



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Choosing the Extraordinary Life – Part 1

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

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk. I am so pleased today to have one of our most popular guests back with us. He is Dr. Robert Jeffress, senior pastor of 13,000 member First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. And he's the author of very many popular books on a Christian way of life. More than that, he is heard around the world. His influence is literally extending around the world and the Lord is using him in such an incredible way and especially Washington D.C. and what's going on in government. And that relates to the topic that we're going to talk about today, which is his book, the title of which is *Choosing the Extraordinary Life: God's 7 Secrets for Success and Significance*. Dr. Jeffress, welcome back for perhaps the fifth time.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Oh, it's an honor, Dr. Dobson to be here at Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: It's always good to have you here. Before we get into your book, I wanted to ask you kind of a personal question. Being the pastor to that larger church is a huge responsibility. But where does the greatest joy come in handling that responsibility?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Without doubt, it's our invitation time every Sunday when I give people the opportunity to trust in Christ to savior or recommit their lives to Christ, to see people flooding down the aisle not because of me, but because of the power of God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit. To see transformed lives of people of all ages, all races, responding to God's invitation that is the climax of every week for me.

Dr. James Dobson: When you were a teenager, would you have ever believed what God was getting ready to do in your life?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Well, that's a whole other story. But God has been good to put me... And there are a lot of great churches, but he's put me in the best church in the world, I think.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that's a grand one.

Speaking personally, my vision for what I'm doing now goes way, way back as well. Kind of a similar moment, but it was not with a pastor. I was on a tennis

team when I was in college. And I was driving my team in my parents' car to the Ojai Tennis Tournament, which was one of the large tennis tournaments in California. And as we were riding along, we were talking about what we planned to do with our lives. And I was the number two player at that time. The number one player was in the car and his wife was sitting in the backseat. And she remembered something that I only remembered after she had told me. I said on that day as I was driving, "I am very, very concerned about the family. It's under siege." This was 1958, I think.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: "It's under siege and we must do something to preserve it." And that was my vision as a young man, I guess I was 21 years old.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Could I say something about that? That is a perfect illustration, Dr. Dobson of what I talk about in *Choosing The Extraordinary Life*. So many Christians are kind of like that Chicago sewer worker who said, "I dig the ditch to earn the money, to buy the bread, to get the strength, to dig the ditch." I mean, they don't have any real purpose in life.

But I think the key to finding that extraordinary life is discovering your unique purpose in life. I mean, we all exist to glorify God. But I say in the book, God is writing a specific story in your life to tell his story.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: And one way you discover that purpose I talk about is obeying the passions that God puts in your life. There's a reason he gave you a passion for the family. There's a reason he gave me a passion for broadcasting and for preaching. Many times people think, "Well, God's will for my life must be the most unpleasant and distasteful thing I could ever think of. It must mean going to Africa and living in a hut somewhere." No, many times God's specific plan for our lives aligns with our desires. Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he'll give you," what? "The desires of your heart."

Dr. James Dobson: I am sure you agree with me that there are millions of people out there and a lot of them are listening to us today who have no idea what we're talking about. There is no passion in their lives for anything. They're trying to do their job. Many of them are raising children and going about the routine aspects of their lives. And there's no sense of commitment or ministry there. You're saying in this book that you've written actually, chapter two, that we can choose to devote ourselves to changing the world as best we can. Maybe a small aspect of it.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And thereby gain an extraordinary life.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: That's one of the keys to an extraordinary life, is determining to influence your culture. And, by the way, this isn't one of those positive thinking, mumbo jumbo books. I'm using the Bible, specifically the story of Elijah as the backdrop for this. The Bible says Elijah wasn't a spiritual super person. He was an ordinary person like we are. And yet, God used him in an extraordinary way. And one reason is Elijah determined he was not going to isolate himself from his culture. He decided to influence his culture.

We say, "Well, times have never been as bad as they are today." Well look back at Elijah's day, 900 BC. It was more wicked then than it was now.

Dr. James Dobson: Jezebel, are you kidding me?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Jezebel and Ahab, Elijah didn't go hide himself someplace. Instead, he stood before Ahab and without stuttering or stammering said, "Thus sayeth the Lord." And I think it's a great instruction for us that if we're going to have that extraordinary life, God put us here to influence our culture, not to isolate ourselves from it. And certainly, not to identify with it by becoming like it.

Dr. James Dobson: That's why I left USC School of Medicine. I saw the culture changing. And I saw the impact it was having on the family. And I felt called to do something about it. And I did one of the scariest things I've ever done. I walked out of there, resigned from what was a lucrative, not financially, but emotionally satisfying life. And started Focus on the Family and a radio program. And began addressing cultural matters.

