



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: See You at the Library with Kirk Cameron – Part 1

Guest(s): Kirk Cameron

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you had a great Thanksgiving last week and hopefully a fun-filled weekend spending time with loved ones or perhaps crossing some things off of your Christmas list. Now on today's program, co-host Gary Bauer will be talking with a guest whose name you just might be familiar with, actor Kirk Cameron. They'll be discussing Kirk's testimony and his recent national library campaign. Now, before we get started, I want to remind you that tomorrow, November 28th is Giving Tuesday. It's a global one-day generosity event. And thanks to some very special friends of the ministry, we have a matching grant of \$75,000 in place for tomorrow only that will make your dollars go twice as far. That's double the impact. So please prayerfully consider making a financial gift to JDFI tomorrow on Giving Tuesday. Now here is our co-host Gary Bauer to introduce today's guest, Kirk Cameron right here on Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Joining me on the program is a guest whose name you may be familiar with. His name is Kirk Cameron. Kirk became a household name with his role as Mike Seaver on the Growing Pain sitcom that aired in the 1980s and he has continued in his acting career and has starred in movies like *Left Behind* and *Lifemark*. Kirk is the host of TBN television series *Takeaways* and *One-on-One with Kirk Cameron*. He's also partnered with Brave Books in December of 2022 for a children's faith book campaign launched Nationwide called See You at The Library and we're going to be talking about that today. His children's books are entitled *As You Grow*, *Pride Comes Before the Fall*, and the newest book entitled *The Fox, the Fair and the Invention Scare*. Kirk and his lovely wife Chelsea had been married for over 30 years and together they have six grown children.

I don't know how they find the time, but in addition to all that, they host an all-expenses paid summer camp called Camp Firefly, which is for children who are terminally ill and their families. I can't imagine what a blessing that must be for those families. Well, welcome to the program Kirk. I'm really glad to be able to spend some time with you. I wanted to begin if we could, you have said that you've found Christ in Hollywood, which is not exactly the place people expect

to find Christ. When you were a child star actor on *Growing Pains*, tell me a little bit about what that was like and when you found Jesus.

Kirk Cameron:

Well, Gary, it's great to be talking with you and so good to be here on Dr. Dobson's program. I came to faith in Christ when I was about 17 years old. I was actually an atheist at the time, and it's amazing to me that God saves atheists out of their atheism and agnostics out of pretending that they don't have enough evidence to see the existence of God. Romans 1 tells us that's not true. God doesn't believe in atheists or in agnostics because what can be known of God is evident through the things that He's made and their own conscience bears witness. And I came to faith in Christ, not because I found Him in Hollywood, but as my pastor reminded me, Christ wasn't lost, I was lost and He found me in Hollywood. And that really is the case because as an atheist I wasn't looking for God, I wasn't trying to find Him through religion or a self-help 12 step program.

I was flying high on top of the world. I was Mike Seaver on *Growing Pains* and I had everything that I wanted except I was in church one morning following a pretty girl who I wanted to date and she wisely brought me to church so that her daddy could meet me and he asked me lots of questions about the sermon that I heard that morning. I didn't know who the preacher was, but I later found out his name was Chuck Swindoll.

Gary Bauer:

Wow.

Kirk Cameron:

And I had a lot of my questions answered by this girl's father. And then he told me, "Kirk, if you want to know if God is real and He is interested in you, you need to talk to Him, but you have to go to Him on His terms, not yours. And His terms are humility and faith." As an atheist in Hollywood, a successful actor, I didn't have humility or faith and he explained those were gifts from God, but you need to approach Him with a sense of respect for who He is, the creator of the universe. And I remember sitting in my car parked on the side of the road on November 5th, 1987, and I thought about the fact that one day I would die and find out if what that preacher said was true.

And I knew that if there really is a God and a Heaven, I would not be going there because I had never once said thank you or tried to be the least bit respectful to the one who gave me my life and keeps my heart beating at night. And so I just prayed and I asked God to show Himself to me, to forgive me of the bad things I've done and to make me the man He created me to be. And I began to go to church at the advice of another friend who gave me a Bible. I began to read the Bible and discover who I am, why I'm here, who God is, and I decided that I wanted to follow Jesus Christ as the Lord of my life. And I can say that of all the things that have ever happened to me, there's nothing more important and for which I'm more grateful than God finding me in Hollywood.

