



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: God: The Architect of Our Lives – Part 2

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

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Announcer: Today, on Family Talk:

Roger Marsh: Psalm 90 verse 12 reads, "Teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom." As believers, we are not promised another second here on this earth. No matter young or old, we are all called to glorify God every moment that we have breath. And as our guest on yesterday's edition of Family Talk said, "We must trust God's plan and his sovereignty and continue to do kingdom work."

John Maxwell: I think there is a response though that I must give. And that is I need to be a good steward of my body now, and I need to get about my calling. What God has called me to do, I better do with great intensity and focus; and not take for granted my health and not take for granted my calling. And I can say that I'm not working harder but I am focused better.

Roger Marsh: Welcome everyone to Family Talk, a production of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh with your host, prolific author and child psychologist, Dr. James Dobson. On today's program, we are concluding Dr. Dobson's classic discussion with John Maxwell and Dr. John Bright Cage. John Maxwell of course, is a popular author, speaker, leadership expert, and a prominent Christian voice. Dr. John Bright-Cage is a respected cardiologist based in Nashville, Tennessee.

Now in yesterday's broadcast, we heard John Maxwell share how he nearly died from a massive heart attack in the late 1990s. However, God still had a plan for his life. Through a series of divine circumstances, he was connected to Dr. John Bright Cage, who dramatically helped to save John Maxwell's life. Now if you missed that full story, be sure to go back and listen to that last program on our website at drjamesdobson.org. On today's broadcast, Dr. Dobson, Dr. Bright Cage and John Maxwell will examine what it means to live life to the fullest. They'll also stress the importance of caring for ourselves physically and not wasting the opportunities God has granted to us. Here now is the conclusion of that discussion on this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: John, you cannot look face to face with death like that without being changed, without your priorities being reexamined, without being different coming through it. I know that has happened to me twice now. What has this done to you? What's different? I mean, you've always had a passion for the Lord. You've always had a passion for pastors. That's not new. What's new?

John Maxwell: Two things. One is, when I was laying in that bed, in that hospital, I so desperately wanted to talk to Margaret, my wife, and my kids. Now I've preached messages on keep short accounts. Margaret and I every day tell each other we love each other 50 times. I mean, we're very expressive about our love. I always had been with my children, but when I'm laying on that bed, not realizing that I'm going to make it, I want to tell Margaret one more time I love her and I want to tell my kids one more time. Oh, and they happened to be there because they were at the Christmas party, so I was able to be there. Little Elizabeth came in and put her head on my chest and just wept and prayed a prayer. But that day I discovered something. No matter how much you tell people you love them, no matter how much you express this love, it's never enough.

In other words, I wanted one more time, of course Margaret's with me, but I wanted one more time to just tell her I loved her and that I loved being her husband and I wanted to tell my kids I love being their dad, and you just can't tell the people that you love that you love them enough. So, the first thing I'd say to all of our listeners is: no matter how great that relationship is, never take it for granted and probably for the next month or six weeks, especially, Margaret and I, you know, as I was recovering, we would just maybe be in the same room. We'd look at each other and the tears would just start flowing.

Dr. Dobson: Shirley and I still experience it.

John Maxwell: You know what I'm talking about?

Dr. Dobson: Oh absolutely.

John Maxwell: And you just say, I could have lost this. Which brings me to the second thing, and the second thing I've learned is that... is to not take life for granted. And I did enjoy life, but I took it for granted. I just assumed I would live a long life, and I just assumed that my ministry would be fulfilled over a span of X amount of years. And now I don't assume that. So every day I get up and I tell God how grateful I am for life. I look and I've got Margaret, my best friend, and my kids are healthy and my ministry is I think where it should be. And I'm saying yes to God and the calling and... just let me say one more thing.

When I was on that table, the warmth of God and the grace of God just overwhelmed me. And it's really true. It's the first time in my life I really did stare death and look at it and say, this may become a reality in my life. It's the first time I've really had what I would call maybe a close call. But the peaks that

God gave me and the fact that He loved me unconditionally and that His grace just overwhelmed me there on that table. And the witness of the Spirit that I was a child of God. Just removed the fear factor.

