



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** God's Model for Fatherhood

**Guest(s):** Josh and Dottie McDowell

**Air Date:** June 18, 2021

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

**Dr. James Dobson:** Hello, everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, a radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson and thank you for joining us for this program.

**Roger Marsh:** The following program is intended for mature audiences. Listener discretion is advised.

Hello everyone, and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and Family Talk is the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Well, Father's Day is this Sunday. So today in honor of dads, we are hearing a classic conversation that Dr. Dobson had with renowned author and speaker, Josh McDowell, and his wife, Dottie. Josh McDowell is an evangelical apologist, a public speaker, and a best-selling Christian author. He has written or co-authored over 150 books, including *More Than a Carpenter* and *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. His wife, Dottie McDowell, is also a published author of several books, including the *Topsy Turvy Kingdom* and *The Right Choices Bible*. Josh and Dottie have been married over 48 years. They have four children and 10 grandchildren.

Josh McDowell grew up with an alcoholic father and was abused as a child, but God redeemed his story and Josh became a great father to his four kids. He even wrote a book called *The Father Connection* that will be mentioned in today's broadcast. Now Josh and Dottie McDowell are also very good friends of Dr. Dobson. We hope that you'll enjoy their conversation today.

**Dr. James Dobson:** I'm so delighted to have you all here.

**Josh McDowell:** Well, it's always good to get back, Jim.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Dottie, this is your first time in the studio with us.

**Dottie McDowell:** It is. Yes, it is. It's a great treat to be here.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Okay. The rest of the program's yours, just go ahead and talk. Hey as a matter of fact-

Josh McDowell: You just ruined my wife's week.

Dr. James Dobson: These folks got back yesterday from Romania and Greece. You don't look like you're in jet lag, but I'll bet you don't even see me over here, do you?

Josh McDowell: We did get back late last night and I got up at 3:30 this morning to get here.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, my goodness.

Josh McDowell: In about two hours we'll feel the jet lag.

Dr. James Dobson: You were telling me in my office what happened in Europe. Explain that experience.

Josh McDowell: Something we see in most countries around the world where we go, but we were in one of the Eastern Europe countries where the church will not address the issue of sex at all, and yet it's rampant among believers and STDs are off the charts. So, they had me speak on sex, lies, and myths, a beautiful poster. Most churches refuse to put it up. However, pastors brought scores of kids from their churches and community. We had 6,000 out, turned about 1,000 away, and that night I stood up because I'm old enough to be their grandfather, and I said, "Tonight, I'm not going to give a talk. I'm not going to give a lecture. I want to share my heart as a daddy," and the whole atmosphere in that room changed. Six thousand kids spoke about sex in such a straightforward way. They had never heard it before in that country. And when I gave the invitation, over 1,000 came to Christ and it looks like it's close to about 1,500.

Dr. James Dobson: You told me an hour ago that you're talking to about 5,000 kids per week.

Josh McDowell: We do anywhere from 500 to 5,000 a week. They're hearing... They've got haunting questions that they don't believe there's answers for. "How do you know the Bible is true?" I mean, Jesus is just one of many prophets out there and everything. And when you start sharing why it is true, they will listen to you more now than ever before.

But Jim in five years, I've been asking Christian kids from Christian schools everything. "Are you a Christian? Yes. And I'll say, why?" Not one person in five years has given any intelligent answer on why they're a Christian. And when you start talking about how you know, oh, it's revolutionary and this should come from every dad.

Dr. James Dobson: Dottie, it must thrill you to see how God is using your ministry together, and Josh's message after 46 years. Does that just cause a lump to come up in your throat?

Dottie McDowell: It does. It definitely does. Yeah. I heard Josh speak when I was on staff with Campus Crusade at the University of Texas and I hadn't met him yet, and I was

so amazed at what he said and how he said it and the passion that he had. I turned to my roommate and said, "I want to marry somebody just like him," and she said, "Oh sure." But I prayed that the Lord would let me marry someone who was a radical for Jesus Christ, someone who wanted to help change the world. I don't think I realized that he would really answer that so...

Josh McDowell: That was 37 years ago.

Dr. James Dobson: Thirty-seven years ago.

Dottie McDowell: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: My goodness, do you think it's going to work?

Josh McDowell: You know, we're going to give it another 35 and then we're going to sit down and talk about it.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I have great love and respect for you all. Talk about your relationship. You really had a dad that wasn't very good.

