



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Tribute to a Praying Mom

Guest(s): Fern and Ty Nichols

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk with your host, psychologist and bestselling author, Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh and if you have ever prayed desperately for a child of yours, we have a very encouraging program for you today, especially for the praying moms who are listening to us. We know there are so many obstacles and so many challenges and so many potential pitfalls in front of your kids these days, and it's even harder if your child has walked away from his or her faith. I'll tell you, if you're a praying mom, it's enough to wear out a mom's knees. Well, our first speaker today here on the program is that prodigal son, and yet his mother never stopped praying for him.

Ty Nichols: God had me under the microscope because my mother was in his ear every day, and she wouldn't let God forget about me. "Lord, please remember my son," daily.

Roger Marsh: Now, that was Ty Nichols, the son of Fern Nichols, who's the founder of Moms in Prayer International. Ty shared his moving testimony in a prerecorded message given at a Moms in Prayer conference in Dallas, Texas. He offered encouragement for parents who have a child who have walked away from the faith, reminding them that they should never give up loving and praying for their wayward son or daughter. Ty testifies how his mother's fervent persistent prayers help deliver him from rebellion through his teenage years and into young adulthood. Here he is now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Ty Nichols: In my mind, I was it. She was old school, I was new school. She was the old way, I was the new way. Her faith was a crutch and my life was a trophy. Satan was trying to destroy me and discourage mom. He tried to get her to question God's authority. Can you relate? Tried to crush her spirit because her kids were her most cherished possession. My mother and her prayer warriors charged the battlefield daily to rescue me from the enemy. They were fighting the battle for me and were serious about bringing me back into the loving embrace of God

and I was doing everything I could to keep from it, but thankfully, my mom knew God. No, no, no. She knew God. She knew God.

And while I was wasting my life away in rebellion, she stood on the rock of God's promises. You want to talk about being tough, you want to talk about self-sacrifice, you want to talk about endurance, you look no farther than the person sitting to the right or left of you who is praying their son or daughter through the fire. Now that's toughness. For years, she stood on the rock of ages and faithfully enveloped me in prayer.

By the end of my senior year, I felt sick. I was ugly inside. I exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. I decided to go to a Christian college because I felt like that might fix me, and for a while it did. I loved going to chapel. I loved hearing the music and I knew the Holy Spirit was at work, but Satan had a grip on me and the fool's gold of the world was too attractive and I fell right back into the same behavior patterns that I had when I was a senior in high school.

Midway through my sophomore year, I left the Christian school, which is a miracle in itself because I knew that if I didn't change, I was headed for destruction. We've all read this story about the prodigal son who is lying in the mud with the pigs and I found myself lying in the mud with the pigs. How did I get here? What happened? Well, I moved back. Guess where? Home. And I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was loved and cared for and I got my first real job as a Mailroom Manager, sorting mail by zip code. Now, there's a job.

God was finally able to get me alone. There was no social functions, no parties, no workouts, no games, no crowds. And on Sunday evenings, I'd attend church at Horizon Christian Fellowship and it was at that time, I could physically feel the forgiveness of God. God was carrying me on his shoulders, on the wings of my mother's prayers. I do know the pastor of Horizon Christian Fellowship prepared every sermon just for me. It was if he was speaking directly... I could see him back in his study before the sermon going, "All right, Lord. Ty's coming. What do we got for him tonight?" And he would hammer me with, get this, he would hammer me with God's love and God's grace.

The favorite verse in the Bible for me is Romans 2:4, and it says that, "God's love leads one towards repentance." Not God's punishment, not God's legalism, not God's rules, but, "God's love leads one towards repentance." I remember I tried to find a seat. It's packed like this at Horizon on Sunday nights, and I remember trying to find a seat by myself because I knew I was going to break down. I couldn't handle it emotionally and I didn't want to be seen. I was still worried about my image, but it didn't matter. As soon as Terry Clark would get up and start singing, I'd break down and cry and I'd cry tears of thankfulness that God still loved me. I'd cry tears of shame of what I'd done and I'd cry tears of awe that God still cared about me. God had me under the microscope because my

mother was in His ear every day, and she wouldn't let God forget about me. "Lord, please remember my son," daily.