Gary Bauer: Kirk, that is a fantastic story. And you mentioned this friend, so there were some people in your life that when you were beginning to have this awakening sort of were around you to point you in the right direction.

Kirk Cameron: Yeah, that's right. Again, as an atheist, I wasn't hanging out with my church friends. I went surfing on Sunday mornings while others were going to church. But when I started having questions about what happens when you die, "What about other religions? How could you believe the Bible? It's so old. How do you believe in somebody you can't see or the idea that a man could rise from the dead?" God began sending people into my life, I believe, to help me through these questions and then eventually help me to my knees to call out to God and believe the gospel. And that's one of the many demonstrations of God's faithfulness to those who seek Him. He says that in His Word, that if you'll seek Him with all of your heart, you'll find Him when you seek for Him with all of your heart. And in fact, we later find out that in all of our seeking, God is the one who is seeking us. We're the sheep that goes astray and He goes after the lost sheep and He finds us.

Gary Bauer: Kirk, what about family and close friends and so forth? Sometimes when we accept Christ, it can be off-putting to other people that love us or maybe they were used to you being an atheist and all of a sudden you're talking about the Bible. Did you have to deal with any strains in family relationships or longtime friendships or whatever or were you pretty much accepted right away as you're going through something that was changing your life?

Kirk Cameron: It would be very dramatic and fun for me to exaggerate and talk about all the persecution I went through and all the friendships that I've lost. But that wasn't my experience. My experience was that when I came to believe the gospel, I believed I had discovered something that was worth more than all the money that I had made on *Growing Pains*. There was something so valuable that I had found forgiveness of my sins and eternal life that I figured everybody would want to discover what I had discovered. It's kind of like the story of the man who finds the treasure in the plot of land and he sells everything he has to buy the land so that he can have the treasure. And there were some who were responsive, particularly people who went to church, my new church friends who were excited about what I had become excited about.

But then there were those at work who thought I had probably just wandered into something of a religious cult that might be dangerous. And so they were skeptical. And I think many of them responded skeptically out of love for me, the way that you and I might respond if our children came home and said all of a sudden, "Dad, I'm a Wiccan. Dad, I'm going to change my gender and I'm going to become a girl." We would say, "Ho, ho, time out. Tell me more about what you're giving your life to here."

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Kirk Cameron: And so that was the case. And then of course there were those who were just settled in their disdain and hatred for the Bible, Christianity because of their own experiences and associations. And that's been a colorful adventure over the last 30 years dealing with those who are enemies of the gospel. But I think in all of that, the support, the encouragement and the vitriol and the hatred, we begin to learn something of what Christ meant when He said, if anyone wants to save his life, you've got to lose it. If you want to follow after Him, pick up your cross. Deny yourself, follow me and all who want to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

I haven't reached persecution levels, no one's thrown stones at me yet. No one has tied me to a stake like they have done to Christians throughout history and the martyrs. But I think this is where we begin to have our faith developed, our convictions formed and our character forged is in the valleys of trial and challenge and resistance and also on those mountaintop experiences where you feel the support and the goodness of God and of good friends being near you. So it's been a good journey. That's the sanctification process, the maturing process of a Christian. And I've got a long way to go, but I'm thankful for where the Lord's brought me so far.

Gary Bauer: We've all got a long way to go, Kirk. It's very true. Faith is a growing process, hopefully all the way to the time that we're at the throne and hear those words we all want to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Now, you mentioned interestingly enough that it was an interest in a young lady that led you to that church. Now you met your wife, is this right on the set of *Growing Pains* and was that the young lady or was that somebody else?

Kirk Cameron: No, that was a different young lady.

Gary Bauer: Okay.

Kirk Cameron: Mike Seaver had several girlfriends-

Gary Bauer: I'm not surprised.

Kirk Cameron: ... over the six or seven years.

Gary Bauer: I'm not surprised.

Kirk Cameron: But the Scriptures say it's not good for man to be alone, and I think He put that into every man's heart. So this was somebody that the Lord brought into my life to bring me to a place of finding Christ. And that was not my wife. My wife and I met several years later and she became the love of my life, my better half. And we have six children, they're all raised and grown and moved out of the house now. A couple of them are married. We're looking forward to grandkids soon.

Gary Bauer: Yes, Carol and I have three adult children who are all married and we have our eighth grandchild on the way. And I can tell you that the old saying, which you've probably heard is correct, that if Carol and I would've known the grandchildren would be this much fun, we would've just skipped right to them instead of having children.

