



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: God: The Architect of Our Lives – Part 1

Guest(s): John Maxwell & Dr. John Cage

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Announcer: Today, on Family Talk:

Roger Marsh: Welcome, everyone, to this Thursday edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and wherever you're tuned into the program, we are so glad you've joined us today.

It's always exciting to hear from you, especially as you listen all over the country. In fact, over the last couple of years we have been working tirelessly to expand our broadcasting network. God has backed those efforts and we have added over 130 new affiliates during that time. You can now hear Dr. Dobson and Family Talk in cities like New York, Houston, San Francisco, and Denver.

You can see our full list of radio partners when you use our station finder feature at drjamesdobson.org. And of course you can always listen online through our website, through our app, or through your Amazon Alexa.

You know, your financial assistance of our ministry has truly sparked this growth. And right now is a great time to partner with us here at Family Talk. Every donation we receive right now will be doubled, thanks to a generous matching grant from a group of helpful donors. So, a \$25.00 donation becomes \$50.00, or \$50.00 becomes \$100.00, \$1,000.00 becomes \$2,000.00, and so on.

Be sure to show your support of Dr. Dobson and Family Talk by contributing to this match. For more information, call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Or visit us online at drjamesdobson.org. Thanks so much for your support.

And now, let's get to our program. Have you ever felt the hand of God interrupting your life? Was there a miraculous situation that you knew could only be explained by divine intervention? Well, on today's Family Talk broadcast, we're going to hear from two men who personally have experienced the Lord's sovereignty in this way.

Today we are opening up our archives to hear Dr. Dobson's conversation with John Maxwell and Dr. John Bright Cage. John Maxwell is a dynamic speaker, a leadership expert, and a New York Times best-selling author, with over 25 million books in print. Dr. John Bright Cage is a noted cardiologist from Nashville, Tennessee.

In just a moment, you're going to hear how God intertwined these two men's lives for his glory and his purpose. Now I don't want to take anything away from their testimony, so let's get started.

Let's listen now to the program titled, "God, The Architect of Our Lives," on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: John, we're here today to relay a personal experience that explains how you and Dr. Cage met and how the Lord used that linkage between you.

But first, let's get right to it. Let's go back to December of 1998 and an experience that you had, which came out of the blue for you.

John Maxwell: Oh my, I'll never forget it. December 18th, as you know, our Injoy organization is in Atlanta, Georgia now, we've been there for a couple of years. And we were having our Christmas party, it was always a highlight because so many of our people, especially in the Injoy Stewardship division, travel or on the road on a daily basis all over America helping churches raise dollars for building programs and debt retirement.

So, the Christmas party is special because everybody's coming home and we're going to be able to be together. And we had the most wonderful evening. In fact, in the car on the way down to the Christmas party, I called another wonderful friend of mine, Dr. Elmer Towns, and he was in the hospital and I prayed with him on the phone, and hung up. I thought, "Wow, it's too bad during Christmas he's in the hospital." Went to the party, had a wonderful time. Had it at Turner Field, they turned on the lights for us, and we had it in the wonderful 755 Club there. The people just had a great time.

As the party was about to be over, I began to feel a little bit sick to my stomach and just kind of needed some fresh air. And never really thought much of it until I was kind of hugging the people good-bye and they were breaking up. And a couple of our people that work for us, Connie Wood and her husband, Ron, they came over and gave me a big hug. And Connie put her hand behind my neck. And she said, "You know, your neck is cold, and it's just breaking out in sweat."

And I put my hand back there and I realized immediately that there was something that was wrong. And I kind of sat down and they went over and told my wife, Margaret, and - I'm not sick at all. I mean, I've been very blessed with health. And as soon as she saw me, she said, "Call 911."

And I laid there on the floor and the people got around me. There were still probably maybe 40 or 50 of our people there. And they were really kind, they gave me some room and they were doing the things I think, Dr. Cage, they were supposed to do. They were rubbing my hands and giving me air. They took my shoes off and waiting for the ambulance to come.

Dr. Dobson: Were you having chest pain at that time?