Would you believe there, in the early days, this would've been early 1980, people resented that. And said, "Why don't you come off this talking about abortion and the unborn child and about the education of our children, and what's not happening or is happening in the public schools. And all in marriage. Your people will not stay with you, they will not support what you're doing if you insist on talking about those controversial things." And I remember saying that to one of my vice presidents that day, "You know what? I don't own this place. I didn't come up with this. The Lord put me here. It's His ministry, and if He doesn't want to support it, I don't want to be here."

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: "I'll go do something else. But as long as I'm here, I'm going to try to have an influence on the culture." And the people stayed with me obviously.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Well, obviously, they did. When you think about it, we pray the Lord's prayer over and over again without thinking about what we're praying. When we pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it's being done in Heaven." What are we praying for? We're not just praying for some future kingdom of God to come. We're saying, "God, we want Your will to be done right now on this planet as it's being done in Heaven."

And Dr. Dobson, I don't believe it's God's will for 1.4 million children to be murdered in the womb every year through abortion.

Dr. James Dobson: Couldn't be.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I don't think it's God's will for immorality to be running rampant in our country like an open sewer line. I don't think it's God's will for 10 commandment displays or crosses from war memorials to be torn down, or the name of Jesus being prohibited from the public square. That is not God's will.

God is sovereign, not just over the church but overall creation. And I believe He's called us to be an influence for Him. Elijah, thinking about him, he didn't think it was God's will for the Israelite to be worshiping a false God named Bael. He didn't think it was right for child sacrifice, much like abortion today to be the way to worship Bael. He decided to make a difference in his culture. God has called us to do the same.

Dr. James Dobson: Does it concern you? I know that you're uncomfortable or probably are uncomfortable criticizing other pastors in other church settings. But I'm sure you're aware of how few of them are willing to do what we're talking about here. They get a few letters of complaint and a few people leave the church because they're talking about the controversial issue of pro-life, for example, and they're afraid and they run, and they hide and they don't put it on the line. I tell you, there's nothing that frustrates me more than that.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: And not only that, it's just not the pastors but layman. Not only do they refuse to get involved, but they have developed this perverted theology to cloak their cowardice. And it's a theology of isolationism that, "oh, we shouldn't get involved in the culture. We can't change the culture. If we get involved in the culture, it might taint our holiness." Well, we're not that holy anyway, so it's not going to get that tainted.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: No. Jesus used the imagery of salt and light. Remember, the job of salt in Jesus' day? Salt did not prevent the decay of meat, but it delayed the decay of meat. It gave the meat a longer shelf life. Eventually, it would rot and have to be thrown out. God has called us here in this culture not only to share the light of Jesus Christ, but also to push back against evil. Not that we're gonna stop it ultimately, but we want to give this world longer to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. But for salt to do its work, it's got to get out of the salt shaker and actually penetrate the meat. We've got to get out of the church and penetrate the culture.

Dr. James Dobson: What does that really mean when the Lord calls us to be salt and light? How do you express that in the real world?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Look, Jesus didn't say you were to be salt of the earth or the light of the world. He didn't say it's one or the other. Christians have to learn to multitask.

I mean, we all realize ultimately, the only thing that will change a human being is the power of Jesus Christ, the light of the gospel. And that is our primary function. But it's not our only function. We are to be that salt, that preservative to vote against evil in the world. And that brings up one way we influence our culture.

In Elijah's day, the Israelites didn't vote for King Ahab. He was an evil king, he got imposed on them. And in Elijah's day, the king set the spiritual direction of the nation. If it was a good king, God blessed the nation. If it was an evil king, God cursed the nation. But the king set the moral direction of the country.

Today, we as Christians have been given the privilege of electing our leaders. And that means every time we go to the voting booth, we are casting a vote for either righteousness or for unrighteousness. And that's why a primary, not exclusive, but primary way we affect the culture is by voting for people who embrace the right biblical policies.

Dr. James Dobson: Boy does that message resonate at this time? Because we're right around the corner from the midterm elections. Neither you nor I want to be political here, but we must get good, godly people to come out and let their influence be heard. That's one way to be the salt in the culture.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Well, it is. And that word politics is a four letter word to a lot of people. But if you look at the root of that word, the Latin root, it means influence. When you say Christian shouldn't get involved in politics, what you're saying is Christian shouldn't get involved in influencing their culture. Can anybody say that with a straight face and mean it? Of course, we're to influence the culture.