Josh McDowell: I was brought up on a farm in Union City, Michigan, a little tiny farm. And growing up, my father was the town drunk, which brought... Anybody who has an alcoholic parent, they sent shame every day of their life, especially when friends would come over and your dad would be drunk. So I'd take him out in the barn, I'd tie him up, put a hangman's noose around his neck, take the other end of the rope and as tight as I could pull it to his head would go backwards over that tight board, the top board. And then I would tie the rope around his feet. The first time I did that I left him there from 6:00 at night until 6:00 the next morning. And Jim, when I went out the next morning, I was so discouraged. He was still alive. I just wanted him dead.

Dr. James Dobson: You really wanted to kill him, didn't you?

Josh McDowell: All I wanted as a kid was for my father to quit hurting my mother, and what was ironic I couldn't stop him so I thought it was my fault. And I grew up with that guilt. I tried to kill him several times. I came to the point at 11 years old, I didn't want to live anymore. I just wanted to die.

And I went to the university and I met some students there and professor, their lives were different. And they seemed to have not only a love for each other, but they loved and cared for people outside the group. I said, "What makes your life so different?" This young lady looked at me and said, "Jesus Christ." And I just laughed at her. I said, "Don't give me that garbage. I am sick and tired of religion, church, the Bible and Christians." And she said, "I didn't tell you a religion, the Bible. I told you the person Jesus Christ." And they challenged me, the students and professors, to intellectually examine it.

And so, they so irritated me I accepted it to refute them. And the background of my book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* was to write a book against Christianity. I traveled in the United States, England, Germany, France, and Switzerland gathering the information to write the book. I'd returned to London, England on a Friday night at about 6:30 in a small museum library. I leaned back in my chair and right out loud in front of everyone I said, "It's true. It's true. It's true." And that brought me to the part of trusting Christ as Savior and Lord when I returned to the university.

And I was able to look my father then square in the eyes and say, "Dad, I love you." And that scared me because I didn't really want to love him. I believed he killed my mother and destroyed my family and I found myself saying to the man I chose to hate "I love you." And that's when I knew it was real.

A short time later, he came into my room after I was in a very serious car accident, strapped into bed, couldn't move. And he said, "How can you love a father such as I?" I said, "Dad, six months ago I hated you. But I learned one thing that God became man, His name is Jesus, and He is passionate about a relationship with you." Right there my father prayed with me and I think if I hadn't come to Christ, I could have every type of emotion to be a dysfunctional individual.

And then something I've never even shared with you from six to 13, in the context of all that, I was severely sexually abused by a man by the name of Wayne Bailey who was hired to be a cook and a housekeeper in the ranch. And I was six years old. My parents would always say, take me into him whenever they left and went downtown, "Now you obey Wayne. You do everything he tells you to do. And if you don't, when I get home, you're going to get a thrashing." I didn't want that from my mother.

So, what do you do at six years old? You do whatever Wayne Bailey tells you. At nine years old and 12, I went and told my mother and she wouldn't believe me. I can't tell you how that hurts. You feel so isolated as a kid in the world. At 13, I was strong enough so I went to this man, backed him up against the wall and I said, "If you ever touch me again, I'll kill you." And I would have.

After I trusted Christ, I went to the pastor that led me to Christ, a little tiny church, no education. I was a little scared to share it with him, because I didn't want to be rejected, and I did. And for six months, Jim, he walked me through a healing process and I knew it was coming. He says, "You have to forgive him." I said, "No way. I want him to go straight to hell and burn." But I knew it was true. I knew I had to.

So I went, called him up, drove up to Jackson, Michigan where he lived. And I said, "What you did to me was evil, very evil." But I said, "Wayne, I've come here to tell you that I've come to know Jesus Christ as my savior and Lord." Now what I told him, I didn't want it to be true. I knew it was, but I didn't want it to be. I said, "I've come here to tell you that Jesus died as much for you as he did for

me." And if I hadn't done that, I don't think I would have ever gotten through that healing process over being sexually abused.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it's an amazing story, Josh. And your dad went on to have a relationship with Christ.

Josh McDowell: And led over 100 people to Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: That is just phenomenal and the amazing thing is that when you were in the worst distress and misery, God knew you and was leading you and Jesus Christ wanted a relationship with you. You went on to write the *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* and more recently *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, and the book that is most relevant to our program today, *The Father Connection*, which is now being released. We could talk for next week, next month, it is just a pleasure to have you all here. Josh, because we love you, we've got a little surprise for you.

