



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Real Moms, Real Jesus – Part 1

Guest(s): Jill Savage

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson. 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: You're listening to Family Talk. Today is the National Day of Prayer. That's right. Today, Thursday, May 5th, faith leaders and everyday folk from all across the country are gathered in Washington, D.C., for the sole purpose of lifting up our nation to God. There are also local National Day of Prayer gatherings all across the country in churches, community centers, even outdoors in public parks and open spaces.

This year's theme is "Exalt the Lord Who Has Established Us." It's inspired by Colossians chapter 2, verses 6 and 7, which read, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness." By the way, did you know that our own Mrs. Shirley Dobson was the chair of the National Day of Prayer Task Force for 25 years? She stepped down in 2016 but truly loved her time working with NDP. Both Shirley and Dr. Dobson continue to have strong prayer lives as well.

Prayer is often an undervalued and underused tool in many churches all across our land, but in prayer, God, in His wisdom and power, has given us a vehicle to affect the world all around us. Now God is completely in control. He does not and cannot change, but we know from the Bible that the Lord hears our prayers. He listens to them and even acts on them. It seems unbelievable, but it's true. Since it is true, as believers, we must understand the power of our earnest prayers and what impact they have on the heart of God.

As Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 16 says, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Won't you join us in approaching God's throne tonight? We would love to invite you to view the live National Day of Prayer broadcast from Washington, D.C. It's a special livestream prayer event this evening, Thursday, May 5th at 8:00 PM Eastern Time. You can find the livestream on our website at drjamesdobson.org, or visit our Facebook page. Go to Facebook.com and search for "Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk."

Motherhood is a joy and a gift from God, but sometimes it's just overwhelming. The daily grind of packing lunches, shuttling kids to practice, and constantly trying to keep the house in order can be very taxing. Sometimes that tiresome routine gets interrupted by sickness or a change of plans, and that adds a whole new level of stress and frustration. These responsibilities as a parent don't take into account the need for moms to spend time with their husbands or to just have some time alone. Well, I hope the scenario I just described doesn't throw you into a whirlwind of anxiety. Here at Family Talk, we know how hard mom life can be. If you can relate to the overwhelmed feeling that sometimes comes with being a mom, I'm sure that today's program here on Family Talk will be an encouragement to you.

I'm Roger Marsh. I'm so glad that you've joined us. Today on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, Dr. Dobson will be talking with author, speaker, and coach, Jill Savage. Jill is a national speaker who is passionate about encouraging families. She's the author or co-author of 14 books, including *Professionalizing Motherhood*, *Living with Less So Your Family Has More*, and *Real Moms... Real Jesus*. In fact, that last title is the topic of today's conversation.

Previously, Jill served as the CEO of Hearts at Home, an organization that was created to provide resources to moms in all phases of motherhood. Jill and her husband, Mark, now pursue full-time ministry with an emphasis on marriage and helping people improve the quality of their lives as God intended. They have five grown children, eight grandchildren, and they make their home in Normal, Illinois. Here now is Jill Savage with Dr. James Dobson on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: We were talking in my office a few minutes ago. Jill, you're really kind of changing the context, though, with which you started there because the problems, and frustrations, and needs of full-time mothers are really the same that full-time working mothers have.

Jill Savage: Right. A mom is a mom is a mom. We all struggle with the same things.

Dr. James Dobson: You now have about 50/50 in terms of the women that you're working with.

Jill Savage: Right, right. We're looking at every mom.

Dr. James Dobson: Describe Hearts at Home ministries. How did you happen to start it? What's going on there?

Jill Savage: Well, Hearts at Home actually started out of my own need as a mom. I thought back to teacher conferences I used to go to as I was finishing up my degree. I attended them. I always came back with new ideas, fresh ideas for the classroom, new vision. I got into mothering several years, and I thought, "Okay, I need that. Where's the mom conference?" I couldn't find anything. We had a mom's group that was in our community. It had grown quite large. It started in my living room with eight women. We had

over 100 that were meeting at that point in time, not in my living room anymore. By that time, we moved to the church building. We said, "Let's do a conference for moms."

Our church supported it. Our plan was maybe 400 moms. We thought there's 100 of us, 400 moms. It was very grassroots. I mean, we literally xeroxed things on the xerox machine, folded the brochures ourselves. The day of the conference rolled around. We had 1,100 moms from 10 states.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that incredible? Well, that speaks to the need.

