



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Common Sense Truth in Today's Culture – Part 1

Guest(s): Pastor Gary Hamrick

Air Date: January 8, 2024

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

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.

Gary Bauer: Well, hello, everyone. And welcome to Family Talk. I'm Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm also the host of Defending Faith, Family and Freedom Podcast here at the JDFI. And I'm honored to serve alongside my good friend, longtime friend, Dr. James Dobson. Now, joining me on the program today is Gary Hamrick. Gary is the senior pastor at Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, Virginia, and totally coincidentally, he happens to also be the pastor of the church that my wife Carol and I attend on Sunday, usually online, so it's good to see the pastor today. He also has a radio program that is called The Cornerstone Connection that airs weekdays. Gary is on the board of directors for the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. And if you're coming to Washington anytime soon, you have got to take in the Museum of the Bible. He serves as the chief chaplain for the Loudoun County Virginia Sheriff's Office. Gary and his wife Terry, have three grown children and seven grandchildren. Welcome to the program, Pastor Hamrick, Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley send their regards to you.

Gary Hamrick: Well, thank you, Gary. It's good to be with you. I really appreciate the ministry of James Dobson and Family Talk, so thank you for hosting this today.

Gary Bauer: It's my pleasure. Pastor, there's a lot of reasons we wanted you to be on the program and not the least of which is that the church in America seems to be having a real hard time trying to figure out what it should do at a time when so many things in America are going off the rails. Even our religious liberty is not the same that it was in previous decades, and so we want to talk about all those things because you seem to me and to many of us, as I listen to your sermons on Sunday, watch your sermons, you seem to have found that balance.

Your sermons are Christ centered and at the same time, your sermons are relevant to all of the things happening around the church, around the state and around the country. But Pastor, I suspect a lot of people listening to the show in spite of the fact that you're really well known in Virginia these days, they may not have heard about you, and so I'd like to spend some time just introducing

you to our audience. And I want to begin by asking you, how did Christ lay his hands on you? When did you first realize he was calling you to ministry and did you immediately jump at that possibility or did you do a little dance there as many of us do?

Gary Hamrick: Yeah. I did a little dance there for a while. I was raised in a church going home, I'll say it that way, because I didn't really come to know Christ as my savior till I was 15, and I was confronted about the difference between going to church and having a relationship with Jesus. I thought I was automatically saved because we were a church going family, and that's typical of a lot of people's stories. But one time I was at a youth camp retreat and a gentleman came up to me and asked me if I was saved and I said, "Yeah, I'm saved because I go to church," that was my standard answer. And he just took me to Romans 10:9-10 and said, "Well, it sounds like you believe in your heart, but have you confessed with your mouth that Jesus is Lord?"

And so that's really when I became a Christian, and I did not respond to a calling to ministry initially. The reason, Gary, was because I'm the fourth generation pastors in my family on both sides of my family tree. My mom's father was a Methodist pastor. He was a district superintendent of the Baltimore Conference. On my dad's side, his brother was a pastor, and my great-grandfather was a circuit rider preacher on horseback through the hills of West Virginia.

Gary Bauer: My goodness.

Gary Hamrick: And I just started thinking maybe I'm supposed to be a pastor because what the men in my family do typically, so I really wrestled with that for a few years. I actually went off to American University as a Journalism major and I was going to go the route of communications and journalism. And then when the Lord really got ahold of my heart, I had to change directions and realize, "I've got to be reporting the real news and not the fake news," and so the Bible became my handbook for a teaching ministry, and so the Lord called me that way. I just had to wrestle with, "Is this a real calling or is this only because this is what people do in my family?" So it's been a joy to be at Cornerstone now for 33 years, started with 18 people, and the story is really the Lord's, what he's done here at our church.

Gary Bauer: Gary, that's a story I think a lot of people can identify with now. So you were going to go into journalism. Look, some people would argue maybe you should have gone into journalism. We've got a real problem, but not enough Christians there too, right?

Gary Hamrick: Yeah. Well, that's true too. That's a mission field of its own.

Gary Bauer: It is. But so how did Cornerstone happen? So did you walk into a gigantic church?

Gary Hamrick: So I was a youth pastor at a church in Vienna, and I was in my mid-twenties doing youth ministry and there was a handful of families meeting here in Leesburg, Virginia who just had a heart for a Bible teaching church. In fact, when I did my homework, Leesburg, Virginia is where the first Methodist church was planted in America, so it has a rich heritage of denominational churches. Nothing wrong with denominational churches, it's just that this group of people wanted a non-denominational Bible teaching church, and so they started meeting at a school here in Leesburg. And one of the ladies in that initial core of 18 people knew my wife and thought that I should become their first pastor, so she put that bug in my wife's ear and I said, no.