Well, God save me. My king rescued me. He descended into the very hell I was in and He called me by my name, and He reached out that nail-scarred hand and He pulled me out of the pit and He embraced me with strong, loving arms and He said, "Welcome home." And my mom is still on her knees, begging God for mercy and compassion and blessings for her son. And He's still shaping Patty and I, and He's still molding us and I'm still not perfect and I still have faults.

As your brother in Christ, as your equal, let me give you some encouragement from one who has been rescued from the grasp of the roaring lion, who seeks to devour whomever he can. Those of you mothers who may be struggling with the prodigal or who may have a son or daughter who is like me, you can't see it, but you know it's happening. There's no dramatic event in life. There's no major league happening, but it's a gradual slide down the slippery slope. If they've been making decisions that are contrary to God's Truth, here is my encouragement to you, first from me, then from the Lord. Mom, I love you, and you are the strongest I know. Thank you.

From the Lord, he says in Deuteronomy 32, and I'm going to paraphrase now, but this is the Lord's encouragement to you. He says, "I am your rock. My works are perfect. All my ways are just. I am faithful. I do no wrong. I am upright. I am just. I am your God." Then in Deuteronomy 3:22, the Lord gives us an incredibly encouraging verse, especially in light of the discouragement that may have tendency to slip into your thought patterns when you're waging the battle on behalf of your kids. It is humiliating, it is discouraging. We have this American dream that says we're supposed to have it all together and the truth of it is 90% of us don't. But thank God He's graceful and patient with us all.

But when you're in the midst of the battle and you're feeling the discouragement, Deuteronomy 3:22 says, "Do not fear, for the Lord your God will fight for you." Think about that. Who do you want to step in the ring with? "The Lord your God will fight." No, no, no fight. He will fight for you. When you go to your next prayer meeting and when you drop to your knees the next time you feel discouraged, when you feel humiliated, when you feel disgusted, when you're ready to quit, when you feel the weight of Satan's minions pressing in on top of you to try and get you to stay off your knees because he's won the battle, you remember that the mighty warrior says, "I will fight for you. I will not stand idly by. I will not be a spectator in the bloodbath for your kids. I will fight on your behalf for your son or your daughter, and I will show myself strong for you."

Roger Marsh:

If you're just joining us, you have tuned to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. You've been listening to a pre-recorded message from Ty Nichols, the son of the founder of Moms in Prayer International, Fern Nichols. Ty gave his encouraging testimony to her at a Moms in Prayer international conference in Dallas, Texas.

Later, Dr. Dobson was able to talk with Fern Nichols by telephone to get her response to Ty's touching words. We'll share that with you in just a moment, but first, here are some more encouraging words about parenting from Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Have you noticed there are two kinds of kids in the world? Yes, there's boys and girls, but that's not what I mean

Roger Marsh: With another Dr. Dobson minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Compliant kids are the ones who sleep through the night from the second week of life. They goo at their grandparents and they smile while you're changing their diapers. During later childhood, they love to keep their rooms clean and they do their homework and they like to help set the table for dinner. Then there are the other kind, those who come out of the womb smoking a cigar. Compliant children are a breeze to raise, of course, but the tougher kids can turn out fine too. If you shape that strong will without breaking the spirit during the early years, you can prepare that child for a responsible and disciplined adulthood, set boundaries and expectations in advance, and then enforce them with love.

Roger Marsh: For more information on this topic, go to drdobsonminute.org. Well, that is certainly welcome advice for any parent who is in the middle of the ups and downs of parenting. And by the way, if you have benefited from the program here today on Family Talk, please know how much we appreciate your prayers for our ministry, and also your faithful financial support. May is the month where you can make a gift online or over the phone or through the mail to support Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and that gift will be doubled thanks to a special matching gift. Learn more when you go to drjamesdobson.org.

And now we will close today's program with Dr. Dobson's telephone interview with Fern Nichols, the founder of Moms in Prayer International. Fern offers great encouragement for parents of prodigals as she tells a bit about her own journey with her prodigal son, Ty. Let's hear that conversation right here, right now on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Hello, Fern.