John Maxwell: Yes, I was starting to have chest pains at that time, and then I realized I was having a heart attack. And by this time, I really know that I'm in trouble.

And they come and get me, and because it was down at Turner Field, they took me to the closest hospital, which was an urban hospital, which was Grady in Atlanta. Good people, wonderful people, treated me great, but I think they're more ... it's more used to gunshot wounds than heart attack victims.

So I got in there and they said, "No problem, we've got this early, you're having a heart attack, but we'll stabilize you." And I felt very relaxed, I felt that they would. Little did I realize-

Dr. Dobson: Were you frightened, John?

John Maxwell: No, I wasn't frightened. I can say that during the whole evening I really didn't feel a lot of fright or fear in my life. Really, Dr. Dobson, I just had a sense of God's hand was upon me. But I knew at the same time that I was in trouble. I mean, I really realized that this was not something that I could slough off. I was really having a heart attack, and I knew I was, but I felt very comforted with their words. They said, "John, we're going to be okay, we're going to be able to stabilize this heart."

And they began to work on me and gave me some nitro and some stuff to try to stabilize the heart. But it wasn't stabilizing. And I could tell, they weren't talking to me much, but more doctors started gathering. And I've been in hospitals as a pastor long enough to know that when you have a bunch of doctors in the room, you know, you want the doctors out there around the nurses' station talking about their Christmas party. And you know, you want one nurse kind of watching the monitors a little bit.

And the more the doctors gathered, the more I realized that they were not stabilizing me. And the chest pains were just intense and continued for a long period of time. My wife, Margaret, of course, they allowed her to come in. And it started with her that "he's going to be fine, we're going to stabilize it, until after about an hour and a half," they're telling her, you know, not even maybe to be real hopeful. And "we can tell then that it's a pretty serious thing."

Now what's wonderful-

Dr. Dobson: Now wait a minute. They were implying to her that you might not make it?

John Maxwell: That's correct. They were implying to her that they just had not gotten that heart stabilized, and I think the facilities at Grady were not really probably the facilities I needed, and maybe even the doctors, the cardiologists, I needed to really take care of this issue.

So anyway, they're talking to Margaret and the people outside had gathered. And Linda Eggers my assistant, her and her husband, Patrick, had gone home. They called her. So they came back, and she said on the way back to the hospital she asked Patrick, her husband, she said, "Let's stop at Injoy and let me get the Rolodex. I may have to make some phone calls tonight." Now that was of God.

She stopped by, picked the Rolodex, and she went to the emergency room waiting room there, where the rest of the Injoy people were waiting for me. And her and Margaret were talking, and Margaret was telling her, she was saying, "It's not looking good." And they kind of had a feeling I was probably in the wrong hospital.

And so, they were going through the Rolodex a little bit and they came to Dr. John Bright Cage's name. And this is what's huge, immediately Margaret and Linda both said, "We need to call him."

Now, I want to stop, if I can take a time out here for a moment, because we're going to talk a little bit more about God's hand upon His people. If you'll just be patient with me just for a second, what's so awesome is that Dr. Cage and I had had a meeting in June, six months prior to this heart attack, Thomas Nelson's my publisher, and I was up with Sam Moore, and you know Sam who owns Thomas Nelson.

Dr. Dobson: I sure do.

John Maxwell: And Roff Setters. We were having lunch and Dr. Cage was at this lunch with us. I didn't know him at all. And Sam Moore said that Dr. Cage had helped him with some heart problems and had helped him get on top of it. And Sam asked John Bright, he said, "Is there anything I can do for you?" And John Bright said, "Yes, I'd like to meet one of your authors." And he spoke concerning me, that he'd like to me.

And so, we're in this luncheon that day so that I can meet Dr. Cage. And I'll let him tell more of his story in a moment. But there's one thing I want to say to our listeners, then I want to, I'll turn it over, probably won't be able to speak much more after that for a moment anyway.

He shared with me that ... he shared with me that he felt that God had called him to watch after my health. And very foolishly I kind of sloughed it off, to be honest with you. I told him that I was in good health, and that, you know, I get

physicals every year and all this. And I'll never forget, Dr. Cage, you leaned over that table a little bit more intently to me and you said to me, you said, "No, you're not in as good a health as you think you are. You're overweight. I get your schedule and you're working too hard and you're traveling too much." And he said, "You're a candidate for a heart attack." And of course, that's his area.

