



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Relying on God's Strength

Guest(s): David Abel

Air Date: May 3, 2024

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Roger Marsh: I'm Roger Marsh. And before we begin today's edition of Family Talk, I want to remind you that right now the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has a special matching grant in place thanks to some very special friends of our ministry, every dollar you donate up to \$300,000 will be doubled during the month of May. Learn more when you go to drjamesdobson.org.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, which of course is the division of James Dobson Family Institute. I want to introduce today's program with a little bit of personal history. Some of you, probably not many, but some have listened to me since 1977. I was at Focus on the Family for 33 years. And then after leaving that ministry in 2010, I started another ministry, the one you're listening to now called James Dobson Family Institute. You know that one of my major objectives is to introduce God's people to other ministries, not our own, but others and Christian leaders that are doing important things for the Lord. And we're going to do it again today. I want you to meet a remarkable couple whom I've come to know this year.

One of the blessings of doing what I've done for 43 years are the people that I get acquainted with and it just happened again. They are David and Tierney Abel. David is a very successful businessman who along with his wife, Tierney, have been blessed by the Lord. Now David is with us today. He is deeply committed to the Lord and you're going to hear that with the interview that's about to happen. David, thank you for coming and being with us. I read a little of your bio this morning. You were 18 when you started in business working out of your grandmother's garage-

David Abel: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: ... and using the family station wagon to deliver goods to people.

David Abel: It's just been an amazing journey of watching the Lord transform me and coming to understand that it really wasn't my business, it was the Lord's business that he entrusted me with. And he changed my heart about 15 years ago and I became all in for the Lord. And now our company, which is now celebrating its 43rd year, is about a stewardship company. About how can we make a positive difference in the world? How can we give back to help others?

Dr. James Dobson: And a significant percentage of the profit that's comes from that business goes to a non-profit organization called Brittany's Hope. Explain what that's about.

David Abel: Sure. Brittany's Hope was founded at the death of my daughter. She was taking a dozen donuts into work. She was 23 years old her last semester of college. She hit black ice and slid sideways, hit a tree, and her neck broke. And so as we were picking out the final clothes she'd ever wear, the Lord spoke to our heart and said, "Out of her death could come life," and her dream to help other special needs children as she was labeled and she became our first adopted child out of 12 adopted children could be lived on through the foundation called Brittany's Hope. And to date, over 1400 children have come home to loving homes here in the United States from all over the world that were labeled special needs. We have built orphanages in schools and clean water wells. We're all about helping God's abandoned children worldwide.

Dr. James Dobson: And that comes from the proceeds of your business?

David Abel: The proceeds of our business, what the Lord put in our heart is to share. 30% of our net profits with ministry work all over the world, and part of that goes to Brittany's Hope, along with hundreds of other non-profits throughout the world that are doing the Lord's work.

Dr. James Dobson: David, you're married to Tierney. Tell us about how you met her.

David Abel: So one day traveling on a plane from LA to Atlanta, I sat aside of a young lady who asked me about my journey with the Lord and my life story. And after four hours on that plane, something happened, something happened in my heart, something happened in her heart, and there was a connection. I call her the script of my heart and I call her my dove as the nest of my heart, it belongs to her. And the Lord was doing something, he was healing her heart and my heart and bringing us together in the most incredible marriage that I've ever experienced in my life and to experience true love. So for me, it was a divine appointment on a plane with my precious wife that changed my life.

Dr. James Dobson: How'd you come to know the Lord?

David Abel: Born and raised Catholic, at age eight I discovered pornography in my father's closet and it caused me to fall into addiction.

Dr. James Dobson: Eight years of age.

David Abel: Eight years of age. It fell out of his closet and it caused me to go into addiction and what's actually called sexual addiction.

Dr. James Dobson: Sorry for interrupting you.

David Abel: That's okay.

Dr. James Dobson: But that's what I've been trying to say to parents. This addiction can happen very, very early in a little boy's life and hold him in bondage for his whole life. You were able to escape it. How did that happen?

David Abel: So again, it fell out of my father's closet. My grandfather was addicted and I didn't know it. It was passed down generationally. So was alcoholic addiction. So was anger addiction. So it was gambling addiction. Through the grace of God, I broke free from all of those except for pornographic addiction, sexual addiction, I couldn't break free. And at age 46, I didn't care if I lived or died, but the Lord had another plan. I ended up having an experience with the Lord in November 2004 that changed my life and I gave Him my all in. I had my encounter called a personal encounter with Jesus Christ who came to set me free. And it's only through His grace and me saying yes to that invitation that set me free, and I've been free for 15 years.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh man. I think it is the most difficult addiction to escape. More than heroin, more than cigarettes. All the other things you can get addicted to. This one goes to the core of masculinity. And for the Lord to heal you, that is a major thing.