Dr. Dobson: Regardless of the outcome.

John Maxwell: Regardless of the outcome. and I can say that in the humanness I really wanted to hang around because I just wanted it. There was a whole bunch of stuff I wanted to get accomplished, but as far as my faith, I just want the listeners to know, that in those moments your faith really does hold. And God is real and God was there to minister to me in a wonderful way.

Dr. Dobson: I experienced the same thing, John, and of course Shirley saved my life by knowing what to do. She called 911 and got me to the hospital with the stroke 15, 20 minutes after it occurred, which really gave me every opportunity to survive it and stood beside me, and I was aware of her presence all night long. I could not say a word, I had complete aphasia. I had no ability to express a single thought yet there she stood beside me. I knew she was hurting, I knew she was praying for me, I knew she was pulling for me, but I knew she was hurting throughout that whole night. And I have, since the episode been reminded by Shirley of the very first thing I said, because it was about eight o'clock the next morning - I hadn't said a word - and I awakened and I looked at her. And she was still standing there, and my heart went out to her because of what she had been through that whole night.

And I reached my hand up to her face and I touched her on the cheek and I said, "I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry." It's all I could say, but my heart was aching for her and she had expressed love to me without words through that night, and that's what got me through the night. You know, and when it comes down to those moments, those relationships, and what God has to say to you, that's all that matters, everything else is gone. John, you have stood right there with a lot of people who are in this same kind of fix, haven't you?

Dr. John Cage: Every day, every day. And there's no guarantees in life. I mean, there is nothing that you can guarantee it's going to happen. Other than you do your best, you know Romans 12 that says God gives you the gifts to do the best you can in a Christ like manner. That's all I can do. But I'm convinced God has called me to do what I do and I try to relay that to my patients, that they're also children of God and that they have somebody that loves them even more than me.

John Maxwell: Can I say something?

Dr. Dobson: Sure.

John Maxwell: Because I haven't been able to, this is the first time Dr. Cage and I have seen each other.

Dr. Dobson: Since that time.

John Maxwell: Since the heart attack. I mean we've talked on the phone and before-

Dr. Dobson: Right before we went on the air, John Bright you said "This man looks good." You gave him a different diagnosis.

Dr. John Cage: It was a great view.

Dr. Dobson: Go ahead and tell.

John Maxwell: Well as good as I can look. There are some limitations there, we all realize but it's the best – it's the best shot I can do, let's put it that way. But I haven't, I haven't had this opportunity to say this personally, but I just want to thank you. I want to thank you for being faithful to God. I want to thank you for obeying him. I want to thank you for getting in my face that day when I was kind of ignoring your loving admonition to me. And I want to thank you for taking your name card out and saying, "call me anytime, night or day." And every day, Dr. Cage, I thank God for you every day. I don't miss a day of exercise. I don't miss a day telling Margaret I love her. I don't miss a day praying for you and thanking you for what you've done in my life, but I haven't been able to personally say that.

Dr. Dobson: That was quite a gift for a physician to say to somebody he doesn't know: "Call me anytime day or night."

Dr. John Cage: Well, I'm convinced God had a hand in this. There's no question in my mind that God called my heart to help him. And it's just, it's to glorify God. That's all it should be about.

Dr. Dobson: I want to say to those out there who are not eating right, not exercising. They have perhaps hypertension, high cholesterol numbers. They are a candidate for a heart attack or a stroke. Someone said that a good scare will do more than all the good advice in the world. I want to ask our listeners out there, is it going to take a near death experience for you to deal with this, to perhaps leave your family years before you'd have to, perhaps not finishing the assignment that God has given you on this earth, simply because you are unwilling to deal with the unpleasantness of getting physical exams and doing these other things.

Preach it for me, John Bright, what else do you want to say to 'em?

Dr. John Cage: What I tell my patients, especially, you know, the ones - most of the people I have had disease after their 50s and 60s and 70s. I sit down with them and I say, how important is your family to you? How important are your grandchildren to you? Do you want to see them grow up? Do you want to see them get married? Do you want to see things happen in your family and be a part of that? If you do, you're going to have to change, because if you don't, you're not going to be

here for them. You may be up in heaven and can watch down, but it's not the same. You've got to do it, if not for yourself, then for them. And I have been amazed that people never have thought about that.