Josh McDowell: I wonder what this is.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it's something you're probably not prepared for, but your oldest daughter, Kelly, is here.

Josh McDowell: Are you serious?

Dr. James Dobson: She is hiding behind...

Josh McDowell: My psychiatrist.

Dr. James Dobson: We don't have cameras, but I think that kiss came through.

Josh McDowell: Sit down, honey.

Dr. James Dobson: We're delighted to have her here. Kelly, you're a physician. You're in the last year of your residency in psychiatry.

Kelly McDowell: I'm getting ready to start my last year in two months.

Dr. James Dobson: You're starting the last year. It's a delight to have you here.

Kelly McDowell: Thank you.

Josh McDowell: Wow. What a surprise.

Dr. James Dobson: A special time, isn't it? Well, we thought that Sunday being Father's Day that it would be kind of neat to have her here. And as long as we're on a roll, Katie, are you here?

Josh McDowell: No, you're kidding. Oh honey.

Dr. James Dobson: I think she kind of loves you.

Josh McDowell: Oh.

Dr. James Dobson: Join us at the table, Katie.

Josh McDowell: Oh wow. Two of the most precious things in my life.

Dr. James Dobson: And tell us where you are and what you're doing.

Katie McDowell Issak: I live right outside of Vancouver, British Columbia, and I work at MEI Middle School. I'm an eighth grade learning assistance teacher.

Dr. James Dobson: And you don't get a chance to see your folks all the time then, do you?

Katie McDowell Issak: I don't, I don't. It's never enough.

Dr. James Dobson: And you're married.

Katie McDowell Issak: I am. I've been married for almost six years.

Dr. James Dobson: And you have?

Katie McDowell Issak: I have a child on the way.

Josh McDowell: It's not a secret anymore.

Katie McDowell Issak: My first. We're very excited.

Dr. James Dobson: Josh, we can't stop now. Heather, would you come in?

Josh McDowell: No.

Dr. James Dobson: Goodness. A lot of kisses and hugs here. I wish we had television for this. Join us at the table. Heather you are in school.

Heather McDowell: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Where are you and what are you doing?

Heather McDowell: I'm a graduating senior at Biola University.

Dr. James Dobson: Biola. My son graduated from there. That's not too bad, is it?

Josh McDowell: Let me tell you, I don't... I'm speechless.

Dr. James Dobson: Now we couldn't get Sean here. But he's on the phone.

Josh McDowell: Is he?

Dr. James Dobson: Why don't you say hello to your dad, Sean?

Sean McDowell: Hey Dad, how are you?

Josh McDowell: Oh man buddy, I wish you were here just to give you a big hug on Father's Day.

Sean McDowell: Well, I'm sure missing you and we'll see you real soon.

Dr. James Dobson: In unison, would you all like to say something about Sunday?

Kelly McDowell: Happy Father's Day, Dad.

Katie McDowell Issak: We love you so much.

Josh McDowell: What more could you ask?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, quite a bit more as a matter of fact. We have another surprise for you. Your book, *The Father Connection* is being re-released and coming out and each of your kids have written a foreword for you in that book. Can you believe that?

Josh McDowell: How did you do this without me knowing it?

Dr. James Dobson: And we want to let them share a little bit with you of what they said in the book or anything else that they would like to say to you. Kelly, we're going to start with you being the oldest. Would you like to express some of your memories and some of your appreciation for your dad?

Kelly McDowell: Well, it was such a privilege to be able to write a foreword in your book, Dad, because you've been such a great model to us of a husband to mom and a father to us, and I know that the parents that read it are really going to benefit from it. I went back and read it because it was written when I was a kid the first time, so I went back and read it and I can say that dad has lived out those principles that he taught in there. The stories that he shared in the book, I was like, "Wow, I remember that. I remember that." And so I really think that any parents that read it will benefit from the things that he shares there.

Dr. James Dobson: The highest compliment that any father who's an author can have, and a speaker, is for his own family to say he lives by those principles.

Kelly McDowell: He absolutely lives by it. And so that's why it's such a privilege to be here today. They'd asked us to share at least one story of things that we appreciated and that's really hard to do because I have so many that we could share and we got to share a lot of them in the forward.

But I think one thing that I take away from growing up with you as my dad was the way that you've treated mom and the way that you've loved her and that you're always affectionate and caring and looking out for her well-being as well as all of us kids. I remember as a kid that if we'd talk back to mom or get on mom, you'd say, "Nobody treats my wife that way." And that spoke to us of how a husband respects a wife.