But what touched my heart that day is he gave me his card and he said, "I really want to help you." And he said, "I want you to call me, day or night." Little does he realize, little did I realize that when he gave me his card with his phone number, and he said, "I want you to call me day or night," I don't know what time, Dr. Cage, you can talk to this more than I can, because I'm laying in the hospital, but I think it was maybe 2:00, or I don't know, what time in the morning was it when they called you that time?

Dr. John Cage: It was about midnight, 1:00 in the morning.

John Maxwell: Okay, about 1:00 in the morning.

Dr. Dobson: And your conversation with John was six months before?

Dr. John Cage: Six months before this.

Dr. Dobson: And what led you to say that? What was going on there?

Dr. John Cage: It is a ... this is a story of how God keeps the links in a chain together, irrespective of what we know at any point in time in our life. This, I'm convinced, that God had a divine plan for John Maxwell, and I was a small link in this clog. But I had to be there for him.

In retrospect, it goes back into so many different variables that only God could have His hand in this.

Dr. Dobson: So Linda, John's secretary, called you at 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning.

Dr. John Cage: She called me on her cell phone about midnight or 1:00, and said, "John's in trouble, we've just moved to Atlanta a year ago, we don't know any cardiologist or any doctors here in Atlanta. Is there anything you can do?" And I said, "Well, if you'll give me your cell phone number and five minutes I think we can help."

Let me back up before we finish the rest of the story to tell you how we got there, because I want this to be in a chain of events to show you how God had His plan in this.

When I was seven years old, at my grandfather's farm in Lebanon, Tennessee, I found that I wanted to become a doctor. And I won't go into details, but it had to do with frogs. At the age of 12, in 1965, I was led to Christ and became a Christian. In 1982, my mother died from a heart attack of the same artery that

affected John Maxwell, in a 24 hour period, same scenario. It was before they had the clot dissolvers, the stents, the magic things that I have now in my armamentarium to help people.

But because of her, I then made the conscious decision that I needed to go to medical school. I had always wanted to, but had not had the ability to do it. And John's taught me this in retrospect and reinforced this, that if you change your attitude and you become focused, and you have a mindset that you're not going to let go, and have the tenacity to do it, it can happen. And that's what happened to me.

I went on to medical school at Texas Tech. And then four years later, came back to middle Tennessee, to Nashville. My family's been there since 1745. That's part of the chain there, something about me wanted to come home. And so I did, and did my internship and residency.

Then in 1987, when I was an intern and resident, I would drive home in the evening, around 6:00 to 6:30, and on WNAZ in Nashville, carried your broadcast at that exact same time. So through my entire internship, residency, fellowship, I would listen to your program every night coming home, if I wasn't on call.

When I came back to Nashville in 1993, after I finished by fellowship in Memphis, it was still on. And it was wonderful! I would come back and listen to it. And in 1994, you announced for the first time Promise Keepers was going to be, and have regional conferences for the first time outside of Colorado. And the closest one was Indianapolis.

Immediately, my best friend that I grew up with back in Portland, Tennessee, David Jones and I signed up, and we drove to Indianapolis. And at Indianapolis at Promise Keepers was John Maxwell. He had a-

Dr. Dobson: That's the connection.

Dr. John Cage: That's the connection that first started. And he had a topic called, "Leave your jacket," I'll never forget it.

John Maxwell: Yes.

Dr. John Cage: But the most important part was not the jacket, but his final process of saying what his definition of success was. And it stuck to my heart. And for our listeners, the speech was basically this on success, it's not important that John Maxwell has Injoy, the most important thing to you is your family and that you have their honor and their respect because of what you've done for them. And that you should never, ever, ever, ever forget that.

John Maxwell: That's right. In fact, I said if I define success, as I remember it, Dr. Cage, I said that success is having those who are closest to you love and respect you the

most. And that means Margaret, and that means my two kids. I mean, if people who are closest to us do not love and respect us the most, then there's something wrong with us, I believe.