Dr. Dobson: In 43% of the cases, the first symptom of heart disease is sudden death.

Dr. John Cage: That's right.

John Maxwell: Wow.

Dr. Dobson: Isn't that incredible? It masks itself.

Dr. John Cage: That's right. That's exactly right. And that's where we have the problem is - you know, our goal is to keep people from getting to the point that we have to do something to them, to give them a sense of awareness that what's wrong, that they're doing it to themselves, so they won't get it to begin with. And that's even better, because then we don't have to take the risk of them losing their heart or losing their life.

Dr. Dobson: John, I'm not a cardiologist, but I'm going to give you some advice.

John Maxwell: Okay.

Dr. Dobson: And we'll see if your doctor here is prepared to back this up. Knowing your temperament, which is like mine, and knowing your characteristics.

John Maxwell: Birds of a feather here.

Dr. Dobson: That's right. Exercising every day is not going to be your problem. Even controlling your eating habits is not going to be the problem. The big problem is keeping your schedule under control and not falling back into that pattern of a type-A personality that's go, go, go, go, go without stopping to rest. That is still a problem for me. I do well and then I don't do well and then I do well and then I don't do well and it's a roller coaster. But that's the one I have difficulty.

John Maxwell: Well, you're right on. And what's interesting is my wife Margaret is in the control room and while you're talking and saying this was going to be your problem, I mean, Margaret's back there and she's smiling, she's nodding, she's, you know, she has everything but waving a handkerchief saying, "Amen."

Dr. John Cage: She's giving Bonnie high fives, I think.

John Maxwell: She's in the amen corner right now because that's exactly right, because you know what? We want to help people.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

John Maxwell: And every time there's a call, and every time there's a need out there, my response naturally is, "let me go over there and help them. Let me see what I can do to add value," whatever. And I know that's what yours is. And so I've made myself accountable. I have what I call a hatchet committee, which really looks at all my invitations.

I call them my hatchet committee 'cause they just hack everything up. They just tell me "no, I can't do it." And I really have held myself accountable to them because I know my tendency. If I'm not accountable to somebody for my schedule, I will go right back into that same pattern.

Dr. Dobson: I have three physician friends whom I meet with regularly, and they ask the hard questions, you know, and it is a really necessary to have an accountability group. Because we're made that way. You know, we've got Cadillac engines in there that are running and it is really hard to keep them in the garage.

John Maxwell: And we're not happy if they're running. Well thank God we have a few more years to ride them, I hope, now.

Dr. Dobson: Everything in moderation.

Dr. John Cage: I have a men's 6:30 Bible study or group that meets every Friday, and we have three topics: how to be better fathers, better husbands and better brothers in Christ. And every time we get off that track, it's because we're trying to do too many things and we've got to learn to slow down.

Dr. Dobson: How about yourself, John Bright. Are you working too hard?

Dr. John Cage: One of the things that I have found when I joined the group that I joined, the cardiology group in Nashville, they're the ones that are – they're also my brothers, they're my brothers in medicine. And one of the priorities I had was, you take a day off during the week, you take a full day off with no call, no rounding, no patients that you have that time off to be with your family and to take care of yourself. And it's the only group in town that does that, and we make less money, but we also, I think have better families and we have more time to do the right things.

Dr. Dobson: So, you're living by that standard?

John Maxwell: Oh, that's good.

Dr. Dobson: And eating right.

Dr. John Cage: Sometimes.

Dr. Dobson: Everybody's got a weakness there somewhere.

Dr. John Cage: One thing though that I was impressed by, you tell on a broadcast that you went six years until you got to Kay James's house before we had a piece of pecan pie.

Dr. Dobson: That's true.

Dr. John Cage: And I was impressed by that. You really have toed the line on that.

Dr. Dobson: Well, I still feel guilty about that one piece of pie. I have been pretty good about it. Again -

Dr. John Cage: That's what you've got to do.