Fern Nichols: Well, hello.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, nice to talk to you.

Fern Nichols: Well, I tell you, you have just been so in my heart and my prayers. We just love you so much here and we just know that you are constantly under great attack. And so we just lift you up and just pray that the Lord will continue to prepare tables before you in the presence of your enemies.

Dr. James Dobson: Fern, it is an interesting experience because I came out of a medical school and a respected environment, and to have a lot of hatred thrown our way is something you got to get used to. And I don't suppose anybody likes it, but you really only have to answer to the Lord.

Fern Nichols: To constantly keep that perspective, I know you need to have a lot of prayer because it still hurts. It's hard.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I am learning how to deal with that.

Fern Nichols: That's amazing.

Dr. James Dobson: But it's also an honor to carry the banner and you have certainly done that through the years.

Fern Nichols: Well, Dr. Dobson, I'm just so appreciative of the fact that you wanted to interview me personally. I just feel so honored. I do believe that this is a message that is going to really touch thousands of mom's hearts. As I've been able to travel a little bit more-

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Fern Nichols: I'm just seeing weeping mothers everywhere. They are just distraught over their kids.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, why wouldn't they be? The only way they can be together with the kids that they brought into the world is to win them to Christ.

Fern Nichols: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: And if they don't get that done, they'll never see them again. It's a scary experience, especially in a wicked world like the one in which we live.

Fern Nichols: I so agree.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, you must be, Fern, so very proud of Ty at this stage of his life.

Fern Nichols: I tell you, it is in great thanks to God and his grace and mercy, and hearing so many prayers from this mom and many other moms as he was going through that finding his faith time.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you despair at any time along the way?

Fern Nichols: Oh, my goodness. There were times, I didn't know the depth of how intercessory prayer could be in the heart of a mom. It went to the stomach. It was just like what you said. The most important thing is that they are there in

Heaven, bottom line. And so sometimes when you don't see them making right decisions, you go to that place, did they really make a decision for Christ?

Dr. James Dobson: You were in the audience the night that he first shared this message, weren't you?

Fern Nichols: Yes, that's for sure. First of all, it was just a great joy of Jesus is the victor.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, yes.

Fern Nichols: Satan is defeated.

Dr. James Dobson: He has this marvelous message now, and we just heard at least a part of it, of the necessity of fighting for your kids.

Fern Nichols: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: You never give up. You never stop praying for them.

Fern Nichols: No.

Dr. James Dobson: I know that you did that. You're a woman of prayer and you have helped to spread the prayer movement around the world and we appreciate you so much for doing that, Fern, but when it came home to your own family-

Fern Nichols: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: Where you had dedicated your life to this cause, to not lose your faith and to continue to believe and wait on the Lord, that should speak to an awful lot of people.

Fern Nichols: Well, it truly is. It is a testimony to a faithful God who keeps his promises because truly, Dr. Dobson, I just had to be in the word a lot because the truth of God's word is what kept me going in days when I felt like, "My goodness. Here, I'm in a prayer ministry and my own child is not walking with the Lord. What's that all about?" And the promise that He so gave me was that Luke 22:31 when Jesus prayed for Peter and He said, "Peter, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat, but I'm telling you, Peter, I'm going to pray for you that your faith won't fail and that when you return, you're going to strengthen the brethren."

Dr. James Dobson: Wouldn't it be absolutely wonderful if the parents out there that are in despair today because their kids have gone into outbroken sin and just are living like the devil, if they could hear the voice of the Lord saying, "I'm up here praying for you. I'm making the case for your child with groanings that cannot be uttered?" Wouldn't that be encouraging?

Fern Nichols: Very encouraging. And I tell you, their times is certainly groanings.

Dr. James Dobson: Fern, thank you for what you're doing. I'd love to have you back on the program. You're one of my favorite people and I just love what you've done through the years. In 30 seconds, tell me what Moms is doing now. Where is it and how's it going?

