



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** The Importance of Christian Citizenship – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Tony Perkins

**Air Date:** April 15, 2024

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

- Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.
- Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. Now, you've probably heard these words before, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights." And perhaps you've heard these words as well, "And for the support of this declaration with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." What you just heard was from the very beginning and the very end of the Declaration of Independence. The men who wrote that important document were diligent in including God as they began the process of forming a new nation. They understood what was at stake as they could no longer stand by and do nothing under British tyranny. As Christian men, they understood the importance of being a citizen of God's kingdom as well. And it's important for us to understand what it means to be a citizen of our nation today. So without further ado, to introduce today's guest is Gary Bauer, right here on Family Talk.
- Gary Bauer: Well, hello everybody. I'm Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of Public Policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm also the host of Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom Podcast here at the JDFI. And I'm honored to serve alongside my good friend, Dr. James Dobson, here on Family Talk. Thank you for joining us. One of the founding fathers, Patrick Henry, once said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by Religionist, but by Christians and not on religions, plural, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ." So what does it mean to be a Christian and a citizen of this great country we were blessed to be citizens of? And that's what we're going to discuss today with our guest, also my good friend Tony Perkins. Tony is president of the Family Research Council, which serves the Kingdom of God by advocating for faith, family, and freedom and public policy, and the culture from a biblical worldview.

He's a former member of the Louisiana Legislature. He's the host of a daily syndicated radio show, Washington Watch with Tony Perkins. He's the author of

*No Fear and Personal Faith, Public Policy.* Tony has proudly served in the United States, Marine Corps. I think you know Tony, so did my father, Spike Bauer. So I know better than to call you a former Marine. You are a former police officer.

Tony earned a master's degree in public administration from Louisiana State University, received an honorary doctorate of divinity from Liberty University. He and his lovely wife Lawana have been married since 1986. They have five grown children. Tony, welcome to the program. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley send you their best regards. As I was looking forward to the show, Tony, it obviously came to my mind that you and I and Dr. Dobson share a unique history together and it all revolves around the Family Research Council. And I tend to think everybody knows about this history, but I don't think they do. So would you mind starting out by just telling us first of all what you see the role of FRC as, but also sharing with our listeners how our paths crossed in this unique way that has put us each where we are today?

Tony Perkins: Well, thank you Gary. It's great to be with you and great once again to be on Dr. Dobson's radio program. So you know a lot about the Family Research Council because you were here from almost the very beginning. Jerry Regier, the first president, you were the second president. Ken Connors had a short stint there and then I came in after you ran for President of the United States. And it goes back to Dr. Dobson was at the center of that. At the very beginning, this organization was birthed in prayer and it's something we are focusing very heavily on because we need prayer. Our nation needs prayer. In fact, the way forward I think is only going to be discovered and revealed to us through prayer. We need God more than we've ever needed Him before. But I was just thinking, Gary, as you were mentioning that it was almost 20 years ago that you and Dr. Dobson, myself, we traveled the country together coming up to an election, getting Christians registered and turning out to vote in election back in, I guess 2004 was that election year.

Gary Bauer: Yeah, I almost forgot about that, Tony.

Tony Perkins: That's right. I mean, we spent a lot of time together crisscrossing the country to do that. So I know all of your jokes and the punch lines.

Gary Bauer: Yeah, I think I might have one new one, but I'll save it for later. And we were fighting about a lot of the same things we're fighting about now, but I don't think even 20 years ago we had any idea where America would be. At the moment we're talking right now, it's the decline and the falling away from a Judeo-Christian worldview has been really rapid and stark.

Tony Perkins: It has, but also what I see, Gary, is that the lines of division are clearer now than ever before. And the nation is clearly divided. I mean, you see that in almost every election that takes place, whether it's a national election, even state elections. But we see the division and it's really much like the parable that Jesus tells of the wheat and the tares that the enemy came in the middle of the night, sowed the seeds of weeds, the servants say, "Well, should we pull up the weeds

now that we see them sprouting?" And they said, "No, just let them grow and both will come to fruition and you'll be able to discern the weeds from the wheat."

And He goes on to give the explanation of that parable. And he said, "This is a picture of the end times." And I think that's where we are. Evil has become more pronounced as you made reference to the things that we're dealing with today, 20 years ago, quite frankly, we didn't think we would be here this fast where we're now. I mean, we were debating marriage. I mean marriage was on the chopping block back then, the redefinition of marriage. But now I would've never envisioned this debate over gender and how you can just kind of choose your own identity. That is crazy.