Jill Savage: It speaks to the need. We were overwhelmed. Honestly, I realized, "Okay, Lord. Your vision for this is way bigger than mine." At that point, we actually moved that conference the next year to a college campus. We had 2,800 moms, and the next year, 3,400, and the next year, 4,500. It just continued to grow. Now we do conferences in several states. We also do some conferences in Europe every year for moms over there.

Not only that, but we're more than conferences. We have an extensive website. We have a very active blog. We're on Facebook and Twitter. Hearts at Home is the go-to place for moms, so a place that moms can go to find the encouragement, the education, and to be equipped to be the best mom they can be.

Dr. James Dobson: Now you have written this book, *Real Moms...Real Jesus*. Again, I said that I haven't seen the connection. Of course, there's a connection between Jesus and moms, but to think in terms of household and mothering duties in the context of Jesus having experienced that, go to the heart of that. Explain how you get from here to here.

Jill Savage: Well, again, *Real Moms... Real Jesus* actually came out of my own personal journey, my own spiritual journey. I was feeling like God was very far away. We know when we feel that way, it's not Him that's moved. I'd really been praying about what is it that I could do to jumpstart my spiritual life again, when you just need that fresh sense of God's spirit. I love to read biographies. I am a big biography person. I thought, "I have never read the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as if they were a biography of Jesus." I never read it that way. I never thought of it that way.

I decided I was just going to read about the life of Christ in a completely different way. I chose to actually read it in the Message version of the Bible because it read more like a biography. I was just looking for kind of a fresh sense to it. As I was doing that, all of a sudden, I realized, we know that when Jesus lived on this earth, He was fully God, and He was fully man. Well, I got the fully God part. I mean, I had focused on the miracles, certainly, His resurrection. All of that was the fully God part, but I'd never seen the fully man part, the human experience.

I was reading. I remember the very first thing that I ran across was a simple statement about Jesus. It said this, "Large crowds followed Him everywhere He went." I thought, "That's my life as a mother." Large crowds of little people follow me everywhere. I never, ever had thought about the fact that Jesus would understand what that feels like, to have people following you all the time, needing things from you all the time. All of a sudden, I thought, "Oh my goodness. He knows what that feels like."

I read a little bit further, and I ran across the statement that is said several times in the Bible. It said, "The crowd pressed into him." I thought, "Oh my goodness. That is my experience. My children think I'm a human jungle gym." Our children are always tugging at us and holding onto us. I remember when Erica was a baby. She's number three, and she was very colicky. I felt like I was nursing this child because it was the only way she would be quiet. I was nursing her all the time. I had these two little preschoolers, one attached to one leg, one attached to the other. Talk about the crowd pressing into you, no personal space.

Then I'd get everybody in bed at night. I'd fall in bed next to a husband who had a gleam in his eye. I really was like, "Can I not have any personal space?" Well, I was reading in the biographies of Jesus, and I went, "The crowd pressed into Him. He knows what that feels like, to have no personal space."

Dr. James Dobson: This book, *Real Moms... Real Jesus*, is very practical in the kinds of things that you discuss here. I think every mom out there, whether she's employed full-time or she's at home full-time, is going to identify with the particular emotions and frustrations that are there. The first one is what you had been talking about here. That has to do with the fact that a mother often feels like she's never alone. She is never just sitting down and being herself.

Jill Savage: I know.

Dr. James Dobson: Because there is responsibility there. Describe that.

Jill Savage: It's constant. I remember one particular morning, I woke up really early, and that's not me. I'm not an early morning person. I woke up really early. I couldn't go back to sleep. My youngest was about three at the time. I thought, "Oh, I'm going to get up. It's quiet in the house. If I could get downstairs, I could be alone for 45 minutes before everybody rouse for the day."

We live in a 100-year-old farmhouse. This is how desperate I was because when you live in a 100-year-old farmhouse, you walk down the hallway and everything creaks. I have learned as a desperate mother that if you walk with your legs up against the side of the wall, like you're walking on two tightropes, you can actually get down the hallway without making a noise.

That's how I did that morning. I walked down. I was desperate for quiet. I got downstairs, and I made myself a cup of tea. I grabbed my Bible, and I sat in my overstuffed chair. I just, "Oh, thank you, Lord, so much. I just need this quiet." I

had probably been there two minutes, and I heard the footy pajamas coming across the kitchen floor. My three-year-old popped his head around. Now every morning, he and I snuggled in that chair. He popped his head around. He said, "Mommy, were you waiting for me?"

