



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: In Honor of Dad – Part 2

Guest(s): Dennis Swanberg

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello, everyone. This is Dr. James Dobson, and you're listening to Family Talk, which is a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. Today, we're going to continue hearing a recorded message from my very good friend Dr. Dennis Swanberg. If you missed the first part of this message, here's a little bit of what we heard yesterday.

Dennis Swanberg: My dad is a deacon, and when they do those deacon ordination services, it's pretty awesome. They all line up, all the ordained men, and they come up here and they had the contestants up here sitting down. I mean, candidates, not contestants. I'm sorry. They'd come up and they'd do the laying on of hands, and my dad, he's so cute when he does it. My dad's hard of hearing, and he thinks he's whispering, but he's loud, so when he comes up to pray over someone, we all hear what he says, but he's good. He says the same thing. He says, "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul, and all those within me, bless His holy name. You're a good boy." Finally, it came to the last one. Are you ready? "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul, and all those within me, bless His holy name. You're a good boy. You still got that truck for sale?"

Dr. James Dobson: You can see why I love Dennis Swanberg. Today, we're going to continue to honor his dad by some memories and the godly lessons he learned from him. The Swan, as he's called, also encourages men to be active in their own homes and to build their kids up. Before we begin today, let me tell you a little more about our guest.

Dr. Swanberg is a popular comedian, speaker and ordained Southern Baptist minister. He hosted two successful TV series, authored nine books and created dozens of DVD series. Dennis is a graduate of Baylor University where he double majored in Greek and religion. This is a gifted man. He went on to complete his master of divinity and doctor of ministry at Southwestern Seminary.

Many of you faithful listeners know that, from time to time, we discuss some pretty serious topics, but every now and then it's important to just sit back and laugh a little, and that's the reason that I want to let you hear from Dennis Swanberg today. He does a great job of mixing solid biblical truth with great, clean humor. With that said, here's the remainder of Dennis Swanberg's message entitled "In Honor of Dad" on this edition of Family Talk.

Dennis Swanberg: I remember all those times I did hospital visitation in the ministry. Amen. We and the staff, we know about going to the hospital. I remember when my daddy was in the hospital. He's had a couple of hernias. He's had some knee surgeries. He's had this and that. I remember we all went there the first time he had to have some surgery, and he was all in his room and he wouldn't put on the gown right there in front. We said, "Daddy, you need to get the gown on and get in your bed."

"I ain't putting that thing on yet. I ain't. I'll put it on when they come and get me. I ain't putting that thing on. Good night. That's pitiful looking. I unfolded it a while ago when y'all weren't here, and it's pitiful. It is pitiful."

I said, "Well, daddy, we're here. We're family."

"I'll do it when they come in here with the gurney."

Sure enough, finally, here comes these guys with that gurney, that bed on wheels, and they said, "Mr. Swanberg, we need to get you on here."

"All right, give me a minute. Good night." He goes in the bathroom.

I said, "Daddy, we're leaving."

"Oh, good night," and he goes in that bathroom. When he came out, he had it on backwards. He had the little tie down. The split was in the front, and he'd come out there going, "This is the most pitiful thing I've ever seen."

I said, "Daddy, you don't put it as... It goes down the back."

"Well, that ain't much better either, I'm telling you."

Speaking of hospital visitation, you know I was a pastor for 23 years, 23 years, and we did that hospital visitation. After Wednesday night, I wanted to go out and eat with my friends, but do I get to? No. Here come Mr. Anderson up to me. Mr. Anderson, he got that big tummy. His pants are down low. He's that type of guy who says, "I've been a 38 since I've been in high school, Brother Dennis."

I said, "Pull your pants up. You're 42." Anyhow, he comes up to me and he says, "Brother Dennis, have you seen Brother Johnson at the hospital?"

I said, "I've been up there three times this week."

"The family didn't see you. The family didn't see you."

I said, "Well, I've been there. I've been there three times."

"Well, I'm not trying to tell you how to do your job, but you could score some points if you would go up there, Brother Dennis."

I said, "Well, I've been up there. My staff's been up there. We've had someone up there every day."

"Well, I'm just telling you they didn't see you."

"Well, the old boy was an ICU/CCU, hey, you, one of them use. Tubes up his nose. Tubes everywhere. You know what I'm saying? He just that old kind of old boy. He was in a coma. Now, I prayed over him because I think the last thing to go is your hearing, and so I tried to be sincere about it. I've had prayer over him and everything, but then I'd leave a card. 'I'm praying for you. Brother Dennis.' I've been there."