I said, "I'm not going out to Leesburg," because at that time, Leesburg, 33 years ago was just a cornfield with the old historic part of town, and I didn't see the Lord's calling in that, but I quickly realized after just praying through it, "You know what? This is the venture of faith that God's calling us to," and we had just had our son, our first child, Tyler. And so a venture of faith it was, and those initial 18 people took care of us and it's just been a venture of faith. But you know what, Gary? God has honored two things. We decided we're going to teach the Bible and we're going to worship the Lord. And from that, now the Lord has built his church and there's some seven, 8,000 people now, and that's just a credit to what the Lord has done.

Gary Bauer: What an incredible story about what happens when God blesses a ministry. I've seen your sons on the stage, and as an observer it looks like you did pretty well, Pastors. But anybody that's raised a kid, Carol and I have three adult children, they're all married and we've got eight grandchildren, but they have free will and you can do everything we're supposed to do, but you're always holding your breath to see whether it takes or not, and it sure seems to have taken with your family.

Gary Hamrick: Yeah, by the grace of God. We just wanted our three children to leave the home saved. And because preacher's kids, I mean, I'll be honest, some preacher's kids are a little wacky and we were just grateful that not only did they leave saved, but they married believing spouses and all three of our kids wanted to serve here in ministry at the church. And so it really is the grace of God. Because you're right, sometimes Christian parents can do the best they possibly can and their kids still go off the rails, and for us it was just a real gift that they've turned out the way they have to God's glory.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk. And I'm Roger Marsh, just jumping in for a brief moment here. From all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we thank you for listening today and for making us a part of your day each and every day. Of course, we are a listener supported Christian radio program and it's because of you and your prayers and your faithful financial support that we're able to bring quality content to you and your family each and every day. Now, to find out more about how you can support the JDFI visit drjamesdobson.org, drjamesdobson.org. And we all have a prayer in our heart,

so if you have yours you'd like to share, we would love to connect with you and pray with and for you if that's what you need. If you'd like to reach out, simply give us a call at 877-732-6825, that's 877-732-6825. And now let's return to the program right here on Family Talk.

Gary Bauer:

Pastor, as you know, Dr. Dobson's always been interested in public policy and government and so forth. I can't tell you how many times over the years I watched members of Congress scrambling for cover after Dr. Dobson went on the air and told people to call the White House or the Capitol Hill switchboard and tell them, "Vote no on this legislation or vote yes on that." But the real thing that Dr. Dobson has devoted most of his career to is strong marriages and how you raise children, and every family's different. Every family has different challenges. Families with a successful head of the family often really have challenges because you're building the church in this case, but there's the crying baby. There's a spouse that wants you home for dinner. What did you all have to do as a family to navigate all that and stay strong and make sure you were saving your own home while you were trying to save souls?

Gary Hamrick:

Yeah, that's a great question, Gary. I think one of the things for us that we really prioritized was family dinner time where we would just really spend that time around the dinner table unpacking the day, and then after we had dinner, and to my wife's credit because she really was the one who had the heart for just having family devotions after dinner. And so even when the kids are really little, sometimes it's hard for little tiny kids just to sit still for 15 minutes, but we navigated it based on whatever their age was at the time, and sometimes it was just as simple as, "Here's a verse today, let's all say this out loud and memorize it." And then as the kids got older, we would move it from the dinner table into the living room and open up our Bibles and just have Bible study together.

And I can't say we did it every night, but that was a consistent thing we did to just stay glued together. The enemy works hard at destroying marriages and families, and the family that prays together stays together, so the saying goes. And we just knew that if we really, number one, modeled in the home the way we were in public, if I was one man in the pulpit and one man at home, that hypocrisy would have spoken, sadly, volumes to our children, and so I wanted to be as true in public as I was in private and then to just really model it in the home in a way that we just wanted to focus on the Word and love each other. And I knew that if we didn't work hard at keeping the hearts of our kids bonded with us as a family, then their hearts would be bonded to the world and the world is constantly pulling at our children to grab their attention and their affection, and we have to work hard at being engaged, going to their ball games.