Now, I don't identify as a Republican or a Democrat. I choose according to that candidate's policies. No candidate, no elected officer is perfect. We're all sinners. But you have to look at the policies and make a choice who's going to stand up for life? Who's going to stand up for religious liberty? Who is going to stand up for the family? And then, make a choice. Sitting home is not an option for somebody who takes the culture seriously.

Dr. James Dobson: Shirley, and I've been praying about this because there is a struggle today between good and evil. Now, neither political party conforms to those extremes. In fact, they both are flawed and both fall short of the glory of God, obviously. But there is right and wrong. And when we see wrong occurring, we must use our influence to oppose it. And if you're given a vote and you won't use it, and you sit at home on election day, you won't spend 20 minutes to use the primary means of conveying our influence or using our influence in the culture, and that's voting, there's something wrong with that.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: There is something wrong with that. And I'm telling you, we get maligned as conservative evangelicals for making abortions such an issue. But in Elijah's day, it was an issue. When they were taking babies and placing them on an open

flame and burning them alive remember, what God said through Jeremiah the prophet? He said, It has not entered my mind that you would do such a detestable thing as this. But because you have, I am going to send the Babylonians to take you captive. God hates the murder of children. And right now, the issue I think Christians have to stand up on is the life issue.

And Dr. Dobson, this is something where Christians get confused. God created three institutions, not just one, but three. He created the family first, Genesis 2. He created government, Genesis 9. He created the church, Acts Chapter 2. Where people get confused is when they try to confuse the responsibility of each institution. We never expect Washington D.C., the government to bring revival to America. That is the job of the church of Jesus Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: And I hate it when people demean that task by saying that gospel won't arrive on Air Force One.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Nobody's expecting it.

Dr. James Dobson: Of course, it will not.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Nobody's expecting it to. But neither should the church be in charge of immigration policy, or capital punishment, or any of those issues. That's the responsibility God gave to the government. I mean, in 1 Timothy 2, Paul said to pray for the government, the Roman pagan empire. He said, pray for kings in all those in places of authority that we might lead quiet and tranquil lives in all godliness and dignity. Basically, he said, pray for government that A, it would keep us safe, and B, it would leave us alone to practice our faith. That's the best you can hope for from government. Don't confuse the role of government with the role of the church.

Dr. James Dobson: You talk about Elijah, and a lot of this book is based on his life and the Scripture. And doing what he did there may cost you your life. It may not be an easy road. And the best example of that I can think of is John the Baptist sitting in prison being totally vulnerable to whatever Herod wanted to do to him. And he, being there in the palace, observes that something evil was going on. And he said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And he lost his head over that, they murdered him. And Jesus said of John the Baptist that he was the greatest man who ever lived. So, sometimes you speak the truth to power and it may not be an easy road.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: No. And I hear the concern, well, the evangelical leaders, they've sold out to this political party and so forth. There's no hesitancy to speak truth to power. And when we see any administration, any president going off the rails on the abortion issue, or on the religious freedom issue-

Dr. James Dobson: You have to speak truth to power. It doesn't matter who it is.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: That's right. That's exactly right. And Elijah's a great example of somebody who is willing to do that. And look, we have to keep things in balance. I mean, you can go too far on the political side and forget the main job of sharing the gospel. But these Christians who are totally uninvolved in what is happening right now in our nation, they've got the balance wrong. It's not either/or. It's both/and.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Jeffress, you're on television a lot. And I have cheered, as you have spoken up for biblical truth in that whenever things happen in the culture, you're there to explain what the Christian perspective is. You do it brilliantly. And I imagine you have been criticized for that, have you?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I have. I'll tell you the most interesting experience I've ever had in that. A few years ago, I was invited to come out to Hollywood to be on Bill Maher's show, *Real Time with Bill Maher*.

Dr. James Dobson: Why? Why did you accept that?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I thought, I'd never seen the show, but I knew it was popular. And I thought, "Well, if I can speak to millions of people and share the gospel, that'll be a great thing." Well, I told my deacons and my prayer partners what I was gonna do. They said, "Have you lost your mind?" It's kind of like your response. "Why would you go? He will skin you alive." And then, I started watching some old reruns of that show and I thought, "My, what have I done?" And so I thought, "Man, this is a mistake." But then I thought Dr. Dobson, "If Paul was willing to go to Mars Hill to share the gospel with a secular audience, surely, I could go to "Maher's Studio" in Hollywood and share the gospel."