David Abel: It is. And what the enemy meant to take me out, the Lord now uses for His good. Because now we fight the pornographic epidemic worldwide, setting millions of people free by letting them know the truth of Jesus Christ and what he can do in setting you free from this addiction that owns you, it owns you. So for me, what the enemy meant to take me out, we now fight worldwide to restore fatherhood, to restore women made new who have been abused. That's my calling. I'm all in. It's actually that's done through Stewardship: A Mission of Faith which is another...

Dr. James Dobson: So you have more than one non-profit organization?

David Abel: We do. The Lord inspired us to start Stewardship: A Mission of Faith, to defend fatherhood, defend motherhood, defend marriage between one man and one woman, and what we call the theology, the body which God describes in sacred Scripture from the beginning to the end. And then to fight pornography, which is absolutely an epidemic in this country. It's meant to emasculate, as you said, the male figure of the family and to abuse the precious sons and the precious daughters of God the Father.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, the business success that you have been given by the Lord you see as having a purpose which is to give to others.

David Abel: Absolutely. What I believe the Lord has entrusted to me. When I came to realize that everything I own belongs to God and that I'm to use it to make this world a better place, it's what set me free. Jesus Christ said He came to set the captives free.

Dr. James Dobson: All right, there is so much about you and what you're into and what you're doing that I want to talk about. Let's turn a corner. Not too long ago you found a piece of property in Pennsylvania and you felt that the Lord was leading you to purchase that property and do something with it.

David Abel: Yes. So we ended up acquiring over the past 33 years, 275 acres. But about 12 years ago, the Lord had us acquire a piece of property to add to that, which we didn't realize at the time, but we come to find out Abraham Lincoln's funeral train traveled through the center of the property. We then were inspired by the Lord to look for and find actually a replica of the Lincoln Funeral train, the Lincoln funeral car and we put that back on the property, tell this country's history.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you know for a fact that his funeral train came right through that particular property?

David Abel: Absolutely, the railroad bed's still there. The railroad cut's still there. We have pictures from Harrisburg that show the exact time in the history books 12:05 to 12:15, April 22nd 1865 Abraham Lincoln's funeral train traveled through the center of our property.

Dr. James Dobson: On the way to Illinois.

David Abel: Oh, yes. So it would've been a 1610-mile journey to Springfield, yes, which took him right through our property.

Dr. James Dobson: And what did you want to do with it other than have kind of a historical memorabilia here, what was your purpose?

David Abel: So the Lord inspired us to create a property. We call it the Barns of Lancaster County, located in 275 acres of our property. It started with the Ironstone Ranch. We restored the 1860s barn, but then we got what's called the Star Barn. The Star Barn is the most photographed and painted barn in the country. But we came to realize what my wife said, "We need to save that." Is that this barn had significance, religious significance.

Dr. James Dobson: This was no small barn; this is a big structure.

David Abel: Yes. It was built by Colonel John Modder after the American Civil War. He was a colonel. He put a five-pointed star in every one of the buildings, the five-pointed star was put on for hope and prosperity for the nation. But the hope was in Jesus Christ because a five-pointed star represented his five wounds, two in the hands, two in the feet, one on the side. So we believe at such a time as this, we were entrusted with this barn with its religious significance to bring God all honor, all glory, all praise in all we do in the barn and on the property.

Dr. James Dobson.: Well, what do you do with it?

David Abel: So what we do is we hold corporate events, wedding events, we do public events, non-profit events to raise funds, to make awareness of our history of our company and the significance of barns. But also to just share with the public our great history, our farming history, to give honor and glory to God through every event that happens on that property and in that barn.

Dr. James Dobson: How many people does it hold?

David Abel: In a sit-down meal it'll hold 650 people, but in a public event it can hold a couple thousand people at a time?

Dr. James Dobson: Right now it's used for weddings. Describe it.

David Abel: Yeah. So right now, one of our biggest incomes that we are able to receive income from is from weddings. And for seven years it's been put on our hearts to put our core values out there. We are a biblically faith-based ministry/business. And our mission at the Stone Gables Estate is to donate 100% of our net profits to aid abandoned children worldwide. We call it Events with a Purpose. So for seven years we posted our core values. We are a biblically faith-based organization. We are a for-profit, but our mission is to donate 100% of the proceeds to make this world a better place by aiding abandoned children worldwide. And for seven years we've had weddings, we've never had anybody ever file a complaint against us for discrimination or anything until April of 2019.