They want to see mom and dad there limiting the exposure they have on computers and phones and all this stuff to try to limit as best you can, all the influences of the world, and then just really pray together, read the Bible together, just so that God would just really knit our hearts together as a family. And I think that went a long way to helping protect them and then preparing

them to go out into the real world with that foundation and to live out their lives. And because at some point it has to be put into practice, you can't just live in a bubble. You can't protect them forever, but if you do your best to invest in them spiritually and love them and you're there, you're present. Sometimes I hear people talk about, "Well, it's really quality of time. It's not necessarily quantity of time," and I would disagree. I think it has to be both. If you're not there with the quantity of time, they'll go looking for fulfillment in other ways in the world, and so just keeping that bond of the family was really critical for us.

Gary Bauer:

That's really great advice, Gary. As I could say, as chance would have it, but I doubt if it was chance, you end up being the head, the pastor of this incredible church in Northern Virginia, and Northern Virginia a few years ago ends up being ground zero for the great, I don't know if you want to call it a parental awakening, but certainly the parental rights movement in many ways traces its roots to Loudoun County, Virginia, and what parents discovered was going on in the schools in Loudoun County, Virginia, which as you pointed out not that long ago was this sort of backwater very rural place and all of a sudden was being enveloped in all of the influences of what we have in America today. This was a serious thing. I mean, there were people heading all this. Talk a little bit about what happened and the role that you and Cornerstone played in standing up for parents.

Gary Hamrick:

Yeah. Loudoun County became ground zero because of a policy that the Loudoun County School Board wanted to pass, and actually they ended up passing it. It was Policy 8040, and the policy allowed school-aged children, I mean, we have to imagine this. School-aged children were allowed to decide whatever gender they wanted to be, and then they had the freedom then to use whatever pronouns they wanted, and teachers and fellow students were forced to identify that child by whatever pronoun he or she wanted, and it just outraged parents, understandably so.

One particular employee of the Loudoun County School system, he was a PE teacher in Loudoun County Public Schools, his name was Tanner Cross, and at a public hearing for public input on Policy 8040, Tanner got up and spoke as a private citizen in a public hearing, not as an employee of the school, but he basically said, "Hey, as an employee of the school, if a student comes up to me and demands that I call that individual a pronoun that is contradictory to their biological sex, I would be lying to them and as a believer," I'm summarizing, but basically Tanner Cross said, "as a believer I can't in good conscience do that. That goes against my faith, that goes against their God-given design, and so I can't participate in that."

Well, he was put on administrative leave for that statement, and there was a lawsuit that ensued ADF successfully, represented him in court, but what that did was it ignited a firestorm. I didn't realize that Tanner Cross and his wife Angela went to our church at Cornerstone Chapel, and after he made that public statement and then the backlash, and I found out he went to our church, I met

with them, I got them up in front of our congregation in all our services, and everybody gave them a standing ovation. We prayed over them, but what that ignited was we've got a problem with our school system, and maybe it was always subtly under the surface, but boy, it came out full force and with this policy that the school board passed, and so parents are so outraged, and that's how Loudoun County became the epicenter of all of this, and I actually opened up our church to take recall petitions to try to unseat these school board members because of that policy, and so that's how we got into the battle. It was not intentional, but I just couldn't remain silent.

Interestingly, Gary, when I got up in the pulpit and I made a statement that basically said, "If we lie to children and affirm a gender that was not their God-given biological sex, then that's a form of emotional child abuse," and I said that, and oh my goodness, the backlash from the media and the community that came out against me for saying such a thing. Well, look, I'm not the only one, Dr. Michelle Cretella, I think her title is executive director of the American Pediatric Association. She's an M.D. and she called it institutional child abuse. When you start using beta blockers and you do gender surgery and all this kind of stuff, this is a form of child abuse because we're not being true to children. And so it's interesting, Gary, how when you just stand up today for truth, and it's not even necessarily radical truth, it's just common sense truth. Let's call a boy, a boy and a girl, girl. Why has that become radical? Why has that become controversial?

But when you stand up for common sense truth in today's culture, it's just an indication of how evil our world has become, that is an issue that people are now calling you haters or calling you biggest or making up all kinds of comments. And so as I just have stood my ground over the years preaching from the same book, the Bible I've been preaching from for 33 years, when truth confronts the culture, the culture will sometimes become unglued, especially the further the culture drifts from mainstream common sense values. Let's not even say Christian values, let's just say good old-fashioned American, mainstream common family values. When a culture strays from those things and then you confront the culture, wow, when they become unglued about it just shows you how far the culture has strayed. And so we're just holding the line telling people the truth, wrapping it in the love of Jesus and let the truth do its work in the hearts of people.

