



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A New Pro-Family Vision for America

Guest(s): Brooke Rollins

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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 friends to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. We can take a look around at our neighborhoods, communities, states, and this country and see that we as Christians have much work to do for God's kingdom. We know that come this November, we'll be heading to the polls for an important election. Well, with that, have you ever wondered what the fight is like on the front lines within the White House? Well, today's guest here on Family Talk is Brooke Rollins, and she'll be joining Gary Bauer to discuss her experiences in the White House under the Trump administration and her current work for the next administration as well. So let's join Gary Bauer, who will further introduce today's guest, Brooke Rollins, right here on Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Well, hello everybody and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Gary Bauer, the senior vice president for public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm also the host of the weekly podcast, Defending Faith, Family and Freedom here at JDFI, and I'm honored to be working alongside of my good friend Dr. James Dobson. Now, as you all probably know, we will be voting. I hope you know anyway. We'll be voting for the next President of the United States in November. And Dr. Dobson and I have been pushing very hard the idea of Christian citizenship. So we want to really help you be informed with that important election coming up. And one of the great questions they ask is when we elect a president, who's going to be around them? Well, one of those people is our guest today, Brooke Rollins. I've known Brooke for a number of years, and she is a real intelligent woman who understands all the issues that the faith community cares about but really more broadly than that, all the public policy challenges facing our country.

She is currently working on developing pro-family policies as CEO of America First Policy Institute. And in the past, she has worked for former President Donald Trump as the director of the office of American innovation, as well as director of domestic policy at the White House. She earned her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Texas School of Law. Brooke and her husband Mark call Fort Worth, Texas home, and together they have four children.

Brooke, great to see you. Welcome to Family Talk. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley, send you their best.

Brooke Rollins: Well, Gary, what an honor to be here. And I don't know that there is any group of people in the world who best represent what we all hope to be and work to be and as a light for the world certainly and what we're called to be. So thank you. It's an honor to be with you.

Gary Bauer: Well, the honor is ours. Brooke, America First Policy Institute, now, I know quite a bit about it just because I've been sentenced to work in Washington, D.C. and I keep track of all these things, but a lot of our listeners busy raising their families and dealing with all the challenges of life in America these days. Tell us a little bit about the organization and why it's called America First. Some people get all squirrely about that, I don't know why, but it's a great group. Help us understand what you all do.

Brooke Rollins: Yeah, and I appreciate the opportunity to do that. You mentioned in your introduction, I had the incredible blessing, a very unexpected of being in the last White House. I was right next to President Trump for three years, year two, year three, and year four of his first term. Again, was not part of my plan. I had been in Texas my entire life, was raised here by a single mom in a really small town in the plains of Texas, was an agriculture major at Texas A&M. I had to get that in because you mentioned my graduate degree, my law degree, but I don't really count the University of Texas as part of my story because of course the Aggies are so much better than the University of Texas. But my role in Texas was always first as a wife and a mom of four beautiful children. And then kind of on the side, my side gig was running the Texas Public Policy Foundation, which is one of the larger state-based policy organizations in the country.

Fast-forward had never endorsed a candidate. Now, I'd worked with a lot of them. Rick Perry, I'd known since I was 15. I was in his first shop when he was governor. Ted Cruz worked for Texas Public Policy Foundation before he became a member of the United States Senate. Really all the candidates in 2015, 17 of them I think that were running, I knew every one of those Republicans, Scott Walker, Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, every one of them I'd worked with in the course of my time in Texas, except the real estate guy from New York. And so in God's great comedy, because I do think He's got a great sense of humor. I was the person that said, "Oh, Donald Trump is not going to go more than two or three weeks in the Republican primary. This is to up his TV show ratings, and then we'll get back to normal."

And fast-forward a couple of years, and I'm running his domestic policy agenda, and continues to be was, and continues to be one of the great honors of my life. He was an amazing boss. I would work for him again if the timing worked out. He was just incredible. We had a lot of incredible ladies. I think we had more moms on our senior staff in that West Wing than in any president, Republican or Democrat in the history of the country. Between us, Sarah Sanders, Ivanka Trump, Mercedes Schlapp, Kellyanne Conway, we had 19 school-aged children.

So we often joked, working in the White House was nothing. Dealing with Kim Jong Un was easy compared to getting all those children up and ready.