Dr. James Dobson: And so everything was turned upside down. This is an extremely important aspect of your work and life to understand. All of a sudden, after never having any complaints or conflict of any sort, and then this purpose that you dedicated yourself to was being carried through. All of a sudden you were attacked, criticized, vilified, and threatened by an organization.

David Abel: Yeah. So what happened was a man decided because he had a different faith belief than us, he believes that two men and two women can be married. That is his faith belief. He has a right to that faith belief. But what he doesn't have a right to is to force us to participate through the use of our property, which is God-honoring, which is dedicated to God and we believe is owned by God to partake in any private event which includes weddings that doesn't honor biblically God's teachings that marriage is between one man and one woman. So he contacted every television station, radio station and newspaper to use them as weapons to launch false accusations against us, accusing us of discriminating, accusing us of being non-tolerant of non-inclusive.

None of that is truth. Everybody, all 7.8 billion human beings are welcome on our property to all public events. Everybody is welcome to be employed by us. Everybody is welcome in our accommodations. But what we cannot do is hold a private event on the property we believed is owned by God that would cause us to violate our long-standing church's teaching that is biblical of what marriage is, which is between one man and one woman.

Dr. James Dobson: How did the media respond to this guy?

David Abel: They got behind him because it was sensationalism and they sent it across the AP wire worldwide. So within 24 hours, we were attacked by people that have so many wounds that came against us threatening to burn down the barn. I'm telling you, I have never seen anything like this. False accusations, lies, non-truths. All this stuff come against my family, come against us because of our faith and our faith belief. We never discriminated against anybody ever. They discriminate against our ability to live at our faith in our workplace, in the community and in our church. It was so, so horrifying.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you're one of many that have found themselves in this struggle related to LGBTQ. Of course, I'm speaking of the cake baker, a man named Phillips, he was here. And a woman who a floral shop and somebody else who had a camera shop. This is a campaign, this is a crusade, this is intimidation. This is if possible bankrupt or do serious harm to businesses who have a commitment to biblical teachings, especially with regard to marriage. I'm telling you folks listening to us, it's coming to your neighborhood, it's coming to your businesses, it's coming to your town. This is a worldwide phenomenon, especially here in the United States and you are the victim of it. What was it like going through that? All of a sudden from great success to even losing money on this enterprise that was done for a godly purpose?

David Abel: So the reality is I asked God that very same question the next day. I said, "Lord, what am I supposed to do with this?" And I heard the still quiet voice of the Lord speak to my heart. He said, "David, the attack that's coming against you, number one, I allowed for your edification." He said, "David, you would've never known the names of the people that launched the arrows that have great wounds. Now that you know them by name, I want you to pray for each and every one of them." And that really was-

Dr. James Dobson: You were not angry.

David Abel: Well, no, I was confused until I heard that because I'm like, "You know what? You're right." Because it's not people that attack us, it's Satan. The enemy of our soul that is out to destroy Christendom and he'll go and operate through people's wounds to come after us. But the greatest thing we can do is love in return. When we pray for them, heap the hot coals of God's love on them. They are His precious sons and daughters who are lost and are being used because of wounds that they have. So it gave me a whole new perspective of how to look at the attack. Number one, it's never about people, never. It's always about the enemy who's coming against us to destroy Christendom. So that gave me a whole new perspective of how to fight the fight when Satan attacks is, number one, recognize who's attacking you. Then, number two, pray for those who are launching arrows.

Number three, call on the body of Christ. We had over a thousand pastors worldwide praying for us. We had over 200 cloistered nun groups praying for us.

We had pastors and priests and bishops all getting their congregations to pray for us, praying prayer words throughout the world to hold up my wife and I's arms during this attack in prayer to God. And God answered those prayers again and again and again and every day gave us strength to stay in the battle. Because you see the two words, the Lord spoke to us were, "Stand and hold." And then He said, "Allow me to do the battle. The battle is not yours, it is mine." When I didn't realize that stand and hold, which is what I lived on every day as the attack ensued, comes right out of Ephesians chapter six. It's when you put on the armor of Christ, you stand, you hold. Folding is not an option for Christians and then you allow God to do the battle.

You see too many Christians have folded and that's not of God. The enemy uses fear to silence the body of Christ. We as the body of Christ need to rise up and hold the arms up of the cake baker, the florist or anyone else, including us at the Stone Gables estate. Everybody in the body of Christ needs to stand and hold and listen to what Jesus said again and again, "Be not afraid."

