



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Children: A Heritage from the Lord

**Guest(s):** Dr. Michael Youssef

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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:** Psalm 127:3 reads, "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him." Our guest today is going to be analyzing this verse and the rest of that psalm on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Hi. I'm Roger Marsh, and Family Talk is the listener-supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. On today's edition of Family Talk, we'll be featuring Dr. Dobson's good friend and the founding pastor of The Church of The Apostles in Atlanta, Georgia, Dr. Michael Youssef. Dr. Youssef was born in Egypt and lived in Lebanon and Australia before coming to the United States and fulfilling a childhood dream of becoming an American citizen. He founded The Church of The Apostles in 1987.

The church has since acted as a launching pad for *Leading the Way's* international TV and radio ministry. *Leading The Way's* programs can be watched and heard in 26 different languages, and they reach audiences across six continents all over the world. Dr. Youssef is the author of more than 50 books. He and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Atlanta, Georgia, and have four grown children and 10 grandchildren. On today's edition of Family Talk, Dr. Michael Youssef will exhort parents to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. He'll also emphasize the importance of teaching your kids to know and obey the Word of God by knowing and obeying the Word of God yourself. Let's listen to Dr. Youssef's powerful presentation right now.

**Dr. Michael Youssef:** There's a period of time, you're going to find, I'm not going to tell you if you don't know, and if you do know, then you keep it a secret. There's a period of time in the lives of every child I know, the parents ask the question, "Children are heritage of the Lord?" And then they get over it, and then you say, "Yes, they are." But I've got to tell you something that is firsthand experience. The children are going through the same thing. They're not very happy about their heritage either.

Now, many times, of course, Christians are prone to taking a verse out of the scripture and they take it out of context, and while it may be sounding great and you learn things from it, but you miss out on the great blessings in putting the text back in its context. And Psalm 127:3 is really a good example of this, because before the psalmist could ever say that the children are the heritage of the Lord, a heritage from the Lord, he had to lay first the foundation for that statement.

He could never have made that statement until he had said, in verses one and two, that unless God builds the house, unless God builds the family, it is in vain the builders will work. In other words, he's saying, "Before you can say that the children are a heritage from the Lord, you must be able to say that unless the Lord builds the family, builds the house, the builders labor in vain."

Psalm 127 is one of very few psalms that Solomon wrote, the son of King David. In fact, there are only two psalms that are attributed to King Solomon, Psalm 127 and Psalm 72. This psalm is one of them, one of two that only attributed to King Solomon. But I want to tell you at the outset, listen carefully, this psalm is an indictment and a rebuke to our segmented lifestyle. This psalm is a condemnation for our divided allegiances and a lack of integration in our lives.

What Solomon is saying in this psalm is this, that if you leave God out of your life and out of your family's life, it is useless that you would work hard in order to provide for your family. If you leave God out of your life and out of your family's life, all the trinkets in the world will mean nothing. If you leave God out of your life and out of your family's life, all the goodies that you are able to give them will mean nothing. If you leave God out of your family's daily devotion and commitment, all the money in the world would only ruin them instead of helping them. If you leave God out of the center, being the center of your family, your family's devotion and your family's commitment, the inheritance that you leave them will turn out to be a curse and not a blessing.

You see, the Bible is absolutely clear from beginning to end that the family is the basic unit of society, that the family is the most important element in society, that the family is the backbone of society. Weaken the family and sooner or later, you're going to weaken society. Destroy the family and sooner or later, you will destroy society. The basic family unit, unless God is at the very center of their lives, they are unsafe. They are unsecured.

What I want to do is look at this psalm again, under four headings. I just want to give you four points so you remember about this psalm, Psalm 127, and the points are these. When God is at the center of the family, God grows the family. Secondly, God blesses the family. Thirdly, God guides the family. Fourthly, God protects the family.

God grows the family. Look at verse one. Here's what Solomon is saying, that when God builds the house, that means when God is at the center of the home, when God is at the center of the family, the family lives in the house, the

members of the household, will grow in maturity. When God's wisdom that comes through the Word of God fills the house, maturity will be the insignia that is imprinted on the minds of all the members of the household of that family. When God's presence fills the house, permeates the family, peace will fill the minds of the members of that family's household. When God is sought in every decision that is made in the family, God's grace is going to graze the hearts and the minds and the spirit and the soul of the members of the household. You see, the family is God's idea. It's God's idea. You see, God is the one who said to Adam and Eve, "Go and multiply and be fruitful and subdue the earth."

