole city revolves around the getting of power and keeping of power and of course, Shirley, in her prayer message and in her work for the National Day of Prayer, always reminded people that the power on the Earth is passing, that the only power that matters is the power that created us all, that has given us the great blessing of being born in a

country like the United States that's built on the idea that liberty doesn't come from any Caesar, but that it comes from God. And I think Shirley has just over the years been able to open doors that some of us can't always open.

Roger Marsh: Amen and amen. Well, without further ado, let's get into this conversation now and hear Shirley Dobson on radio station WAVA in Washington, D.C., talking about the legacy of the National Day of Prayer, on this special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Don Kroah: I can think of no one I'd rather have on the show at any time to talk about especially the National Day of Prayer than my next guest. Shirley Dobson is almost synonymous in my view with that acronym N-D-O-P, National Day of Prayer. She served for so many years in that office and even though now she is a member emeritus of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, I know her heart has never left that or her heart has certainly never left our nation. Shirley, I consider it a real honor to welcome you to the show.

Shirley Dobson: Oh, thank you so much and I appreciate you having me on. And I have to tell you that my heart is breaking by what we are seeing happening in our nation today. The Judeo-Christian system of values and religious liberty that we've enjoyed for all these many, many, many years is under assault. It's almost like somebody said Satan is walking the streets. And there's so many things that are going on, it's more than people can handle, and families are struggling and we see just a steady erosion, but our God is able and that's what we're appealing to Him today for a healing in America.

Don Kroah: Well, you're right, and I have said it several times yesterday and even today, Shirley, that there may be some will say, "Well, you, Shirley Dobson, all of you folks who've been praying for 70 years, hasn't seemed to help much." Well, I'd say it's helped a lot or we'd be in worse shape. What do you think?

Shirley Dobson: Well, that's it. That's the bottom line right there. What if God's people did not pray, if it's this bad with prayer. But we've brought it on ourselves. God has allowed us to go our own way. We've decided that we don't need Him in our schools, we don't need Him in our government buildings. We don't need Him at all in the public square. And so it's kind of like He says "Okay, you don't want me there, you can have it. Let's see what kind of job you can do." And now we see the mess that we're in.

Don Kroah: Talk about those years you spent, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe you served for 25 years as the National Day of Prayer Chairperson for the Task Force. Is that right?

Shirley Dobson: Yes, it is. It was a wonderful privilege and I kept saying, well, Vonette Bright actually asked me, and she's gone on to be with the Lord now, but she asked me if I would take that position and I talked to Jim, my husband, about it and I said, "I think I can do this for two or three years." And I ended up staying 25 years

because I saw the Lord moving and working and blessing our efforts and He just kept His thumb in my back. And then when we got to year 25, it's like He said, "Well, you can step down now and we'll take it from here."

Don Kroah: Well, I know you haven't stopped praying, nor has Jim, nor ministering as well. Perhaps another time we could have you back to talk about some other ministries you've been involved with. You've written a number of things, you've written for publications, but also I believe you and your daughter wrote a book. And you co-authored, did I see a series with Gloria Gaither, a four-book series on families? Those are areas that really the Lord had in mind for you, I guess, once you finished this little part of the journey.

Shirley Dobson: I believe so.

Don Kroah: It's very sad, indeed. And it kind of reflects what you were saying earlier, that we are at a different place as a nation, I believe, than we've never been before, certainly in my lifetime. How should we pray in light of these serious changes in the nation's complexion spiritually? The culture's in more trouble, it seems to me, than ever. There doesn't seem to be a relenting of the killing of our unborn and so much more, but it's easy for saints to get discouraged. We can't let that happen, can we?

Shirley Dobson: No, we can't. And God is not pleased with despair. He wants us to put our faith and trust in him and believe that he is allowing this for a reason. And it's painful, it's sad to see it happen, but if you see the things that are being passed and the things that are being done in this country, you can understand how it must grieve His heart. But I'm sure a lot of your speakers and prayers today have used the Scripture, "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

So I think the first thing that touches God's heart is repentance. Repentance for the sins of our nation and repentance of our own sins, to have a clean slate. And then we go into petition. I don't think you know this, but we have a bracelet. It's P.R.A.Y. Stands for pray. And the P is for prayer. The R is for repentance. The A is for ask, and the Y is for yield. And if we use those four things, pray for our nation, repent for its sins, ask for a healing, and God, not my will, but thine be done, I think that prayer pleases the Lord.

Don Kroah: You remind me, Shirley, of the words, I know you know them, many of us do, from Isaiah chapter 6, I believe, is where Isaiah is overwhelmed. King Uzziah has died. It's a very desperate time in the life of the nation and they've lost a great king. And Isaiah, I think, is a bit discouraged by it, but he says, "Then I saw the Lord, high and lifted up in his temple, his train filled the temple." And of course we know that's where Isaiah himself said, "Woe is me. I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips. I live among a people of unclean lips." And as a matter of fact, he really was brought to humble himself. But then that's when God had the cherubims cleanse his lips and said, "Now who's going to go for us?" And I think we may be at such a juncture. What do you think?