But that's where we are. But I also see Gary, and you've seen this as well, but what I see here in our nation's capital is I interact with members of Congress and have relationships with those members, more and more women of deep abiding faith have been called into this arena over the last 20 years. And probably-

Gary Bauer: That's really encouraging.

Tony Perkins: It is because it tells us when God's finished with a city, He pulls people out. He doesn't send them in, and He's sending men and women into this city who are deeply devoted to Him walking sincerely in their Christian faith. And that gives me hope, and it gives me encouragement.

Gary Bauer: Well, I share the encouragement, Tony, although there are days when I have to remind myself that we are required as men of faith to be optimists about the final outcome. Tony, I read that quote from Patrick Henry, and of course there are so many quotes you can come up with. Not only, you only have to go back a couple hundred years, you can go back to recent American presidents. The other day I came across a number of quotes by Dwight David Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, I mean quotes that when you read them, you would think, "Well, did Tony Perkins say that or Dr. Dobson, or was that Franklin Graham?" No, it was presidents that in many cases are not particularly identified as being over the top Christians.

But today, when somebody comes into the public square, I know you've experienced that, I have too, so has Dr. Dobson, if you love Jesus and you love America, that's now being called Christian nationalism. And it's a very bad thing. Obviously we have to push back against that. But it's not just that all the obvious and expected suspects are saying this about us, but there are some people in the church buying into the idea that there's something wrong about loving America and loving Jesus and bringing that to the debate. So can you share some thoughts with us about that because I think this is kind of 101 right? Loving Jesus and loving America, without people that believed those things, there'd be no America.

Tony Perkins: Right. Right. Look, this is by design. Number one, it's designed to marginalize Christians for the purpose of suppressing their engagement. We've seen this. I mean, Gary, you've been around a while. I've been around a while. But you go back to the moral majority. It was interesting. I actually wrote about this in a book that the late Bishop Harry Jackson and I did together, *Personal Faith, Public Policy*, went back to the moral majority and how every election cycle we were seeing these descriptions of evangelicals, they were poor, uneducated, and easily led. Remember that from The Washington Post?

Gary Bauer: Yes. Yes.

Tony Perkins: And so there were always these efforts to try to make them feel like, "I don't want to be associated with that group because I don't want those things said about me." But what happened is that that didn't deter them. One issue voters, all they care about the life issue and how narrow-minded that was. Well, what happened with that? We ended up continuing voting for pro-life candidates, presidents who said that they would appoint pro-life justices. And what do you know? After 49 years, we actually had a president who followed through and *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. So that vindicated all of that, the marginalization that took place, the names that were thrown and hurled at Christian voters. So this is the next iteration of that, Gary. This is designed to suppress evangelical turnout because the nation really does hang in the balance. I believe we could lose the republic in the next election if the left continues to go down this path. And here's how it happens. Evangelical voters stay home and that's how it happens. And so this really is a voter suppression effort at its heart by the left.

Gary Bauer: Man, that's a great analysis, Tony. It's exactly what it is. And who was this actor? I keep... Rob Reiner. That was the guy on *All in the Family*, what was his name? Meathead. Yes. Now-

Tony Perkins: Yeah, Meathead.

Gary Bauer: Somebody's going to say, I just called him a meathead. No, that was the name of the character. But he's come out with this just terrible movie called I think *God & Country*. And basically it's a screed against Christians being involved in government. But the thing that is so infuriating is there are a number of people that for quite a few years were thought of as Christian leaders, and they lent themselves to the movie basically attacking their co-religionists.

I have to admit, I come up with some uncharitable adjectives when I'm thinking about these folks. But Tony, how do we win this debate within the church? Every Christian father knows that his Christianity should inform the way he is a father and a husband, and you can take all the other things we do in life and we all see, well, our Christianity should be part of that. Why would we think that our citizenship should have nothing to do with our Christianity or that as a Christian blessed to have been born or come to America, that we don't have an obligation as Christians to preserve this country built on the idea that liberty comes from God, not from government?