"Well, they didn't see you."

So what do I do on Wednesday night? Do I get to go eat with the people? Oh, no. I have to go to the hospital. I go up there. I'm looking for people. I can't find anybody. I looked in every waiting room. I know every waiting room in that hospital. I've been all over it. I can't find anybody. I'm getting so flustered, I don't know what to do. I can't believe it. I go back, and I look back in the alley where people get a smoke. Finally, I just couldn't find anybody. I did my best.

Well, next Sunday, right after I finished preaching Sunday morning sermon, here comes Brother Anderson again. "Brother Dennis? Brother Dennis?" This time he's got a tie on, big tummy, short tie. "Brother Dennis, it would really mean a lot to the Johnson family if you could go up there and see..."

"I've been been there. I've been there every day this week, and I hadn't found them."

"Well, I know they're up there, or they wouldn't tell me what I'm saying, Brother Dennis."

So do I get to go out and eat lunch with my family? No. I go back to that hospital. I look. I can't find anybody. I can't find nobody. I'm so flustered. I go to the Candy Stripers, a little booth, the information booth. I rig the lock on their deal on the speaker system. I roll that thing up like a roll-top desk, and I flip on every announcer, every speaker throughout the whole hospital. I grab the speaker, and I go, "This is Brother Dennis. This is Brother Dennis. I'm looking for Brother Johnson and his family. I'll be coming. I'm on the hallway. I'm coming up to ICU/CCU, hey, you, one of you use. Would a family, you, somebody, you, come and greet me?"

Nobody. Nobody. I shouldn't have done this. That's probably one reason I'm not in the pastor anymore. I took my business card and I wrote on there with a

Sharpie, "I was here," and I put it right underneath that tube on his nose right there. I didn't, but I wanted to. Amen. Oh, I wanted to.

Oh, I'll tell you, one of these things I've learned over the years is that you got to have a sense of humor in the ministry. I tell you what's helped me is just people like John Wayne. I love The Duke. I love John Wayne. He's always been a hero to me. In the movie The Cowboys, remember Bruce Dern? He was the mean guy in The Cowboys, if you recall. Oh, he was mean. Bruce Dern has said that of all his movies, he'll be remembered for The Cowboys. He was that mean cattle wrestler that came and stole the cattle from John Wayne and his little cowboys. If you remember, he took that one little cowboy's glasses and took those glasses and just crumpled them in his hands. Remember that? The Duke said, "Oh, we've seen what you can do to our boy. Let's see what you can do and become a little beggar." Oh, baby, bring it on.

I'm a man of the cloth. I got my Greek and religion degree at Baylor University. I've been to Southwestern. I got my master's. I got my doctorate. I'm ordained. I don't know how to say this, but you can't pop a deacon. You know what I'm saying? You can't pop a deacon. You can't go up to an usher and go woo, woo, woo, woo. You can't go up to the sound man and go, "Turn me up." You can't do that, but you can watch a John Wayne movie. It's therapy. It's therapy. Therapy. Therapeutic. I love those one-liners.

In the movie, Big Jake, Richard Boone was in Big Jake. He was paddling and, "Have gun, we'll travel." Okay, some of us are older people. You kids be nice to us. If you want to get our inheritance, you better act like you know what we're talking about here. He was in that movie, and he was the mean guy. He was dying at the end, and John Wayne walked in to that room where he was dying, and he looked at John Wayne and said, "Who are you anyway?"

He said, "I'm Jacob McCandles." Remember what he said? He said, "I thought you were dead." Remember what The Duke said? "Not hardly." I love that. "Not hardly." I've often wondered on Easter Sunday morning if someone did go run into the garden tomb and they bumped into Jesus and they said, "Is he dead? Is he dead?" He might have said, "Not hardly." Whoopee.

I love my daddy. My mama used to always say, "Call you daddy." I'd call my daddy. I'm glad to know that I can call on my Heavenly Father, too. Jesus called His father Abba, daddy. We have a great Heavenly Father. If our earthly father gives us good gifts, how much more so our Heavenly Father gives us good gifts? Amen. Oh, the power of a daddy.

Now, listen, you might not had a good daddy. Young men, dads, maybe your dad wasn't a good dad. Maybe you didn't have one around, but you be a good daddy. You be a good dad. My dad didn't do everything right. My dad was limited on, I guess, raising boys. His daddy came over from Sweden when he

was 14 years old, and his mom and daddy died when he was 10, so he didn't really know how to be a daddy.