Gary Bauer: Brooke, that fact about the women that were in these key positions, that wasn't because the president sat around saying, I need to get a bunch of women because that'll score points in the polls. You all were there obviously, because the hiring was being done on merit, and you were the best people available for those jobs.

Brooke Rollins: Well, and as we all know, because it was reported widely in the press, President Trump suffered zero fools, no incompetence allowed, which is a little unusual for the government, not unusual for a private sector. No, by the last few years, we had the most incredible senior team led by the most incredibly competent people and a lot of incredible women. So I say all that because when we talk today about family policy, family value, how that led to the America First Policy Institute to your original question.

Gary Bauer: Well, I think a lot of people, including our listeners, they read the newspapers and they watch TV and they hear the spin of reporters and experts and so forth. But I think many of them would be surprised at how much in the previous administration, and today in your work, what conservatives are working on are ideas that will lift up all Americans. I know I've always been interested in, and you have been, that the minority community has been failed by big government. Big government talks a good game. I'll give you this, I'll give you that. But what people are looking for is opportunity and freedom. And I think those are two things that are really at the heart of what the Institute is doing.

Brooke Rollins: Well, that's exactly right, Gary. And to your point, and this is why people are surprised when they hear me say when I left Washington on January 21st of 2021, I was more encouraged, more enthused, more convicted that what we had achieved in those four short years in Washington with the ideas of more freedom and less government and what we had proven the concept to all of Americans. Job growth was at its highest in the entire history of America, for Black Americans, for Hispanic Americans, for Native Americans, for Asian Americans, for Americans without a college degree, for Americans who didn't finish high school, for our veterans. The numbers were staggering, and it was over and over and over again. So the idea that to help those with the least among us as we're called to do in Matthew. That that's not more in bigger government, it's creating in our founder's vision and frankly steeped in scripture, the gospel of Jesus being the greatest force for human flourishing in the history of the world and the United States being sort of the Petri dish for that.

And to see that flourishing happening in a way that was unprecedented under the policies of the last administration is such a miracle from my perspective and such a blessing. And so now we take that, we package it. One of our big initiatives at America First Policy Institute is called Athletes For America. We've got dozens of former NFL athletes, former MLB. We have a few less NBA

players, but I'm working on that and others. And the idea is that we build this communications machine that doesn't go to talk Gary to people like you and me, but goes directly into Milwaukee, Wisconsin right into the community, right into the urban area where poverty has been generational and makes the case. And again, this is not Republican or Democrat, this is freedom. This is America first. This is how we lift our families up. This is how we repair and bring families back together.

And when we do, when we do, those people are with us. They are our people. They love God. They want a better life for their own children, which they've never had in their lifetimes. They don't even know what that means, but they got a taste of it in the last administration. So our job is to ensure it's not about a certain candidate, it's not about one race, it's about how we move those ideas out. We change hearts and minds and we build an army for God and for America in a way that at least in my lifetime, and maybe in most of our American's lifetimes, we haven't really seen. The pieces of the puzzle are there. Incredible organizations like yours, the churches, the people on our side, small business owners. Again, this whole new wave of believers in freedom from the Hispanic and Black and blue-collar communities, now it's time for us to get out on the field, leave it all there, and win America back.

Gary Bauer:

Well said, Brooke. The country is facing so many problems. And our listeners, they're wrestling with all these things in their daily lives, whether it's the economic challenges or the breakdown of the family, the battle over whether kids are the responsibility of parents or whether they are responsibility of big government. These are big, big issues. And one of the things that Dr. Dobson keeps emphasizing and I've emphasized, is that there is not a major problem in America that can be solved without the active involvement of men and women of faith. Whether it's racial reconciliation, rebuilding the family, fighting corruption, bringing the country together, securing our nation, all of those things require every American to be involved, but certainly men and women of faith, particularly since the country was built on the revolutionary idea that our liberty doesn't come from big government, that it comes from God. And I know that's motivated you your whole life, the work you did with the Texas Family Council. And I saw on your website that a lot of the policy initiatives you all have actually showed how they fit under biblical pillars.

Brooke Rollins:

That's right. So I'm really proud of this work. I think perhaps we might be the first organization in history that is not a faith-organized organization but is a policy organization with the scripture undergirding it. I really, Gary, I took a lot of incredible lessons away from my three years in the last White House, perhaps the most important, when people would ask me, "What can we do? What a year up here. It's such a battle up there." I said, "Just pray. Just pray for me, pray for President Trump, pray for Vice President Pence. Pray for our team." Because the forces of dark are real and I saw more there than I probably ever have in my life. But every morning I'd walk in that West Wing every single morning and I would stop and I could feel God's hand and the covering of people's prayers.