Dr. James Dobson: He couldn't believe that you would ever do anything that didn't involve him.

Jill Savage: Exactly. He was just sure that's why I was up so early, that I was waiting for him. It is nonstop. Even-

Dr. James Dobson: I'll bet you didn't send him away either, did you?

Jill Savage: You know what? I didn't. I will admit, I was frustrated, initially. I really was because, oh, can I just not have a few minutes to myself? Then I caught myself, and I thought, "You know what?" Here I was with my Bible and my notebook. I thought, "Well, I'd rather he see me sitting here having a conversation with God." I just pulled him up on my lap and said, "You know what? Mommy's talking to Jesus. If you want to sit here and talk to Jesus right along with me, that would be just fine." Sometimes it's constant interruptions. In fact, again, when you read through the Bible, you see how often Jesus was interrupted.

You know what is interesting is the other thing that I did with *Real Moms... Real Jesus* is I looked at how Jesus understands our human experience and so that we have an understanding that He gets us. He understands the challenges we face. I also looked at His character. What are some things that I can learn about the way He lived His life that will help me to be a better mom?

One of those things is Jesus knew how to set boundaries. He knew how to rest. He did do that. He took time to step away from ministry life. It often says that He got up early, and He pulled away from the crowd. I think we have to look at that and we have to say, if he needed to do that, we certainly need to do that. He set that example. Even as mothers, we need to learn how to do that. Not always easy. I had to learn. I remember when Austin, our youngest, was a baby. I had four at this time. We later adopted number five. I had four at this time. I got to the end of one particular day. My husband walked in the door. I looked at him, and I said, "I want to cut a deal with you." I just must have had that wild look in my eyes, like I need a break.

He said, "What?" I said, "I want, every day, when you get home, can the kids have daddy wrestle time with you for 30 minutes?" I go to the bedroom, shut the door. I wanted to read the newspaper, and I wanted to take my Bible. I just wanted to have a little bit of refueling before we went into dinner, and bedtime, and the evening. I'll tell you what. It was transforming for me. It really was. What I had to learn in that situation, sometimes when we have to set boundaries, we have to ask for help to do that. I had to ask my husband for that time. We can take it ourselves.

I learned, even after my kids outgrew their naps, it was still valuable for them to have rest time for me, probably even more for them. I think it was valuable for them to have time apart from their siblings and certainly to take some time to rest themselves. I needed that. That was a boundary I also needed to set.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, now this is very closely linked to your second point that you address in your book called "High Demands." I'm going to read what you wrote there because I really like this. Now you're giving examples of the demands that are on a busy mother.

"Mom, can you wash my cross-country shirt? I have a meet tonight. Mom, can we go shopping today for a new pair of jeans? I've outgrown all the ones in my closet. Mom, I need you to help me look through the catalog for classes for the fall semester. I have to register online by tomorrow. Mom, can you pick up the silk flowers for my bridesmaids' bouquets today?" As I understand it, every one of those questions was posed to you by one of your five children at one time or another.

Jill Savage: Within a 30-minute period.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, how do you deal with that? What would Jesus do about it?

Jill Savage: Well, and that's another way that Jesus understands because everywhere Jesus went, people were calling Him. "Jesus, will you heal my daughter? Jesus, will you turn the water into wine? Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." That's what it feels like as a mom. Mom, will you do this? Mom, will you do that? I mean, there are days that you want to go, "Mom has left the building. We do not know where she is." It really is. I think, as moms, it's important for us to understand the shortness of this season of life. Motherhood is one of those jobs that you can't go back and do over again.

Even though there are days, and particularly seasons, where the demands are high, and sometimes it feels like one day is a thousand years, the reality is it will go by faster than what you realize. If we can keep that perspective, and that seems so far off, I think, to most moms who are in the middle of diapers and dishes, but the reality is it's really right around the corner. It goes by faster than what we realize.

Dr. James Dobson: One illustration from the Scripture that really relates to what you're saying is when Jesus was healing people and the word got around, who knows what diseases these people had, all of them probably, cancer, tuberculosis. They didn't know what to call them in those days, but you know those diseases were there.

On one occasion, He must have been exhausted because He walked down to the seashore. They had been waiting for Him. They were all there, and everybody had a need. He walked past them, waded out in the water, and got in a boat, and rode away. This is Jesus, the compassionate Lord who rode away from all

these needy people. Some of them may have been dying, but He had reached the end of His strength. He needed to pray and be alone with the Lord. At that time, He just could not deal with it anymore.