You know, only my family would understand what I'm going to tell you, but I'm going to share it with you anyway. As a father who had made his fair share of mistakes, and I sure have, and I'm not just saying that to be humble or sound nice, but I'm telling you the truth. They know that. We talk about these things in my family. I can honestly tell you, I can honestly tell you that it would have been impossible, without the power of God and the grace of God and the goodness of God and being on our knees every single day on behalf of our family, it would be impossible for us without complete reliance on the Lord to bring up our family in the fear and nurture of the Lord. When God is at the center, not only does he grow the family, but secondly, when God is at the center, he blesses the family.

In the United States of America, families are disintegrating. Children are neglected. Many parents are raising up their children out of guilt, not love. They give them everything in the world except the most important thing of all, time. A well-known Christian leader told me once, he said before he became a Christian, he felt that his children, his family, were nuisance. They would just get in the way, and he couldn't wait to plan his business trips to get out of town. But listen to me, the sad thing is this, there are Christians who feel that way about their families. In fact, it was the Duke of Windsor who once quoted to have said, "The thing that impressed me the most about America is the way parents obey their children." They haven't fared much better themselves, but that's okay.

And yet Solomon is saying to us today, "The children who are blessed, children who are the blessing from the Lord, only," listen to that word, "only when they are brought up to know the Lord," only when they are brought up to love the Lord. Only when they are brought up to honor their father and their mother, only when they are brought up to respect their elders, only when they are brought up to know and obey the Word of God. God blesses such a family, because God grows the family and God blesses the family.

Thirdly, God guides the family. I don't want to bore you with some of the most incredibly alarming statistics that I just read last week, as I'm preparing for this. It's mind boggling for me, the statistics, the number of children who actually get their guidance from television than from their parents in this country. It can easily depress you, but listen carefully. The children who see their parents go to the Lord for guidance are growing up going to the Lord for guidance. The children who observe their parents regularly and systematically studying the Word of God for directions in their lives, they're going to grow up studying the

Word of God for directions in their lives. Listen carefully, please. More than anything else, more than any other item, this one is caught and not taught. All the preaching in the world, it ain't going to help them. They're watching mom and dad.

There are some people in the church of Jesus Christ, unfortunately, who, when they're in trouble and they need a word from the Lord, they take their Bible and they close their eyes, and they open it and they say, "Well, you know, whatever verse my eyes fall on, that's the verse for the day." Have you heard of people doing that? Sort of like a luck or charm.

But I'll tell you, I heard about a man who used to do this. Well, one day he was doing this. He closed his eyes, opened the Bible, and the first thing his eyes fell upon were the words as follows from the scripture, "Judas went out and hung himself." Well, he realized this is not what he's looking for, and so he closed the Bible again and he said, "Well, I really wanted ... I'm going to try something else." So, he kind of closed his eyes and opened the Bible one more time, and there, his eyes fell on the verse that says, "Go and do likewise." Well, he still wasn't convinced, obviously, and he said, "That's just not right." He said, "I got to try it again." So he closed the Bible, closed his eyes, opened the Bible again, and sure enough, the words said, "What you're doing, do it quickly."

One of the things the Lord teaches parents about his parenting us is the way when we have children. I'm telling you, there's nothing like it. You begin to really appreciate the Lord. You appreciate how patient he is. You appreciate how loving he is. You appreciate how forgiving he is. I mean, you got to have a huge backyard in order to bury all the faults of your children, and they bury yours too. But the way to model our Lord in the way he parents us, to me, it's the most common sense, the simplest and easiest way. You can read all of the books and all the principles and all the one, two, threes, and the formulas. God bless you. Read them all, but I'm going to tell you, just watch how the Lord parents, you, as a believer. You model Him with your children, and it's the simplest way I have discovered.

How does the Lord parent us? Well, in Genesis 28:15, God said, "I am with you." And I could spend a sermon on each one of those. In Isaiah 51:12, the Lord said, "I will be with you." In Deuteronomy 20:4, God said, "I will give you victory." In Psalm 149:4, God said, "I am pleased with you." Lift them up. Don't tear them down. And 1 John 3:1, God said, "I love you." In Jeremiah 31:34, God said, "I will forgive you." And in Psalm 34:15, God said, "I will listen to you." How many of us listen to our children?