I remember those times when I had my Grandpa Elof and my daddy sitting there, and then I'd be sitting here. My grandpa was trying to tell my daddy he loved him, and this is how he'd do it. He'd look at me and he'd go, "I worked your daddy way too hard. I worked your daddy hard," and my daddy would look at me and go, "It don't hurt you. It don't hurt you to work. I'm telling you one thing. We didn't work. No, we didn't work that hard. It hurt. It's good for you," and then my grandpa said, "I worked him way too hard. I worked him too hard."

I mean, my daddy was the type of man, he told me, "I'll tell you what, you knew you had a good Christmas if you got some hard candy and an apple. That was a good Christmas. I remember when my little brother Gene got his first orange. He looked at me and he said, 'Floyd, I got a baby pumpkin,'" and then my grandpa would look at me. "I worked him way too hard."

I wanted to say, "Tell my daddy. Daddy, tell him. Tell each other. I'm right here. Y'all talk to each other," but they didn't know how to do that. They didn't know exactly how to do it, so my dad, he made an improvement. He was trying. You know what my dad called me when I was a little boy? I thought about this just a couple of months ago, and I realized I really hadn't talked about this in all the videos I've ever made, over 11 different videos, and this and that, and television shows and this and that, but it just never hit me until a few months ago.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret what my dad called me when I was little and has called me even up to this day. My dad called me Champ. He called me Champ. He called my big sister Blondie, but he called me Champ. When I was a little boy, little league baseball, he'd write little notes for me. "Champ, hit that ball hard now, son. Got to be tough. Love you, Champ. Dad." That's pretty good. He wrote it. "I love you," and then when I was in high school, he would write, "Champ, did you know when I was in little league I was an all-star? We were champions. Did you know that when I was in high school football, we were state champs? Well, in my junior year in high school, we beat Odessa Permian. I told my boys that movie, Friday Night Lights, let me tell you something. Look up there. You ain't going to see 1970 on there, baby, because we whooped them that year."

I remember when the game was over, my dad and some other men came in, and they'd bring in these big old boxes of apples and oranges for us. He came walking in and he saw me. "Way to go, Champ. Way to go, Champ." He always called me Camp. Champ. Oh, there was a time in high school when I got a little cocky, and one of the men at the office said, "Floyd, is he a chip off the old block?" and my dad said, "He's just a splinter. He's just a splinter," and for a long time he'd call me Splinter and write notes, "Splinter." Splinter, but most all the time he called me Champ. He instilled in me, I think, to be a champion.

I'm going to tell you something. God wants to instill in you to be that champion and, dads, he wants you to champion your children and champion His calls, the calls of Christ. It means everything.

My dad, he's getting a little older now. My dad is at a stage in his life where his memory is not as good as it used to be, but you know what, I remember. I remember, and I'll always remember. I'm praying that when I'm in the third stage of the assisted care living center and I'm about out of it that God will give me the ability to remember my daddy and my mama, that I remember he said, "Champ. Champ."

I wrote a poem for my dad. I did one for mama, and I got to do one for my daddy. I want you to just hear me share it with you tonight, and I hope it blesses you as he's blessed me.

When daddy came home after a full day of printer's work, I'd run and jump into his arms and feel the jerk for he would lift me up and throw me into the air, and then he'd hold me close, and I could smell the ink on his shirt and even the Brylcreem in his hair, his Brylcreem, his little dapper-do. Like an oil slick is what it was. His comb was always gunky. My dad believed a man carried a knife, a comb and a handkerchief. Amen.

I said, "Daddy, you can't carry a knife on a plane." He said, "Well, I wouldn't fly a plane then," and his comb always had Brylcreem stuff in the teeth of the comb. Nasty. Nasty. Nasty. His handkerchief was nasty, too. Mama would wash it, but it'd still come out in a wad. I remember sometime we'd open up the handkerchief and a little of that cornflakes would fly out everywhere. Then he would hold me close with those working man's hands, and then he'd grab my face, staring into my eyes and call me Champ, and then to supper we would race.

My dad's wardrobe was a Dickies shirt and pants that matched, and mama kept them washed, ironed and patched. My dad was the best printer, paper cutter, typesetter in Texas for over 45 years. I can still see those hands, ink stained, rough and swollen, calloused and hard for he was not only a printer, he did moving and hauling and served in the Army National Guard. From private to the general's driver and then officer major was he, this young Swede from Maynard, Texas, served so honorably. For two decades, he served in the Army's 36th Infantry, the famous T-patch of Texas who gained fame in World War II. No wonder, my dad's favorite colors are red, white, and blue.