Dr. Dobson: All right, we have you now really hanging between life and death.

John Maxwell: That's right.

Dr. Dobson: And the call comes to you, John.

Dr. John Cage: That's right. And briefly before that I started getting his tapes, listening to him, and then in 1996, Sam Moore comes to the emergency room, as John mentions, who's head of Thomas Nelson in Nashville. I get to be friends with him and something in my heart told me in 1998 that I needed to meet John Maxwell, that this had to happen. I can't explain it any more than that, other than God's divine intervention.

Dr. John Cage: And Sam came through for me, and six months later I got all over him.

John Maxwell: He did get all over me. And that's a fact.

Dr. John Cage: I was, he was talking about Krispy Kremes and peanut butter pie, and I was just laying into him.

John Maxwell: Time for, "Just As I Am," I'm ready to go to the altar again.

Dr. Dobson: And how did you help him that night?

Dr. John Cage: And so, I gave him the card. Linda Eggers and all this part we've just talked about, turned around, drove, came back, got the Rolodex, got my name, woke me up at home. And then I said, "I know people in Atlanta that are friends of mine that are cardiologists, that are interventional cardiologists," because I knew that's what he needed.

So, I called a friend of mine who was there at Emory, who wasn't on call, but I got his associate, Wendy Book, I said, "Wendy, you don't know me from Adam, but I need you in Grady right now." And I said, "This friend of mine needs help and you all have got to do something about him and get him to a cath lab and open this artery up now."

There was a cardiology fellow named Frank Hobart down there. He came straight to John's bed, called an ambulance to where they could take him to a cath lab at Crawford Long, rode the ambulance with him. Jeff Marshall at Emory was already there waiting on him in the cath lab. They took him straight to the cath lab, sucked out the clot where the artery was stopped up, put a stent in him, and because of that he doesn't have any damage to his heart now.

Dr. Dobson: Oh my goodness. John, you're a fortunate man, as I am, obviously.

John Maxwell: Very fortunate. And very grateful, very grateful. I just, I'm overwhelmed at the goodness of God that he would set this up. You know, the world would look at something like this and call it a coincidence, but it's not, it was an act of God. I have no doubt about it. I believe in the sovereignty of God, he arranged these meetings. And being new to Atlanta, we did not know who to turn to. Dr. Cage was so beautiful as a friend to help us out in the process.

Dr. Marshall, the man that he talked about, who of course now is my heart doctor there in Atlanta. We've had a great relationship and I've been able to share with him a little bit and I can see now a blossoming relationship even on that side. But I'm just very grateful to God.

Dr. Dobson: John Bright, we're talking to many people out there, I'm sure today, who are in the kind of danger that John was when you saw him and don't know it. Talk to those people, because, I mean, this broadcast could save some lives today.

John Maxwell: That would be wonderful.

Dr. John Cage: I think the two things that are most important is, number one, give them the symptoms, so they don't think it's just indigestion. I think that John's eloquently said, "You know, I had this pressure, this tightness, this squeezing, this heaviness." It's not a sharp pain, it's a sensation of oppressiveness. Broke out in a bad sweat, got queasy in his stomach. May have started hurting in his jaw or his arm. And it's something new and something different and something dramatic. That is a red flag of all red flags and you need to be calling 911 and chew an aspirin up. That's the first thing you ought to be doing.

Dr. Dobson: Denial at that point is a killer.

Dr. John Cage: Oh, it is. We'd much rather tell anybody, you know, "You had indigestion, but we're glad you're okay." Rather than say, "Gee, if you'd just come in a few hours earlier we could have saved you."

Dr. Dobson: Where would John have been and what would have happened to him if he had not gotten the medical intervention that you helped to arrange?

Dr. John Cage: He either would have had severe heart failure where he couldn't breathe with normal daily activities, or he would have died. I mean, the mortality for heart attacks that don't open up with the clot dissolvers is still about 25%.

Dr. Dobson: John, you and I are very blessed men. Now, that raises a question, you know, God specifically intervened in your life and mine. I've got a whole series of linkages like that that resulted in my being not only alive, but as strong as I was before, I've got 12 hour energy and feel like I did 25 years ago.