Roger Marsh: Roger Marsh here, just jumping in for a brief moment to remind you that tomorrow November 28th is Giving Tuesday and because of generous friends we have here at the ministry, there's a matching grant in place for this special day. Family Talk is a listener supported program and we very much appreciate everyone who supports us in our ministry efforts. So take advantage of this \$75,000 matching grant tomorrow on Giving Tuesday. And now let's rejoin Gary Bauer's conversation with Kirk Cameron right here on Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Your first child was adopted, I believe. Is that correct?

Kirk Cameron: That's correct. In fact, our first four children are adopted.

Gary Bauer: Wow.

Kirk Cameron: We have six, and so we adopted four first, then we had two more kids the natural way, my wife is also an adopted child, so is her brother. So adoption plays a central role in our family, and I probably shouldn't even say that our last two children were the natural way. There couldn't be anything more natural than adoption. When we look at the scriptures, God adopts us into his family and it's felt completely natural for us as a family also.

Gary Bauer: The movie, *Lifemark*, now that was an adoption theme movie. Was that as a result of your own experience with adoption and building your family?

Kirk Cameron: Well, I heard of a true story of a young lady who changed her mind on the abortion procedure table in the clinic and she placed her son up for adoption and 19 years later he contacted her. She figured he was calling to ask her why she didn't keep him and tell her how hard that has been for him. And the opposite was the case. He wanted to thank her for the courageous choice that she made to give him life and thank him for the wonderful family that God brought to him. And I turned this into a movie with my friends, the Kendrick brothers who made films like *Fireproof* and *Courageous* and *War Room*, and this is a movie that's all about the value of life in the womb and the beauty of adoption. I happened to be an adoptive father, so I got to play the part of the adoptive father in *Lifemark*.

Gary Bauer: That's fantastic. On the abortion table. Wow. I mean that is a dramatic story. I was talking to Dr. Dobson the other day about the number of times when he's been out over the years giving speeches and talking to churches. It's not frequent, but it has happened regularly where a woman will come up and have a child with him or a teenager with him and say that they were listening one day

by accident to one of Dr. Dobson's programs and heard him talk about the sanctity of life and changed their mind because they were planning an abortion. And then he's had the incredible experience of meeting those children that are alive because of words he spoke on his radio show.

You just never know when God's going to use us in order to convict somebody's hearts. It's a great thing to remember. Sometimes it feels like we're speaking into the wind, but you never know when you're going to affect what somebody does on such a basic issue. So today, you've obviously raised your children in a Christian home. Do you continue to see in them what you tried to do with a Christian upbringing with your kids?

Kirk Cameron: Well, I see what the Scriptures tell me I should expect to see, and that is that my children are not little cookie cutter results of a perfect Christian formula that if I take them to Awana class so that they can memorize Proverbs 3:5-6 and John 3:16, that they'll walk a perfect walk with the Lord. That's not the case. They're just like me, works in progress where God is working with them, He's got His spirit of grace on their life and they're making choices that are bringing them closer and closer to seeing God for who He really is. And that's all I can ask. So I have children who are embracing ministry positions, working in the pro-life department. I have some children who are musically talented and they're wanting to use their gifts to bring joy and inspiration into people's lives.

I've got some who are athletic or academic or musical, and so I'm just sort of waiting to see how these works of art turn out in the end. I think if we looked at Michelangelo's David or maybe the Sistine Chapel in the early stages, we might not have any idea where they're going with this, but in the end, these are brilliant artists and if we know anything about God, He is the author of poetry, the author of the best storytelling and sculptures, and He paints the sky with light and water every morning and every night. Surely, He has plans for our children that will just thrill us and put His power and His beauty on display. So I just keep being thankful for everything that happens to my kids.

Gary Bauer: Hey Kirk, that was beautifully said. I mean any father listening to this show, any parent listening to the show, each of our children are fearfully and wonderfully made. They're all made in the image of God. God has a plan for each one of them, and all we can do is raise them the best way we can and then free will-

Kirk Cameron: That's right.

Gary Bauer: ... takes it from there and God's working on their hearts. So again, that was very well said. Well look, not long ago you started this project with Brave Books and that's been big news on occasion over the last year and a half. What led you to that? I want to set the stage here a little bit. At the time there was this new phenomenon that just seemed to come out of nowhere where we were suddenly being told it was absolutely essential to have drag queens reading to children in libraries.