Shirley Dobson: I think you're absolutely right. I think the key that will touch God's heart is genuine repentance for the sins of our nation. And I mean, I can't imagine when my daughter was a little girl sending her off to school to shower with biological boys in the same room. I mean, it would just be unheard of. And now they're trying to push that and a lot of other immoral issues. It's just breathtaking. It seems like there's one every day.

Don Kroah: I'm looking right now and I know we're talking primarily about the prayer day itself, and I would love to have you come back, talk about your books, if you're interested in doing that, another time. But I did notice even back years ago you wrote a book called *Certain Peace in Uncertain Times*, so at least speak if you would to that topic because even so many Christians, I'm sure you're aware, are troubled by COVID-19, the disruption, the dislocation, the whole changing of the culture in so many ways. What do you recommend to people, to even believers especially, to find peace in these troubled times?

Shirley Dobson: Well, Don, it is a very troubling time and so many people are so anxious and fearful. And I had this happen in my own life some years ago where I was going through a period of anxiety and it was kind of free-floating. You couldn't really attach it to anything particularly. But it was a time of anxiety. And I just went before the Lord in prayer and shared with my Christian sisters what I was going through. And we gathered in prayer and I can't explain it, but God does something in your heart when you humble yourself before Him that it's a supernatural peace. You can't bring it on by any other means. It's brought on by God, but you have to seek Him for it.

And so many people seek different kinds of meds or alcohol or drugs or whatever, but they don't seek the Lord, but He is able to give us a supernatural peace that can't be explained. And in fact, there's a Scripture that says, "Be anxious for nothing but in everything, with prayer and thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God and the peace of God which passes all understanding shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." So right there, that's a recipe for good emotional health is to seek the Lord.

Don Kroah: We have one more minute, I want to give you the final word. Thousands of people listening right now and also across the country because I know there are folks listening online to the show. So what would you like to say?

Shirley Dobson: I would just like to remind everyone that America's only hope is prayer. With everything, all the wonderful things that this country provides, we cannot heal ourselves. We have to have Almighty God's healing touch on our country. So I just would like everyone to remember that we are privileged to have this National Day of Prayer, this day set aside for prayer, and I believe if we call on God for a healing for this country, eventually we are going to see it. And so that would be my call today is for wherever you are in your homes, at your office, in your car, at a stoplight, pray for our country, pray for our governors and mayors, all levels of government, pray and just basically what I'm saying is, God, there's

no hope apart from you. You are our only hope. And so that's what I would say to everyone. He has the answers.

Don Kroah: That's a good word. Thank you, my friend. Thank you for coming on the show, so good to talk with you. Give love to Jim for us.

Shirley Dobson: So good to have you to talk to and I'm glad you're still doing your thing in Washington. We need you.

Don Kroah: Thank you. A delightful lady, as you know, Shirley Dobson. She and Jim have given so much of themselves through the years in so many ways to this great nation and to many families across the world as well. So keep them in your prayers also as their ministry continues.

Roger Marsh: And you've been listening to this special conversation featuring our own Mrs. Shirley Dobson today here on Family Talk in an interview she gave with radio station WAVA in Washington, D.C., talking about her role, the 25 years that she served as the Chair of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, and Gary Bauer, the host of the Defending Faith, Family and Freedom Podcast and the vice president of Public Policy here at JDFI. We were just here in the studio listening to this interview and reminiscing on this conversation and it's so nice to hear even all these years later, Mrs. Dobson still has that clarion call to prayer.

Gary Bauer: And it comes so naturally to her. I mean, this is her life. She loves God, she loves Jesus. I am always amazed, Roger, that there are people out there today that want to sort of demonize normal Christianity. If you love Jesus and love America, you're a Christian nationalist and that's a bad thing. Well, Shirley Dobson's a perfect example of somebody that loves America and loves Jesus and oh, my goodness, may her numbers be multiplied millions of times. This is the kind of woman that America was built on. She's a wonderful wife and mother and devoted her life to the Lord, and we need more women and men exactly like that if America's going to overcome the many, many problems we have.

Roger Marsh: It's interesting that Ronald Reagan played a huge role in making this happen when Vonette Bright was the chair of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, and I heard and read some interviews for it. She was described as quite the bulldog, if you will, into getting Congress to do this. But I think people often forget that it was Mrs. Dobson working as the Chair that was able to convince Bill Clinton to sign this thing into law back in August of 1998, and that the declaration that the President shall issue each year, a proclamation designating the first Thursday in May as National Day of Prayer on which the people of the United States may turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups and as individuals. And that's no small feat, Gary. You know, being in D.C. for a pretty hardcore progressive left-leaning guy like Bill Clinton to be influenced by Shirley Dobson, that says a lot for Mrs. Dobson, I think.