He wore the T-patch proudly by training, being ready, which used up his vacation time at Camp Mabry in Austin and Killeen and Fort Hood. Therefore, our family getaways were always short, maybe a trip to Galveston, but they were always so good. We loved Galveston, the most beautiful brown water you've ever seen in your life. We stayed at the S. S. Snort Hotel. Mom and daddy slept in one bed. My big sister Sherry Darlene and my little sister Teri would

sleep in the other bed. I always slept on an air mattress like the one you float in the water, a little air mattress, because I was a bed wetter. I'm telling you, those crash, those waves crashing in on the beach didn't help either.

I remember one night I'd started out over here and, when the next morning came, I'd floated all the way over yonder. I'm just giving my testimony. No drugs, no alcohol, but my dad never missed a ballgame, birthday or graduation date. His life was simple. His word was his bond and with that anyone could relate.

Today, you'll find him just the same. He'll be at the church on Sunday and Wednesday night, too. He's in charge of the tea at Wednesday night suppers. He's ready with a glass or if you need it, too. He's still teaching Sunday school after all these years, starts preparing on Monday for Sunday with those who have ears. He has ears to listen while in this world of strife. My dad's best friend, Jesus, the real teacher and giver of life. He's one of Jesus' greatest servants who's not licensed or ordained to preach, but with his own style and manner, my dad sure can teach. I know I sound prejudiced. He is my dad, but if I'm off, it's just a tad. You know why I feel this way. You understand. He's my dad. He's the only one that Darlene, Dennis and Teri ever had.

Well, now he's getting older, can't pitch softball like he used to do when they called him The Hurler back in '52. He used the old-fashioned windmill style of pitching when he faced his mound, and there was no mercy as he struck you out and left your head hanging toward the ground. He was the Big Swan who once had two no-hitters in one week for in his prime he was like the king in his court that no one could beat. He's been a great daddy to my sisters and me, but most of all, he's loved our mama like God meant it to be, and that's been such a blessing for, don't you see, dad and mom are a picture of the gospel for all eternity. Dad is like Jesus, the generous and gracious groom, and mom is like the church-like bride. Oh, what a perfume.

It's also clear now when I think of my daddy. You see, for now, it's my time to be the daddy for my family. I pray that my boys will forever see their papaw over and over now through me.

I love you, daddy. Your grateful son, the Big Swan and two Swanees, all hoping like me to become just like you one day, the big, big swan. I love you, daddy.

Thank you. Thank you very much. I think it's also appropriate to tell our Heavenly Father that we love Him, too, and that we appreciate Him and, men, it's okay to tell your Heavenly Father daddy that you love him because inside every man, every grown man is a little boy. Amen. We're all His children. We'll always be His children. My mom and dad still worry about me. They're still concerned about me. I'm I'm 50-plus, and they're still trying to tell me what to do. My dad, if I see him, I'll say, "Dad, you doing all right?" "Have you checked

the air in your tires? How much pressure you got in there?" "I have no idea." I said, "About 70 maybe." "Oh, God, nah."

Love your daddy. Call your daddy. Call on your Heavenly Father and know that your Heavenly Father thinks of you as a champion.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I enjoyed that. I hope you did, too. This is Dr. James Dobson again, and what a powerful concept to end today's Family Talk broadcast. We can certainly count on our Heavenly Father to be there for us when we need Him most. You've been listening to a two-day presentation featuring comedian and minister Dr. Dennis Swanberg. To find more information about Dr. Swanberg, his ministry and other resources, visit the broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org.

Thank you so much for listening today and for supporting this ministry. Your financial gifts sustain us in our effort to defend marriages, families and righteousness in the culture. To learn more about us, you can call 877-732-6825. God's blessings to you all.

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

Roger Marsh: I'm Roger Marsh with a quick announcement. Right now, during the month of June, we have a matching grant in place to help us here at the Dobson Institute. If you want to provide the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute with a financial gift, every dollar you give will be matched for twice the impact, imagine, twice as many parents reached, twice as many couples encouraged to practice their faith within their marriage. Just visit drjamesdobson.org to learn more, but don't wait, this grant will only last until we hit our goal of \$300,000. As always, we covet your prayers and we are blessed to be able to serve you.