So, I had 300 of my prayer partners praying for me, my wife and daughter and I flew out to Hollywood. We had a little circle prayer together before we went into the studio. And I went in and it was like going into the lions' den. I sat there and I started talking about God and a few other things. The audience started booing and hissing. But Bill was unusually polite. And we ended up agreeing on some things.

I had an opportunity to share why Christianity was different from any other religion in the world. That it was based on grace and not works. And, by the end, the audience was clapping. And Bill's producer said, "He has never been as polite to a Christian as he was to you." He invited me to come to the after party after the show. And we went to the after party, Bill and I stood in the corner for 30 minutes and had the best conversation. And, at the end, he said, "I don't believe one thing that you believe, but you're a great representative of your faith." And today, years later, I run into people, unbelievers who said, "We've never been to church, but we've seen you on Bill Maher on the YouTube of that."

Dr. James Dobson: Well, what you're illustrating by that story is what John the Baptist did with Herod. You knew you were going into difficult territory. You knew there was a possibility of being humiliated and yet, you were willing to do that. And I was

half teasing when I asked you why? I understand why. You took an opportunity to speak to the popular culture, and that's not an easy thing to do.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: It's not, But it's what we've been called to do. And I would say to our listeners right now, you may never go to be on Bill Maher's show. You may never speak to the President of the United States, but everyone can affect the culture where they are. Their culture may be their family. It's the school where they attend. It's the business where they work, the neighborhood. God put you there for a reason.

I'll never forget Dr. Dobson, when I was a 9th grader, I had an English teacher who was a Christian, we were in a secular school, 3,000. And she said, "Robert, God put you in this school for a reason. He put you here to be a witness for Him. And I want to give you a challenge of identifying five of your classmates who are not Christians."

Dr. James Dobson: How old were you?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: I was 15. "And I want you to commit," she said, "To praying for their salvation. And one time this year to share the faith, the gospel with them before the school year ends." And Dr. Dobson, I saw every one of those five come to faith in Christ. The first guy turned out when I shared the gospel and he accepted it, we didn't know he had a brain tumor and he was dead nine months later.

Dr. James Dobson: You referred to him in the book as Nick.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: That's right. And then, the last one on my list turned out to be my wife later on named Amy. But that was the first time it had ever dawned on me that teacher's challenge that we are where we are to be an ambassador for Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: Even at 15?

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Even at 15.

Dr. James Dobson: That's tough for a kid to confront the culture, which is dominant.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: But you know what, Dr. Dobson? I heard somebody, both you and I know well tell parents, "you either send your child to school as a missionary, or they become a mission field."

Dr. James Dobson: My goodness, that is profound.

Let me refer to your book again. I didn't really give it much of an introduction, but I want to do it now. It's called, again, *Choosing the Extraordinary Life: God's 7 Secrets for Success and Significance*.



What we're talking about today is chapter two in the book and the title of it, The second secret is "Determined to Influence your Culture." I wish everybody understood that. I wish everybody felt that passion. If, as I mentioned early in this conversation, you are out there and you don't have any sense of mission, or purpose, I've got one for you. It's in the second chapter of this book.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: And you've been the model of that for all of us, Dr. Dobson. Thank you for setting the right example. And by the way, this is just one of the seven secrets all from Elijah's life. We talk about learning how to handle bad days, learning to wait on God's timing, learning to unleash the power of prayer. Elijah is exhibit A of the power of prayer, which is key to an extraordinary life.

Dr. James Dobson: When I got this book, I thought "7 Secrets?" We got 25 minutes and we're going to take another one if you'll stay with us.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: We got through one of 'em today, and I'm not even sure we're through talking about that one now. Thank you for being with us and for your passion for the culture at large. Keep up the good work and we'll talk some more next time.

Dr. Robert Jeffress: Thanks Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: What a powerful and passionate message from Dr. Robert Jeffress on the importance of influencing our culture. Visit today's broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) to learn how you can get a copy of *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*. Go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and then click onto the Broadcast page. Also, make sure to listen to part two of their conversation, which is coming up tomorrow here on Family Talk.

As we conclude our program time today, I want to urge you to vote in the midterm elections this November. Are you frustrated by what's going on in America today? Do you want to make a change in your community? Our Christian morals must be protected, so we cannot stay on the sidelines this fall. You can learn more about the individual races by downloading our informative voter guide at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). The future of America depends on our involvement so pray, engage, and vote. We hope to see you at the polls this November.

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

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi everyone. Dr. Tim Clinton here. When you think about your family and where they'll be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? You hopeful? What kind of a legacy are you leaving for your children and their children right now? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving your family. Join us today at

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