Dr. Dobson: Because if that's what I had to do to not only live another day, but to feel like I do, I feel great and I like that. I really do like that. Especially the exercise pays off.

Dr. John Cage: You've got to have it to where you don't have a choice. Well that's what our group did in Nashville, is that - the senior partners in my group had the philosophy that their family was more important than their career. And because of that commitment that I saw and because of how we did things, that's the group I wanted to be a part of when I finished my fellowship. And I came back to the same hospital where I did my residency, where I'd seen this in action for three years. We made a conscious decision to do it this way and it's the best decision we've ever made, and I'm thankful to them for that.

Dr. Dobson: John, where do you go from here? How is your ministry going to change? And God has given you some more time to serve Him. How are you going to use it?

John Maxwell: You know, Coach Mack at Promise Keepers called me after a few weeks after the heart attack and when I started accepting calls, and we had a very touching probably 30 minute conversation and he said "John, I don't think God's done with you yet", and I feel He isn't done with me. And so, we made a huge commitment at Injoy to partner with pastors. We're starting now to scholarship pastors of small churches to come to our conferences. I just raised \$55,000 last week for scholarship monies for pastors to come so that I can train them in leadership. My book, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, has just taken off and it just came out right before the heart attack, and it's kind of a tool to help pastors learn how to lead successfully because you know, Dr. Dobson, many pastors, we weren't trained how to lead, and we're raising a million prayer partners for pastors.

We're, we're still on that. We're over 600,000 remember we were on the program, we're over 600,000 and we're keeping serious tab on this. We're over 600,000. We believe next year we'll go over the million mark and the prayer partners.

Now talk about significance. You know, [Bill Class 00:16:42], my prayer partner since 1981 when I was pastoring in San Diego at Skyline Wesleyan, when we moved to Atlanta, he moved with us, now this is a man in his seventies, and I said, "You don't have to move to Atlanta. Stay there in San Diego. You have children, grandchildren." "No," he said, "I was called to pray for you for the rest of my life." He moved to Atlanta the morning after being in the heart cath and having the little surgical procedure there.

When I awakened in the morning, I was very conscious somebody was in the room, and I looked down at the end of the bed and there he was standing there waiting for me to waken, and he'd been there for two hours and he said to me, "John, I prayed throughout the night and at four o'clock this morning I felt God answered the prayer. So, I got dressed and came over here to the hospital." Now I'm telling you again, I'm telling you, I've all my life preached that pastors need to have prayer partners, but that day it came home to me in a real way. Again, that man, Dr. Cage, and a few others, prayer partners like Doug and Sherry Bennett across the country. These people really stood in the gap and prayed for me and you and I both know - where would we be without the prayers of the people?

Dr. Dobson: Reverend Jack Hayford was my partner at the most lonely moment of my entire life, when I'd gotten a bad medical report and I was scared and nobody was there and he walked through that door and he said, "It's because the Lord told me you were lonely." You remember that story?

John Maxwell: I love that story. It's warm isn't it?

Dr. Dobson: It's because somebody was praying for me.

John Maxwell: That's the beauty, the body of Christ. That's the beauty.

Dr. Dobson: That's the key to everything.

Dr. John Cage: I see y'all two sitting here and it warms my heart because there's a story of what happened to me last year of two patients in the intensive care unit, side by side. The one was a 42 year old gentleman, had a big heart attack, was a type-A personality, didn't know the Lord, would not open up to his family, and he died and they never saw how much he cared about them. He never knew the Lord. Next door to him was a patient of mine that was 85 years old. Has known the Lord for 50 years. He had a heart attack just like John did, but we couldn't open the artery up because it was too far gone. So, we put a mini artificial heart in him called a balloon pump. That kept him alive. I'd turned the balloon pump on, he would wake up, and not have tightness in his chest [00:19:11 inaudible]. You know, I try to wean it off, and he'd try to die.