Jill Savage: That is where He was a boundary setter. He went to bed, and not all the needs were met. When you think about that, when He went to bed at night, not all the people were healed.

Dr. James Dobson: Now it's a little more difficult when you have little children because there's no place else for you to send them at that moment.

Jill Savage: But there are places that we can let some things go. I mean, there are times where I have to go to bed at night, and the kitchen counter isn't cleaned off like I want it to be. The toys are not all put away. I have to learn to let those things go because if not, we will exhaust ourselves with all of those needs around us. I do believe, as we look at Jesus's life, He modeled how to know when you're at the end of yourself and to take care of yourself, how to exhibit some self-care. We really have to learn how to say no because sometimes there are a lot of very good things to be involved in and to have the opportunity to do, but they're not always the best. Sometimes we have to choose between good and best.

One of the things I encourage stay-at-home moms is to realize you're going to get asked to do a lot of things because there's a perception you're more available. Only you can decide what's best for your family. Learn that you don't have to say no on the spot. In fact, that is a strategy I teach moms. Don't ever say no on the spot. Give them 24 hours and say, "I will let you know about that tomorrow," because it lets you pull away and really evaluate. Is this a good opportunity for me? Is this a good opportunity for my family? If I say yes to this, am I actually saying no to my marriage in some way? Am I saying no to my children in some way?

It helps you to think through that. I do think it helps when moms can recognize the value of thinking of life in seasons because it really does. It frees you up to be fully in the season. The other thing that we as moms tend to do is we tend to wish away the season we are in. When they're little and they're in our arms, oh, I can't wait until they sleep through the night. Then it's, oh, I can't wait until they walk. Then, oh, I can't wait until they go to school.

Dr. James Dobson: I just hate to stop, but we're going to pick up right here next time. The title of the book is *Real Moms...Real Jesus*. There's the connection, moms and Jesus. We've been talking about the very practical stuff of never having time alone as a mother and the high demands that are made. There are other issues like that, points of frustration, that we will discuss next time. I want to begin by talking a little bit about fathers and their role in all this. I hope some of them are listening to us today and will be next time because they can really help to make things easier. Jill Savage is our guest. She has written this book. Jill, you have a passion for mothers, don't you?

Jill Savage: I really do.

Dr. James Dobson: That's what you've dedicated your life to.

Jill Savage: I really have. I love to encourage them, a lot of times, out of my own mistakes, out of my own journey, because I honestly think most moms struggle with the same things.

Dr. James Dobson: You still have two at home.

Jill Savage: I do. I have a 14 and a 17-year-old still at home.

Dr. James Dobson: Three are married and gone. Are you starting to have a little lump in your throat about what's going to happen when they're all gone?

Jill Savage: You know what I've learned, though? They still need you even after they're married and gone. I've learned that it's a whole new season of mothering. It's unique, but I'm enjoying these last few years with my boys that are still at home.

Dr. James Dobson: We're going to talk about that next time too. Thanks for being with us.

Jill Savage: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: We'll talk to you tomorrow.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Family Talk. That was our host, Dr. James Dobson, and a special guest, Jill Savage, in the first half of their conversation discussing Jill's book called *Real Moms... Real Jesus*. Since this interview was recorded, Jill Savage and her husband, Mark, have become empty-nesters. They now work together in full-time ministry, focusing on marriage and helping people improve their quality of life as God intended. If you'd like to learn more about Jill Savage, her ministry, or her many books, visit drjamesdobson.org and click on the "broadcasts" tab. That's drjamesdobson.org and then click "broadcasts".

By the way, Jill's most recent book is called *Empty Next, Full Life*. If you or someone you love is having a hard time getting accustomed to the empty-nest season of life, I'm sure this book will be a blessing to you. Again, you can find all that information by giving us a call at (877) 732-6825 or visit drjamesdobson.org and click on the "broadcasts" tab. While you're there, you can also find other great parenting resources that we have on our website. Just search the word "parenting" in the search bar when you go to drjamesdobson.org.

Well, that's all the time we have for today. Remember to please join us on our Facebook page or on our website later this evening, May 5th, at 8:00 PM Eastern Time to watch the official National Day of Prayer telecast. It's going to be a special and powerful event that you won't want to miss. Just go to

Facebook.com and search for “Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk,” or you can also watch by going to our website at drjamesdobson.org. Be sure to listen again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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