Dr. James Dobson: There's no doubt about the fact that this is spiritual warfare. They threatened to burn down your barn, but it was really not about the barn. It was about spiritual conflict in high places. Satan had a purpose for you as part of the plan to weaken Christianity. And I am grieved by the fact that there are many Christian people who love God and really trying to serve Him who buckle at a moment like that when they're about to lose something valuable to them, usually involving money in one way or another. But more than that reputation and physical attacks and they buckle, they give in. That must not be or we're going to lose everything that we care about here, including America as a Christian nation.

David Abel: Absolutely. And Dr. Dobson, the main thing I can share with all of our listeners, stay in close, close communion, common union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Father all day. Scripture commands us pray without ceasing, that means to stay in constant communion and listen to the God. He will give you the promptings. He will give you what to say. He will send His messengers.

Dr. James Dobson: David, you've never been through anything like this before, have you?

David Abel: No, never.

Dr. James Dobson: You've been an honorable man who's lived by Christian principles, you've tried to serve, you tried to give. And here comes this unfair, unjust attack on your personhood, on who you are as a child of God. Now, what did it do to you? Did the Lord sustain you through this attack?

David Abel: Without the Lord and the body of Christ and the prayers of tens of thousands around this world, we would've never made it, my wife and I. It was those phone calls, those emails, those letters, those people that came and supported our events, that gave us words of encouragement. "Stand and hold. We're with

you." Amish bishops made it a point to be driven to our property that said, "Please, David, stand and hold. If you lose, if you fold, we are next." It amazed me how the body of Christ came beside us again, like Moses to hold up our arms in worship and prayer to battle this great spiritual battle. And it's amazing how the Lord is using this to give people hope.

Dr. James Dobson: It's not over yet either, is it?

David Abel: No, you know, it is not over. But again, the good news is, God's got the battle. This is the Lord Jesus Christ's battle. This is the Father's battle. This is the Holy Spirit's battle. But we as Christians, we got to do our part. Stand and hold. And remember this, love conquers all as Christians. We are called to always respond with love, never to react. If we react, we're taking the bait of Satan. But when we respond with love and truth, I promise you that's what pierces the heart. The Lord taught me about the sword of truth and the word of God, how it's meant not to, as my man Peter did, cut off an ear. It's meant to go through bone and marrow to pierce the heart of the listener. So for me, learning how to speak Scripture back to all the people that sent the emails, to all the people that came against us, that put the Word of God out there, which doesn't come back void.

Dr. James Dobson: You are I'm sure inviting people to come to the Star Barn. Do people come just to visit and see the historical setting that you're in?

David Abel: Absolutely. People come to ride the Lincoln Funeral train and get see that reenacted. They come to the Star Barn to see the barns of Lancaster County. They can go onto the website, the Star Barn website and see all the upcoming public events. And it's amazing. And one thing the Lord put in our hearts as we continue this journey, the Star Barn, we did a light show, a Christmas light drive-through that put Christ back in Christmas. It's called the Life of Christ in Lights. It's the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ. And people are coming from six and eight hours away to drive through this light show that tells the true meaning of Christmas. Celebrate the birth of Christ and be all inspired.

Dr. James Dobson: And what an honor it is for us here at Family Talk to have the opportunity to tell people about what you're doing and to ask them to pray for you because the battle's not over. I appreciate you. You're a man of courage. Thanks for taking the time to come and be with us here today.

Roger Marsh: Well, what an encouraging conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his guest, David Abel today here on Family Talk. David's testimony of standing up for righteousness in the face of enormous hostility is truly inspiring. And developing daily dedication to God in order to withstand the attacks of our broken culture is increasingly important as well. If you'd like to learn more about David Abel and the Star Barn, simply visit us online at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Now as we conclude today's program, I want to share with you an excellent opportunity for you to help support the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute financially. At the present moment, all throughout the month of May, we have been blessed by

some special friends of our ministry with a \$300,000 matching grant. That means for every dollar you donate to the JDFI this month here in May, that dollar amount will be doubled automatically.

Just think about that donation. \$50, \$200, even \$1000 will go twice as far to help equip parents, educate kids, and strengthen marriages. That's double the impact. Now, as I mentioned, the grant only goes up to \$300,000, so please consider giving a gift today. You can give a gift online, it's absolutely secure when you go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Or you can give a gift over the phone. Just call 877-732-6825 or give a gift securely using our JDFI app. And when you contact us, make sure you also include any questions, comments, or even prayer requests that you might have. We love hearing from you and we want to walk alongside you on your faith journey as well. And if you'd like to send a donation through the mail, our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. And on behalf of the entire team here at the JDFI, thank you so much for joining us today. Have a blessed and peaceful weekend, and be sure to join us again Monday for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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