Fern Nichols: Well, I tell you, we are exploding worldwide. I mean, we just can't hardly keep up with it. It's just amazing where God is taking this message. The verse I just gave you about that when Ty would return, he'd strengthen the brethren, he was asked to go with me to Ireland, to speak to the women there. And I tell you, it was absolutely powerful because they would line up and talk to him concerning their own child. He'd pray with them, he'd hug them. He gave them that message that you heard, don't give up because God does hear an answered prayer. Love him unconditionally. Don't quit praying.

Dr. James Dobson: That is the message. Don't quit praying.

Fern Nichols: Dr. Dobson, this means so much to us. I can't even tell you. And can I just say a quick prayer for you?

Dr. James Dobson: Please.

Fern Nichols: Heavenly Father, I pray that You would keep Dr. Dobson in the palm of Your hand. You've engraved him there, You love him so. Lord, I pray that he would not be put to shame. I pray that the enemies, father, that You would triumph over them in his life and that he would know his hope is always in You and that You'll never put him to shame.

Father, I just pray that You would continue to show him the way, teach him Your paths, guide him into truth, oh Lord, that he knows all the time that his hope is in You all day long and that he has many, many people praying for him as he leads in this battle for our families. God bless Dr. Dobson and this wonderful ministry. In Jesus' precious name I pray, amen.

Roger Marsh: That was Fern Nichols, the founder of Moms in Prayer International, praying for Dr. Dobson here on Family Talk. And earlier in our program, we heard Fern's son, Ty, paying her a very moving tribute to the power of Fern's prayer in his life when he walked away from the faith. We truly hope that you have been blessed and encouraged by these words to stay in the fight for your children and never give up praying for them no matter what. By the way, if you'd like to learn more about Moms and Prayer International, either to join a group or to start one in your own area, remember you can visit their website, momsinprayer.org, or you can find that information at drjamesdobson.org.

And if you'd like to hear these words again or to share them with a parent you know who really needs to hear that word of encouragement, you can visit us at drjamesdobson.org. And while you're there, you'll find a link to download this broadcast and to share it with others, and you'll also find a link to the Moms in

Prayer International website on our site as well, as well as many other great parenting resources to help you stay in the fight for your children.

This Sunday of course, is Mother's Day and on Mother's Day, we affirm mothers in every possible way. Dr. Dobson has written a very touching tribute to all the moms who support the Ministry of Family Talk and every mom everywhere. The article is entitled Affirming Motherhood, and you can read it on our website at drjamesdobson.org. By the way, if you'd like to receive Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter absolutely free, it's easy to do. Simply sign up to receive yours when you go to drjamesdobson.org/newsletters. You'll also want to check out our Five Essentials of a Mom Series as well, that's also available online.

Finally, as we conclude today's broadcast, please know how much we appreciate your prayers and ongoing faithful financial support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Motherhood is under attack, fatherhood is under attack, femininity, masculinity, everything that God has ordained is good. The world is basically waging war against. That's why we need the ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute to be able to equip parents and young children, to be able to stand up for biblical values and a culture that is throwing them away.

We have a special matching gift in place right now, thanks to some friends of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and you can take advantage of this special opportunity by giving a gift online or over the phone, or through the mail. We have a \$300,000 matching gift in place right now, which means every dollar you donate to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute during the month of May will be doubled. Go online to drjamesdobson.org and learn how you can give your gift securely through there. Also, you can use the JDFI app if you prefer. You can give a gift over the phone when you call us at 877-732-6825, 877-732-6825.

And of course, Dr. Dobson loves to receive mail from his constituents and would love to hear from you through the US Postal Service. You can write to us. Our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado. The zip code, 80949. Once again, that's the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, you can just use the initials JDFI for short if you prefer, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado. The zip code, 80949. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for joining us today for Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

Announcer:

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

Hey everyone. Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at drjamesdobson.org

for helpful insights, tips and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.

Dr. James Dobson: Hello, everyone. Do you need help dealing with the everyday tasks of raising a family? I'm James Dobson here, and if you do, I hope you'll tune in our next edition of Family Talk. Our main purpose in this ministry is to put tools into your hands that will strengthen your marriage and help you raise your kids. Hope to see you right here next time for another edition of Family Talk.