Also, as far as growing up, teaching us of what we would want to look for in a husband, and even in people that we dated was that when you would take us out as a kid and you'd take us on a date and you'd ask us somewhere special we wanted to go and you'd open the door and pull out the chair. And we'd talk about everyday life while we were there, but he'd also get in talking about ways that a husband should treat a wife and ways that you should expect a date to treat you when you're out and being able to recognize healthy ways of interaction and unhealthy ways of interaction. And that's really stuck with me. I really appreciate that.

Dr. James Dobson: Our time is really going to get away from us. Sean, you're second in the birth order. Anything you want to say to your dad?

Sean McDowell: Happy Father's Day, Dad. When we first had the opportunity to write the forward for this book, I just jumped on it, and like Kelly, I went back and I re-read *The Father Connection*. And the first time I read it, I wasn't a dad and now having two kids, it was just so even more meaningful to me. And I could just see the way you modeled and lived out the principles in that.

One thing in particular that really stuck out with me is just how you used to take me to the Final Four. I mean in high school and growing up, one of my passions was basketball and I played all the time, and I know a lot of dads, even friends of mine who would talk about their dads, how their dad would basically build a relationship with them based upon what was interesting to the dad. And it was obvious to me, and I know to Kelly, Katie, and Heather, that you just reached out to our lives and what was important to us and entered into our world. We went to the Final Four like four or five times. You would arrange to speak. In fact, I remember running into you there one time, Dr. Dobson, a number of years ago.

Dr. James Dobson: We were there, yes.

Sean McDowell: It was just so meaningful to me, and thanks for doing that dad. Now that I'm a dad, I want to do that with Scotty and Sean and whoever else may come along.

Josh McDowell: I hope a few more.

Dr. James Dobson: Katie, you're next.



Katie McDowell Issak: I also went back and read the book great before writing the forward because it had been a little bit before I had read it. And one of the things that really stuck out to me, now that I'm expecting my first child and thinking about parenting a lot, I think I was reading it from a little bit of a different perspective. And one of the things that stuck out to me a lot is my dad talks in the beginning about what a rough childhood he had and that he didn't have an example. And I thought, "Wow, I'm just so far ahead because I have an example to look at." I have an amazing mom and dad that have modeled amazing principals and loved me so much. And in the book he shares a lot of things that he did, especially when we were younger with us, about ways that he's always made us feel special individually and as a family.

Something that's just recent wouldn't be in the book because it just happened. The last time we were just all together as a family was at Christmas, and we went on a cruise together and my dad wanted to make sure every day he did something special for all of us. So he became friends with all the dining room staff and he would sneak into the dining room before they even opened and he would decorate the table of our big family table and put little gifts and little notes for each of us at the table, and this was every single night. So every single night we knew when we went to the table, it'd be decorated and there'd be sweet little gifts that he had picked up for us as he had traveled around the world, around the country the past year and thought of us. And it was just every time we're with him, he makes an effort to do something special. And this is a man that is very busy. So-

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Do you see that he's got tears in his eyes? Can you see that?

Katie McDowell Issak: He's always doing little things and giving us little gifts and it's not at all the gifts that he gives us, it's that he pours in love and time into making us feel special again and again.

Dr. James Dobson: Heather, we just have time for you.

Heather McDowell: Yeah. I was thinking back on all the different times, Dad, that you really just went out of your way to make us feel special. And I feel like I can echo so much what Sean and Kelly and Katie have been saying. But one thing specifically for me that you did that meant so much and still does is I think I was nine and I think we were in Russia and it was cold and we were sitting there with all these important people. I think it was the first time I ever saw you wear a suit actually.

I came and I sat in your lap and I said, "Is it okay if I sit in your lap? I'm cold." And you said to me, "Honey, you can sit in my lap anytime, anywhere." And that still, even though I'm 22, and I'm probably too old to be sitting in my dad's lap, there's that comfort and security of knowing that I can always come home to you and mom and I know that you'll always be there and be able to take care of me.

Dr. James Dobson: Josh, that was 13 years ago, and that's what she remembers. It's the little things that stick in the heart.

Josh McDowell: Dottie always taught that to me. She always said, "Honey, it's not the big things, the Disneyland's that they most remember. It's the little things you do day in and day out on a consistent basis that molds a child."

Katie McDowell Issak: Can I say one more thing?

Dr. James Dobson: You sure can.