John Maxwell: That's wonderful.

Dr. Dobson: Now, but the question is: why? You know, the Lord did something for you and me, and since our medical problems, other people have died. You know? And it's very difficult to explain that. I can't and I'm not going to try, except we do need to acknowledge the fact that God is sovereign and he chooses to do what he will do.

John Maxwell: Well, and in fact I think it's very humbling when you look at the fact that some die and some don't, and why did God spare my life? And I don't have answers either. I think there's a response though that I must give, and that is I need to be a good steward of my body now. And I need to get about my calling. What God has called me to do, I better do with great intensity and focus, and not take for granted my health, and not take for granted my calling.

And I can say that I'm not working harder, but I am focused better than I ever have been before. As you know, my passion is to help pastors. My passion is to help local churches. I love the local church. I love pastors, they're my best friends. I try to write books and do leadership seminars and help them raise money for their church programs. I try to really partner with pastors. And so, I went back to our whole Injoy group after I came out of the heart attack, and I said to each one of them in a meeting, with great intensity, with great purpose, "God's given me this life and we are going to do everything we can to help the pastor, help the local church, be a friend, be a partner."

And what really blesses me, Dr. Dobson, is that our whole Injoy group, our whole team, our stewardship division, our seminar division, the whole team, our non-profit organization, they all with great intensity have picked up this mantle. And none of us are taking for granted my life, nor the calling that God has given us as an organization. I just assumed I would live a long life. And I just assumed that my ministry would be fulfilled over a span of X amount of years. And now I don't assume that.

So, every day I get up and I tell God how grateful I am for life. And I look and I've got Margaret, my best friend. And my kids are healthy and my ministry is I think where it should be. And I'm saying yes to God in the calling.

Just let me say one more thing: when I was on that table, the warmth of God and the grace of God just overwhelmed me. And it's really true, that's the first time in my life I really did stare death, and look at it and say, "This may become a reality in my life." It's the first time I've really had what I would call maybe a 'close call.' But the peace that God gave me and the fact that he loved me unconditionally and his grace just overwhelmed me there on that table. And the witness of the Spirit that I was a child of God just removed the fear factor.

Dr. Dobson: Regardless of the outcome.

John Maxwell: Regardless of the outcome. And I could say that in the humanness, I really wanted to hang around, there was a whole bunch of stuff I wanted to get accomplished. But as far as my faith, I just want the listeners to know that in those moments your faith really does hold.

Roger Marsh: An incredible sentiment to end this edition of Family Talk. Deep rooted faith in Jesus Christ can produce tremendous peace when we endure difficult or troublesome times. I'm Roger Marsh, and I hope you can experience that same peace in your life as well.

We've been listening to Dr. Dobson's classic interview with author John Maxwell and cardiologist Dr. John Bright Cage. Learn more about either or both of these godly men by visiting our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, and then tap on to the broadcast icon at the top of the page.

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Thanks for joining us today and be sure to tune in again tomorrow for the second part of Dr. Dobson's classic conversation with John Maxwell and Dr. John Bright Cage. They'll discuss how we can enjoy life to its fullest, and why we must maintain a healthy lifestyle to do so.

That's all on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. Dobson: Do you believe in love at first sight?

Announcer: Here's Dr. James Dobson with Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: Some of you may disagree with me, but I believe love at first sight is an impossibility. Why? Because genuine love is not simply a feeling of romantic excitement, or sexual attraction, or the desire to marry a potential partner, or the thrill at having captured a highly desirable social prize. These are the emotions that are released at first sight, but they are primarily selfish in the sense that they're motivated by own gratification.

When we feel this way, we've not fallen in love with another person, we've fallen in love with love, and there is an enormous difference between the two. Real love is an expression of the deepest appreciation for another human being.

It's an intense awareness of his or her needs and longings, past, present, and future. It's unselfish and giving and caring. And these are not attitudes that one falls into at first sight. Indeed, there is a spiritual quality to the bonding of two unique personalities into a committed relationship that will last for a lifetime. And that does not occur on some enchanted evening across a crowded room.