Gary Bauer: Yeah, it really does. I had a few opportunities where I was supposed to convince Bill Clinton of something. And I can tell you I royally failed. So Shirley Dobson was able to do what I wasn't able to do. And as I mentioned earlier, I served in the Reagan administration and it was in that administration that I got to know both Jim and Shirley. And Jim, God bless him, when I would get in some trouble in Washington standing up for Christian values, he would put me on the radio show and Shirley would often ask people to pray for me. And so as somebody working inside government as a Christian trying to do better and being controversial, Shirley's prayers all the way back then were playing a major role in my life and helping me fight the good fight.

Roger Marsh: Gary Bauer, there's going to be a live stream on the National Day of Prayer. It's a kind of first of its kind because it's not only going to be televised here in the States, but all around the world. And of course, we will be featuring that stream on our Facebook page for the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Take the last 60 seconds of our time together, yours and mine, and talk about why it's so important not only for people to get Mrs. Dobson's PDF of how to be prayed up before the event, but then why watching it and participating it is so important.

Gary Bauer: Yeah, it's one thing to listen to easy-on-ears interview or show and say, "Yeah, that was nice," and then just move on. But as Christians and people that love the Lord and love our country, it's important that we get involved. And you can do that by tuning in Thursday night and it's going to help us all, I think, to get into the habit of praying. This is not something we do one day a year. This is something that ideally we do all during the day. One of my prayers has been that when I look at all the problems facing America, racial reconciliation, the breakdown of the family, more crime and corruption, all these things Americans say overwhelmingly that they're worried about the direction America's going, there's a solution, my friends. It's prayer and it's turning back to God. And the way to do that is to get involved right now. You can begin by tuning in on Thursday night and then moving on from there to make prayer a major part of your daily life.

Roger Marsh: Well, hearing from Shirley Dobson and Gary Bauer these biblical exhortations for being part of the National Day of Prayer events that are happening all this week and culminating with Thursday. Gary, thank you for your insights and for sharing this moment of our Family Talk history with us. It's the first time we've ever heard this aired, this interview with Shirley Dobson and WAVA, talking about the National Day of Prayer. But thanks for your insights and for being with us today.

Gary Bauer: Thank you, Roger.

Roger Marsh: Remember these words from Psalm 145:18. "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth." Our prayer is that today's program was an encouragement for you today here on Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and that was the conclusion of my conversation with Gary Bauer. We also listened to a classic interview featuring Don Kroah and Mrs. Shirley Dobson, the former chair

of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for a special program in honor of the prayer event taking place in Washington, D.C.

I want to share with you about an exciting new free PDF that's available on our broadcast page just in time for the National Day of Prayer. Simply visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk and click the link at the bottom of the page and you can download it. You'll be all prepared for how to pray for our nation on the National Day of Prayer.

Also, before we leave for today, I want to share with you that all month long here on Family Talk, we have been blessed by some special friends of our ministry with a matching grant. For every dollar we receive, that will be instantly doubled. Just think about it this way. Every dollar you donate will go twice as far to encourage parents, teach kids, and rejuvenate marriages. Now the grant only goes up to \$300,000, so please consider making a gift today to double your impact. You can give a gift online at drjamesdobson.org, that's drjamesdobson.org. You can also give a gift on your phone using the JDFI app, or give us a call at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute is a listener-supported ministry. We are so grateful for your prayers and your faithful financial support. I'm Roger Marsh. Be sure to join us again tomorrow as we gather together in prayer for the National Day of Prayer. Till then, have a blessed day and be sure to join us again next time for another edition of Family Talk.

- Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.
- Dr. James Dobson: How does a father teach character to his sons and daughters?
- Roger Marsh: With another Dr. Dobson Minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.
- Dr. James Dobson: One of the best ways a dad's influence is transmitted is through consistent modeling. Character training is instilled through his demeanor and behavior. Your kids will imitate much of what you do. If you blow up regularly and insult your wife, your boys will tend to treat their mother and other females disrespectfully. If you're selfish or mean or angry, you'll see those characteristics displayed in the next generation. Fortunately the converse is also true. If you're honest and trustworthy, caring, loving, self-disciplined, and God-fearing, your boys will be influenced by those traits. So much depends on what they observe in you. Someone said "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one." There's truth in that statement.
- Roger Marsh: For more information on this topic, go to drdobsonminute.org.
- Dr. James Dobson: This is James Dobson again. As we close today's program, I just want to thank so many of you out there who make this broadcast possible with your contributions. And I want to tell you how much your generosity is appreciated.