And I started a Bible study. We met in the Roosevelt Room on a regular basis. Our team would always open our Domestic Policy Council meetings in prayer. I really worked to infuse... And it wasn't just me. I mean Vice President Pence is such a great man of God, and then we had other wonderful people on our team. But I really sincerely believe that God's hand was on that work. And so when I was setting up America First Policy Institute, it was very clear to me that the churches and the faith community, your listeners do such an incredible job of explaining why scripture and our faith is important, and why we believe in life, why we fight abortion, for example, why religious liberty is important, traditional marriage, etc. But what we don't do very well is explain why securing the border is biblical, why energy independence, where that is steeped in scripture. Why a healthcare system that is not reliant on the government or on big insurance companies, it should be between the patient and the doctor, where that comes from, from Jesus's word and in the Bible.

We launched this huge effort called Biblical Foundations and every policy pillar, and we've got 10 major pillars, economy, healthcare, foreign policy, etc, etc. But within each of those, we have more than, I think 350 specific policy ideas that are built out, legislation drafted, getting executive orders ready for the next administration. That's all steeped in scripture. And again, that is a first-of-its-kind effort, but I have found it extremely important, incredibly encouraging, and just equipping our pastors and our men and women of faith, how to talk about all of these issues and how to build the bigger tent, to bring more people closer to God, to make more disciples of all the nations and to ensure that as we continue to fight for America, we really understand what we're fighting for.

Gary Bauer:

Brooke, as you know, Dr. Dobson and I, a bunch of really great people were on the Faith Advisory Board that was giving advice to the administration. We've done that for previous presidents. Some of them welcomed it, others didn't, but the door was always open in the Trump administration. And I have to say, the reason I brought it up is that when we would go over, often people would come to speak with us. And you were one of the folks that we all were always excited to hear from because we knew, you shared our heart about the nature of America's success, where our liberty comes from, why America has played an incredible role in God's plan for the world, the number of missionaries we've sent around the world.

Again, the revolutionary idea that no government, whether it's the government of the party we like or not, no government is the source of our liberty. That's the God of the Bible that gave us the liberty we have. So Brooke, are you an optimist about... A lot of people are worried right now, even in the church. And every once in while I see people saying, "I think we're headed to a cliff. Something terrible is going to happen." You're always upbeat. So give us some words of encouragement that has helped motivate you.

Brooke Rollins:

I really appreciate that question. And the White House people would always stop me and ask me, "Why are you so happy? I'm so confused." Actually, I worked under three different chiefs of staff, and I think at one point, each of

them multiple times said, "Where is that big smile coming from?" And I'd say, "We've already won the battle, right? I mean, we know where we're going and now we're just doing our best while we're here on earth." But I am very optimistic. I know that it looks like and feels like we're looking over a cliff with what the other side is doing to our families, doing to our border, doing to our economy. But I sincerely believe our best days really are ahead, and I think that's because we have a group of very committed people who love Jesus, who love God, who are willing to be in the arena. And just Gary like you and Dr. Dobson after all these years, still being willing to leave it all on the field. That's how we're going to win. And same for your listeners too.

Gary Bauer: Well, that's so well said, Brooke. What you did with four children and having a great life in Texas and then being called into the maelstrom of Washington. I think it was Harry Truman who said, "Washington was the kind of city where if you wanted a friend, you should buy a dog." So I don't know about you, but I've gone through quite a few dogs in my years here in Washington.

Brooke Rollins: We do love dogs in the Rollins family. Yes.

Gary Bauer: Right. But you did something sacrificial as a Christian and as a patriot. And of course, that's the message that Dr. Dobson and all of us are trying to get across, that if you're a parent and something's going on at your school, that's not right. God has given you the responsibility to go to that school and protect your child. Whatever aspect of life you're in, men and women of faith, those that believe the Bible is the word of God, need to be in the public square, or our place will be taken by folks that have a quite different vision of what America is going to end up being for your children and our grandchildren. So in the time that we've had here together, I hope that you the listener get out of this, that there are all kinds of people like Brooke out there doing this good work, people like Dr. Dobson, who's devoted his whole life to it. And we are counting on each of you.