We went through this for five solid days with his family there, he there. In the evening hours, we sat down and we talked about our tombstones. We talked

about what we wanted on our tombstones. He didn't say, like your dad did, "he prayed," but he told me, he said, the most important thing to me in this life is my family and my relationship with God. And his family and he got to say their goodbyes, and they got to be able to have that time together before we had to turn it off, when he was ready to go. And the story gets so good because his son flew in from Texas, and his son and I talked afterwards and his son was led to Christ by this guy's best friend who was one of the members of my church.

And to see the difference in these two guys, one who knew the Lord and one who didn't, and to see the sense of peace that this man had like y'all had with your time. It's just burned in my memory, and it makes me want to take these people that come that don't know the Lord and say, what is it going to take? Now, how can I help you get to this step? And I don't pray with all my patients, but when I get the chance, we jump in there and we try to find a way to help them, because that's another calling that anybody can do. It's not just a physician.

Dr. Dobson: That's the bottom line to this whole program. We haven't talked about it much to this point, but the most important thing is not being physically healthy. Most important thing is being ready to meet your maker, because you never know when he's going to call you. I mean we're not guaranteed five more minutes. You know, the world is set up that way. There is no such thing as security. You can't get it. There's not enough medical knowledge in the world to guarantee you one more minute. And we've got to prepare to meet the Lord face to face. And there's really one way to do that.

John Maxwell: And I remember the wonderful feeling I had laying again on that bed, not sure I was going to live or die, realized I didn't need to have to get on a phone anywhere and call somebody up and ask forgiveness or [crosstalk 00:21:26].

Dr. Dobson: What a wonderful moment. That's why I had no anxiety most of the time through that.

John Maxwell: I mean it was, I mean it was one of the feelings saying, you know, "I've not lived a perfect life, but I knew one thing: I've tried to ask forgiveness to people I need to ask forgiveness to, and I don't need to go back and do some heavy repenting and all that whole process. And you know there's an old song that we used to sing "Nothing between my soul and the savior," and I felt that on that bed that day.

Dr. John Cage: Amen.

Dr. Dobson: Thank you gentlemen for coming in. Now you've got to run and catch a plane. Now I don't know what that means, John. I don't know if that's any indication that you've got some more work to do.

John Maxwell: That means I have some more work to do. I sure do.

Dr. Dobson: And Dr. John Bright Cage, thank you for making the trip over here.

Thank you for what you contributed to this man and his family and to all those other patients out there. You love them. You're trying to serve the Lord and you have done that today by speaking to many people out there. John, I think they're going to be some people who will have listened to this broadcast today and will say, "I've got some work to do. I need to make some changes."

John Maxwell: That's our prayer.

Dr. Dobson: It is at that, and I trust the Lord will give you many long years. When you and I are 95 let's come together. You're a little younger than I am; when I'm 95, let's come together and talk.

John Maxwell: And tell the story one more time.

Dr. Dobson: Absolutely. Thanks for being our guests.

Roger Marsh: I'm Roger Marsh and you've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's conversation with Dr. John Bright cage and John Maxwell, here on family talk. We must be good stewards of the lives that we've been blessed with and not take anything for granted. Visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org for more information about either of our guests today here on the program. That's drjamesdobson.org and then click onto our broadcast page. If you've appreciated this two day program, we would certainly love to hear from you and to contact us most directly, simply go to Family Talk's Facebook page and comment on today's broadcast post or the one from yesterday. You can find our profile by searching for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk when you go to facebook.com. Share how these programs or any of our other radio broadcasts have been impacting you and your family. Again, you can leave your thoughts under today's post. When you go to Facebook.com and find Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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And finally, as we conclude today's program, did you know that now is a great time to partner with the ministry of Family Talk? A few weeks ago, a group of generous donors blessed us with the matching grant of \$325,000. This effectively doubles every contribution that you're able to make, so we ask you to prayerfully consider what you can do to support the ministry of Dr. Dobson

and Family Talk financially. For more information, visit us online at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, or you can call and speak with a member of our customer service team at (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. Thanks so much for your prayers for this ministry and thank you for your financial assistance in supporting us that way, as well.

Well, that's all the time we have for this week. Be sure to join us again Monday for another enlightening edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Have a blessed weekend.

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

Roger Marsh: 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.