Gary Bauer: Well said, Pastor. So as you were talking about, first of all, we can't lie. This is so essential. I mean, this is fundamental to the Christian faith. We must never allow ourselves to be forced by government or anyone else to say or act based on a lie-

Gary Hamrick: That's right.

Gary Bauer: ... that is a violation of everything we believe in. But in addition to that, the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence defines America. There's a sentence right in the middle there and it says, "We hold these truths," that's

the whole beginning of America. The founding fathers were all familiar with the Bible. They're trying to define our country, and they say, "We hold these truths to be self-evident," so this understanding of the importance of truth was apparent to the founding fathers, and we see all these forces trying to remake America, to rip it out of the rich soil of Judeo-Christian civilization. There's a war on truth going on.

Gary Hamrick: Well, there is, and that's why now you hear these people say my truth and your truth as if truth is relative. And so I roll my eyes whenever I hear somebody say, "Well, that's my truth, and then you have your truth." It's like truth is exclusive, and truth by definition will be offensive because when we are living a life that is contrary to what is true, then anytime truth is spoken of or presented, it confronts me and it confronts whoever's living contrary to the truth, so that's the nature of truth. It's the salt in the wound but okay, it's for our best and for our healing, and unfortunately some people just don't want to listen to it, so they start making up all these other, "Well, this is my truth and your truth," and such confusion and chaos in our world today because of it.

Gary Bauer: Absolutely. And Gary, this is fantastic. This conversation has been wonderful. Here's the problem, I've got about 20 more things I want to ask you, and so may I beg you to come back for a second show?

Gary Hamrick: I'd be happy to do that. I look forward to being with you again tomorrow.

Gary Bauer: Fantastic.

Roger Marsh: Truth does have so much value in our daily lives, doesn't it? I'm reminded of 2 Timothy 2:15 which reads, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." I hope you've been encouraged by today's discussion featuring Gary Bauer and his guest, Pastor Gary Hamrick here on Family Talk. There is so much more to listen to, so be sure to join us again tomorrow for part two of their conversation. And as always, if you missed any part of today's program or if you'd like to listen to it again, you can go online to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Also, if you find value and you enjoy what you hear here on the daily Family Talk broadcast, be sure to pick up a copy of our 2023 Broadcast Collection.

This five disc CD set is also available as a digital download, and we'll be happy to send it to you as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Now, this collection includes such guests as Charlie Kirk, Dr. Del Tackett, retired Lieutenant General Jerry Boykin and more. Now, to get your copy, all you have to do is go to drjamesdobson.org/2023, everything you need will be right there on that page. Again, that's drjamesdobson.org/2023. And remember, the 2023 broadcast Collection is our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of

the ministry here at the JDFI. I'm Roger Marsh, and you've been listening to Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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

Dr. James Dobson: How does a father teach character to his sons and daughters?

Roger Marsh: Here's Dr. James Dobson for Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: One of the best ways a Dad's influence is transmitted is through consistent modeling. Character training is instilled through his demeanor and behavior. Identification with him is a far more efficient teacher than lecturing and scolding and punishing and bribing and cajoling. Children watch their dads intently, noting every minor detail of his behavior and values. It's probably true in your home too. Your kids will imitate much of what you do. If you blow up regularly and insult your wife, your boys will tend to treat their mother and other females disrespectfully. If you curse or smoke or fight with your coworkers, your children will probably follow suit.

If you're selfish or mean or angry, you'll see those characteristics displayed in the next generation. Fortunately, the converse is also true. If you're honest and trustworthy, caring, loving self-discipline and God-Fearing, your boys will be influenced by those traits as they age. So much depends on what they observe in you for better or worse. Someone said, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one," there's truth in that statement. Children may not remember what you say at home, but they're usually impacted for life by what you do there.

Roger Marsh: To find out how you can partner with Family Talk, go to drjamesdobson.org.

Hey, everyone. Roger Marsh here for Family Talk. Where can you go to receive support and advice for you and your family? Family Talk interacts with millions of people every day with inspiring advice and tips from Dr. James Dobson on what matters to you the most. Whether it's marriage or parenting, you can be sure our Facebook page will keep you updated with how your family can succeed. Join us each day for the latest broadcast, resources and inspiration. Nowhere else can you hear a thought of the day from Dr. Dobson, as well as a special message before you say goodnight. Now, you can be sure that every post on our page is created with you and your family in mind, so please take the time to visit us and become part of our online community at facebook.com/DrJamesDobson'sFamilyTalk. That's facebook.com/DrJamesDobson'sFamilyTalk.