Whether you live in Ohio or Texas or in a liberal city, wherever it is, that you need to stand up for faith, family, and freedom for making America a shining city on a hill again. There's plenty of people like Brooke out there to help you and show you the way. And if we do that together, then I think we do have a chance that this year and five years and a hundred years from now, the Stars and Stripes will still fly over Washington, D.C. the capital of the free and prosperous people of the United States. Brooke, tell us where people can go to find out more about the organization and how they can join and be part of these chapters that are going to be set up. I really want to make sure that we give them an action item like that so they can join your army.

Brooke Rollins: Well, thank you for that. Americafirstpolicy.com. We are, of course, on social media, A1, America First, but the letter A, the number 1, Policy. I'm at BrookeLRollins. And we have been overwhelmed and incredibly encouraged by men and women like those that are to us today, who have stepped up and stepped in. And I know you hear this every day, Gary, that a lot of people who are involved now said, "Listen, I didn't want anything to do with politics, not

anything." Listen, I don't like politics either, I'm a policy girl, but unless good men and women are willing to stand up at their school board, city council, state level. My mom, single mom raised my sisters and me all by herself at 76 years old is running for the Texas House of Representatives-

Gary Bauer: Oh my goodness.

Brooke Rollins: ... for the first time because in Texas we've got a couple of rhinos. She's running against a Republican incumbent who votes with the Democrats more than he does the Republicans. Listen, if my 76-year-old mama can do it, she doesn't even like public speaking, then I think anybody can do it. Again, I continue to be so inspired and so encouraged. And I know we're wrapping here, but if I could share one quick story as we close. We elevate and honor, and as they should be, our founding fathers, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams. But what I often remind myself is that 10 years before 1766, 10 years before the revolution, before a small group of men declared independence from the greatest power that the world had ever seen, which was Great Britain at the time, they were just average everyday dudes. I mean, George Washington was a businessman.

James Madison was a teenager, and his parents would write in their journal how they didn't think he'd ever amount to anything because he was so shy. Thomas Jefferson was 19 in 1766 and wrote in his journal that his girlfriend had just broken up with him to marry his best friend, and he never got over it. I mean, these were people like us, but they were called together for a time, for a moment that they met thanks to their God and their faith and their belief that there were things worth sacrificing and giving their lives for, and one of those was this country. And so when people seem overwhelmed, they're like, "Oh, I'm just a single mom from Glen Rose, Texas raising my three girls with a little flower shop on the corner square. What can I do?" You can change the world. And that's what this country is based on, is ordinary people doing extraordinary things that can go out and frankly save America. So what an honor to get to carry that message, Gary. Thank you.

Gary Bauer: Well, you're welcome. And what a great close. Brooke, what you just brought up is the subject for another show. We'll have to have you back because as you know, the founders that you mentioned as great heroes of the American Republic, a lot of our children are no longer being taught about them or they're being taught horrible things about them. These incredible men that if they had failed, they would've all probably been hung and their families would've been lost, their property would've been taken away. And it's only because of their sacrifice and the blessing of God that we have the liberty we do today. So Brooke, you always do a great job. It's a pleasure to catch up with you today, and we look forward here at the James Dobson Family Institute to working with you in the months and years ahead.

Brooke Rollins: Well, God bless you. And thank you for all you do, and it's an honor to be on. Have me back anytime.

Gary Bauer: Good to talk with you, Brooke.

Roger Marsh: Our founding fathers certainly acted with courage and faith in establishing this great country that we call home. You've been listening to Brooke Rollins and her conversation with Gary Bauer about her time in the White House under the Trump administration, and how all of us can do our part in building a better future here in America. To learn more about Brooke Rollins and the work she is doing with the America First Policy Institute, visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

In today's world, you may have heard the question asked, what is a woman? And it's amazing to find how much more difficult that question is becoming to answer. Well, to support women and anyone who may need to become better able to enter this discussion of gender ideology, I want to point you to a free PDF file you can download from our website. It's called "What Is a Woman, According to God?" The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has partnered with Dr. Owen Strachan to create this document to encourage moms, wives, sisters, and daughters, and to affirm what God's design for women really is. So go to drjamesdobson.org, you'll see the icon that says, "What Is a Woman, According to God?" Click the link and follow the prompts. Well, I'm Roger Marsh, hope you have a peaceful weekend. May God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow deeper in your relationship with Him. And be sure to join us again on Monday for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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