Tony Perkins:

Well, Gary, you made a reference at the beginning in the introduction that I was in the United States Marine Corps and Spike Bauer was in the Marine Corps as well. And I'm sure if you ask any marine, one of the things that we were taught... it was drilled into us, we never allowed our weapon to be separated from us. You never laid your weapon down and walked away from it. It was always in your hand or it was secure. And there is this effort, what we see happening is an effort to separate Christians from their weapon, if you will, their source of strength, their source of protection, their source of hope. And that is the Word of God. I mean, this has been happening all of my lifetime. The year I was born was when prayer and then the Bible taken out of our public schools.

And so there's been this effort for the last 60 years to push God from the public square, basically separating Christians from their spiritual weapons. We don't battle against flesh and blood. We're not taking up arms. We're getting on our knees to pray. We're proclaiming the Word of God, but increasingly, the battle we see happening is separating Christians from their faith, "Oh, you can be a Christian. Just don't bring that stuff up in public. Check your faith. If you're a fireman, a police officer, you've got to check your faith at the door. You can't bring in those bigoted viewpoints." That leaves us indefensible. It leaves us powerless.

And so that's when we talk about contending for religious freedom, it's not about what church you're going to go to on a Sunday or what denomination you're going to be affiliated with. It's about the ability to live your life according to your faith just as the founders envisioned, as you started out the program with. The pilgrims, going back to the pilgrims, they came here not because they wanted just religious freedom, they actually had that in Holland. What they didn't have was the ability to create community around that faith and influence their laws and their policies that governed them and their children and set the path for the future. That's what we're contending for.

Gary Bauer:

Yeah. And of course, the Mayflower Compact, they dedicated what they were doing in the new land to the God of the Bible. Tony, you and I are both blessed to be friends with the still relatively new speaker of the House, speaker Johnson, who is from Louisiana. And I first met him when I was campaigning in Louisiana in 2000. And you and I, and he along with other folks were on the campaign bus. But I thought it was so telling that when he was selected, there immediately was criticism of him and an effort to make him look like a radical.

But what really set it off was when somebody asked him in an interview, "Who are you? We can't find out that much about you. What's your worldview?" And he said, "Well, if you want to know my worldview, just take the Bible off your shelf and read it because that's my worldview," and you would've thought he quoted Karl Marx or something, saying that would've been in almost any previous age in America a welcome thing to hear. But in this case, where we are right now, that was considered some sort of a scary thing. I'm sure you've got some thoughts about that. Maybe you've even talked to him about it.

Tony Perkins:

Oh, I mean, I talked to Mike on a regular basis. He and I go back to when he was in law school, and I've kind of mentored Mike for years, and he's a godly man. He loves the Lord. In fact, I used to teach a course on God and government, and he was one of the first students that went through that course. How do we integrate our faith with our public walk? You mentioned how Truman and Eisenhower and others made statements today that looked like they were coming from me or you or Dr. Dobson. Part of that was the reflection of the times where the culture was such that it was embracing of faith, biblical faith. And this is where as believers, we need to be more vocal in living out our faith and speaking our faith and not being silent. Because when we're silent, a lot of people think leaders, all the leaders lead.

The reason that Mike drew so much attention is because he did speak out, but so many other leaders are afraid to speak out because they're not hearing this in the broader culture. And so if we want our leaders to be bold in their faith, we need to be bold in our faith. It works both ways. We take encouragement, we're inspired by them, but they too are encouraged, inspired by us when we live out our faith. So moms and dads need to be bold in living out their faith in front of their children, teaching their children to walk in biblical truth. And Gary, this is one of the reasons that we at the Family Research Council have been so focused on encouraging Christians to be in the Bible. I've had a lot of people say, "As a public policy organization, why are you promoting the Bible?"

Well, because in the days in which we're living, we need a firm foundation and we need to find the encouragement, the direction, and the strength that can only come through the living word of God. And so we have a whole reading plan, a two-year journey through the Bible. In fact, if anybody would like to join us in that, they could simply text the word "Bible" to 67742, Bible to 67742 and join us in this journey. But I think, Gary, it's absolutely critical that families, that dads, that moms, children get churches, churches, a lot of churches have departed from the Word, we need to get back in the Word of God if we are going to prevail in these cultural storms that are upon us, and quite frankly, only going to increase in the days and years ahead.