Now, I used to be undersecretary of education for a few years in the Reagan administration, and so I'm pretty familiar with educational research and so forth. I'm not aware of any research that says that kids learn how to read better if the people reading to them are men dressed like women. But anyway, that was causing its own controversy and there were a lot of very upset people about it. And you came along with this partnership with Brave Books and instead of just railing against the phenomena, you had a solution, something that you thought would be a legitimate answer to this. So to tell us a little bit about what motivated you and what ended up happening as you made a perfectly reasonable request of local libraries.

Kirk Cameron:

Gary, you're a worldview guy and I've learned lots from you and Dr. James Dobson and Chuck Colson. And then ultimately we're all looking to the scriptures to make sense of the world that we're in. And I understand that this culture war, so-called that we are in is not a battle between the World Economic Forum or the Alphabet Army or the drag queens versus the Presbyterians or the Baptists or the Church of Christ folks or the Nazarenes or whatever. This is ultimately a battle between God and all other false gods that try to set themselves up as the ones in charge. And there's no contest at the end of the day, God has soundly defeated His enemies and saved His people. And now we're in the process of growing in our understanding of this God and who He is. We've been set free from the prison of sin.

He's redeemed us and purchased us out of the slave block of transgression that held us in bondage. And so what I think we need to do is instead of just cursing the enemies of freedom and faith and the gospel and trying to put up a wimpy little fight against them, but then putting all of our confidence in a rescue of just rapturing us out of here before the place explodes, I think we ought to get on board and say, wait a minute, perhaps God has allowed us as a nation to go down a road that we have been asking to go down for a while in the family and even within the church, sadly, and certainly within civil government and our educational institutions, we've been looking to marginalize God and the authority of His word. And God's perhaps allowing us to go down that road as Romans 1 suggests.

And when we come to the dead end, maybe we'll turn around and say, we have been fools. Look who's really controlling the culture and educating our children now, drag queens, the Godless, John Dewey, Horace Mann, the secular humanist manifesto folks, and we're actually paying them to do it through our tax dollars as we give them over to seven hour indoctrination camps run by a secular government. We've got to stop all of that and begin being in step with the spirit, demonstrating the fruit of the spirit and taking back the sacred duties God has given us. Namely, we could start with the hearts and minds of our own children. So that's all I'm trying to do. How about we learn from the drag queens and start going to libraries and reading our children the stories and telling them what's true and what's good and what's beautiful rather than what's warped and twisted and wrong?

So I wrote a book about the fruit of the Spirit, went to a public library and over 50 libraries denied me access to this public space even though they had previously sponsored drag queen story hours. And my hope was that in pushing back it would wake up enough people. And in fact, that's what happened. When I asserted our constitutional rights and reminded them that religious discrimination in a public space is a bad idea. Over 3,000 parents and grandparents showed up at the Indianapolis Public Library in support of a book with Christian values, and they sang God Bless America, they sang Amazing Grace. We prayed together and recited the Pledge of Allegiance in the public square and we found this same reaction in D.C., in LA, in San Francisco, in Seattle, Washington, Phoenix, Arizona, and all throughout the country. And the more that came up against us, the more parents would come out and support and this is what we were hoping for. A spark that would light a fire that would spread across the nation.

Gary Bauer: This has really been fantastic to spend this time with you, but there is so much more that we want to talk to you about. Is there any possibility you could join us tomorrow to get into some of these other great projects that you've been involved in?

Kirk Cameron: I'd love to.

Gary Bauer: Fantastic.

Roger Marsh: Well, that was just part one of Gary Bauer's conversation with Kirk Cameron here on Family Talk. Be sure to join us again tomorrow as they'll be discussing Fighting for Truth in the Public Square. You won't want to miss it. Now, before we leave the air for today, I want to remind you that tomorrow November 28th is Giving Tuesday. This is a global one-day generosity event. Keep in mind that we are a listener supported program. We would not exist if it were not for listeners, just like you making generous financial contributions to support our ministry.

Thanks to some very special friends of the JDFI, we have a matching grant in place for \$75,000 for Giving Tuesday, that's tomorrow. With that blessing and your contribution, your dollars will go twice as far for double the impact. So please prayerfully consider making a financial gift to the JDFI tomorrow on Giving Tuesday. Also be sure to tune in again tomorrow to hear the conclusion of Gary Bauer's conversation with our special guest, Kirk Cameron, right here on Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. And for all of us here at the JDFI thank you for making us a part of your day.

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