Katie McDowell: I was thinking about today and Father's Day and just what dad means to us. And I think two things that he has taught all of us is to live life passionately and to love deeply. Those are two things that I have learned from dad again and again.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you all believers?

Katie McDowell Issak: Yes.

Kelly McDowell: Yes.

Heather McDowell: Yes.

Sean McDowell: Yep.

Dr. James Dobson: Sean, are you living for the Lord?

Sean McDowell: I am. You got it.

Dr. James Dobson: If you're not, now's the time to confess it. Dottie, this is a special moment for you, isn't it?

Dottie McDowell: This is a thrill.

Josh McDowell: Did you know this?

Dottie McDowell: Of course.

Josh McDowell: How did you keep it quiet?

Dottie McDowell: It was scary the past few days. I was so careful not to say anything.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well, the three of the girls and then Sean on the phone have been listening. The girls were behind the set over here so they've been right around the corner. I couldn't wait to bring them out here.

Josh McDowell: I owe you one, Jim. I owe you one. Only you.

Dr. James Dobson: Happy Father's Day to you, Josh. You have made a contribution to just millions of families and to the cause of Christ. You really do believe that Jesus Christ is our Lord and savior and that there is evidence that demands a verdict.

Josh McDowell: Passionately.

Dr. James Dobson: You haven't changed.

Josh McDowell: Oh no. He's still the same as ever before. I probably have changed. I think I'm more passionate about it today.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Josh McDowell: Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by knowing the word of God.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, thanks for being here today and I appreciate your family participating.

Kelly McDowell: Thank you for having us.

Dr. James Dobson: And coming to be with us. You flew in last night I guess.

Katie McDowell Issak: Late last night.

Dr. James Dobson: So, they were flying in from Greece and you're flying in from all over the country.

Josh McDowell: I hope we have a few hours before we have to leave too.

Dr. James Dobson: No, they're flying home, I'm sorry.

Josh McDowell: I am too.

Dr. James Dobson: Well blessings to you all. Have a great Father's Day. I'm going to enjoy mine, and I just thank you again for all that you do for the cause of Christ. And just think folks, just think about this, we're going to be together in eternity. All this and Heaven too. Dottie, thanks for being with us.

Dottie McDowell: Thank you so much.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. God's blessings to you all.

Katie McDowell Issak: Thank you.

Heather McDowell: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a fun joyful in-studio reunion for Josh and Dottie and their kids and such a great testament to the importance and impact of a good father on the

lives of his children. Now, if you'd like to learn more about Josh and Dottie McDowell, their ministry, or Josh's book, *The Father Connection*, you'll find all that and more on our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). Of course if you have any questions about the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute or Family Talk, or if you need prayer, give us a call. Our number is (877) 732-6825.

Well Father's Day is this Sunday, but here at the JDFI, we are focusing on strengthening fathers all month long. Dr. Dobson has dedicated his life's work to encouraging and equipping the family because he truly believes that it is the bedrock of any good society, and dads, you play an essential role in your family. Don't take that calling lightly. You can find many great resources for dads like Dr. Dobson's best-selling book, *Straight Talk to Men* when you visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Well, that's it for this week here on Family Talk. Thanks so much for making us a part of your lives. Now for Dr. and Shirley Dobson, Dr. Tim Clinton, and all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, I'm Roger Marsh. Have a great Father's Day weekend.

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

Dr. James Dobson: How important is a father's role in the overall health and wellbeing of a son or daughter? Some years ago, a greeting card company decided to do something special for Mother's Day. They set up a table in a federal prison inviting any inmate who so desired to send a free card to his mom. The lines were so long they had to make another trip to the factory to get more cards. Due to the success of the event, they decided to do the same thing on Father's Day. Only this time, no one came. Not one prisoner felt the need to send a card to dad. And many had no idea who their fathers even were. What a sobering illustration about the importance of a father's relationship with his children.

Contrast that story with a conversation I once had with a man named Bill Hoten, who was president of a large construction firm. Through the years, he had hired and managed thousands of employees. I asked him when you're thinking of hiring an employee, especially a man, what do you look for? His answer surprised me. He said, "I look primarily at the relationship between the man and his father. If he felt loved by his dad and respected his authority, he's likely to be a good employee." Then he added, "I won't hire a young man who has been in rebellion against his dad. He'll have difficulty with me too."

Fathers, never underestimate the incredible influence you have on your children, both your sons and your daughters.

Roger Marsh: To find out how you can partner with Family Talk, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).