Gary Bauer:

Tony, you've worked with a lot of pastors around the country, JDFI and Dr. Dobson have been doing that too. In the middle of what seems to be a lot of confusion in the church, there are some pastors out there, there's one right here in Northern Virginia that we've had on the program that there's people like Jack Hibbs out in California, all of these pastors seem to get it exactly right. If you go to one of their services, their message is biblically based. They're not giving you a political sermon. They're talking about the Bible in God's Word, and it naturally leads into then what we as Christian citizens should do. So I'm assuming you're encouraged by the fact that there are men rising up in the church right now doing that?

Tony Perkins:

Yeah. It goes back to what I mentioned earlier, Gary, the evil is becoming more pronounced. The darkness is becoming more intense, but so is the light. The light is becoming brighter, and those that are willing to stand are becoming

bolder. Yes, there's a clear line of separation, but yes, there are pastors who are standing up and speaking the truth, and many of them are close friends of mine and what's happening? Their churches are exploding because people are hungry for truth. Because the problem that is coming from many, the social feel-good messages will not sustain you in your day of challenge, but the Word of God will and its application to your life. And that's what these Bible preaching pastors are doing.

Gary Bauer: Tony, are you... I know FRC did this for a number of years, but do you think it's a good idea even for some pastors to run for office themselves or does that get more complicated or?

Tony Perkins: I think it's a little more difficult for them to run for national office for Congress because oftentimes they have to give up their church. But there's so many other ways to get involved. I was just talking with the pastor in my home state of Louisiana who is serving on a small commission overseeing the recreational aspects of the parish in which I live, which is the equivalent of a county. And you would think, "Well, what's the big deal about that?" Well, they were trying to bring in drag queens.

I mean, every aspect of society is under attack, so it is so easy to take a stand and pastors, they're used to standing alone. They're used to having to oftentimes face opposition. And so I think they're great in the state legislature, city councils. So yes, absolutely encouraging pastors to get more engaged and to encourage their people to run for office, to go into... I don't think we should have our children in public education, quite honestly. I believe we need to get them out. But I do think we need to be sending teachers into the public education system as missionaries because our public schools are as ripe under harvest as many foreign nations are, and we need to be sending missionaries and praying over these young people that would go into the field of education. Look, we've got all kinds of opportunities if we will engage.

Gary Bauer: Wow. Tony, this is just a great conversation. I got so many more things I want to ask you about. Any chance you could come back tomorrow and be with us again?

Tony Perkins: Gary, my time is yours. Anything you want, Gary, I'll stick there with you. I'll be back.

Gary Bauer: Fantastic.

Roger Marsh: Well, we definitely need to be praying for our children as our future is in their hands. Today, here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, you heard a powerful conversation featuring our senior vice president of Public Policy, Gary Bauer, and Tony Perkins from the Family Research Council. If you'd like to learn more about the Family Research Council or Washington Watch with Tony Perkins, you can visit our website at [drjamesdobbson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobbson.org/familytalk). And remember that

Gary Bauer also hosts an outstanding public policy podcast each and every week. It's called Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom, and you can get that online as well when you go to [drjamesdobbson.org](http://drjamesdobbson.org). Now, be sure to join us again tomorrow when you'll hear more from our guest, Tony Perkins, and his powerful conversation with our own Gary Bauer. They'll be talking about children and what they're facing in the world today and why it's so important for us as parents and grandparents to stand up for biblical truth in the face of this growing moral decay.

Parents certainly face many challenges in today's broken culture. We have girls and boys up against some pretty tough obstacles as they become adults. Manhood and masculinity in particular are under attack, and to help parents navigate the obstacles in raising their sons, here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we have developed a new 10 day email series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book called "Bringing Up Boys." It's designed to equip you to wisely lead your sons to grow up to become godly men. Now the series is absolutely free, and to get yours, all you have to do is click the link at the bottom of the broadcast page when you go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). That's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). And before we leave the air for the day, another reminder about the exciting new resource we've developed here at the JDFI.

To reach the next generation of parents, we've remastered Dr. Dobson's practical, biblically based transforming truths into 60-second audio messages called The Dr. Dobson Minute. And we are praying that these audio features will encourage young families and provide them with practical insights to strengthen marriages and help them to be great parents. Now, if you'd like to listen to a sample of The Dr. Dobson Minute, you can go to [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org). That's [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org). I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for joining us today here on this Monday edition of Family Talk and making us a part of your day. God's richest blessings to you and your family as you continue to grow in relationship with him.

Announcer:

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