You understand the marvelous way in which God parents us. You model that to your children, and I guarantee you, they will grow up to love the Lord. Oh, they might wander off. That's not the issue, but they will grow up to love the Lord. When you know God and His ways, then your children are going to grow up to know God and His ways, because they are modeling you, mom. They are

modeling you, dad. They are modeling their parents. God grows the family. God blesses the family. God guides the family.

Finally, God protects the family. Probably, now I'm careful here because I can't defend this historically, but I would say probably our children are as unsafe today as any time in modern history. We have guns and violence in the schools. We have drunk drivers on the roads. We have mind-altering drugs on the streets. We have unscrupulous predators on the internet. We have immoral teachers in the classrooms. Everywhere you turn, it seems, there is danger and insecurity. No wonder the psalmist said "unless God." Look at his words, verse two, "unless God guards the city," unless God is the protector of our families, unless God is the defender of our families, unless God is the shelter of our families, it is in vain for policemen to work.

My heart often goes out and literally I weep when I see a policeman killed in the line of duty. I thank God for these brave men and women, but I want to tell you, we have a greater, greater, greater guard, and his name is Jesus. And the scripture said that He sends His angels to minister to those who fear Him. The psalmist said, "It's in vain for the guards to guard the city unless God himself guards it." Is that danger that our children in brand new, it's just for our generation? No, not at all. Danger was, is, and always will be. It'll ... always going to be with us.

Each generation faces a different form of danger. Each generation faces different degrees of intensity of danger, but danger will always be with us as long as we live in this world. And that is why nearly 3,000 years ago, Solomon could say, "Unless God guards the families, watchmen guard in vain." Whatever danger we may live in, whatever insecurity there may be, whatever threatens us, those who have placed God at the very center of their families will be guarded by the Lord. You have His word on it. Those who place God at the very center of their families will be sheltered by His shadow. Those who place God at the very center of their families, they will be covered under His wings. Those who place God at the very center of their families are engraved on the palms of His hands.

I read recently about those who spent their life studying chicken. There are people actually who do that. And I want to tell you, I gained an insight from the scripture that I never understood for a long time. Those who study the way a mother hen looks after her chicks have said something like this. They said that hen, when she sees a hawk circling overhead, she instinctively gives a warning sound, and immediately the baby chicks come running to hide beneath her wings. They said that whenever there is a menacing storm clouds filling the sky with rolling thunders and jagged lightning, she quickly makes a noise, a certain noise that beckons her brood to herself, where they find protection from the element. And the nighttime, as nighttime approaches us, as the shadow lengthens, she gives a quiet call that gathered her young to rest.

I think I gained an insight from the time the Lord Jesus Christ got on that Mount of Olive and looked down on Jerusalem, that city that was filled of rebellious population who've rejected him and rejected his lordship and rejected his authority and rejected his protection. And he cried when he said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I wanted to gather you as a hen gathers her chickens, but you would not. You would not."

Beloved friends, I want to tell you, God longs to gather families under His wing and under His protection. I believe the Lord longs to see family altars, all over the country, all over the city. But the question is, do we, as parents, place Him at the center? Because when God is at the center of the family, God grows the family, God blesses the family, God guides the family, and God protects the family.

The most probably unfathomable thing about our Lord is His grace. He's so loving and so generous, and because of that grace, I can say, it is never too late. It is never too late. Only the devil and the flesh will tell you, "Ah, it's too late for you." It is never too late with God. I don't care where you are and what you've done, it's never too late with Him. He longs to gather you under His wings. Children have grown and left home? Well, get on your knees, because the wings of the Lord are not geographical. They can reach where no man can. It is never too late. God wants His families to be under His wings, but that will mean He has to be at the center.

Father, what a delight it is that we can call you Father, the most precious word in the scripture, Abba. We are so thankful that you are a welcoming Abba. You receive us with love and with joy, scripture said "even with singing." You rejoice over us. And when we turn to you, you don't condemn us, you just forgive us. And you're in us, and you strengthen us, oh God, that we may know what it is to leave a legacy and a heritage. Teach us today for the sake of Jesus, and for the sake of His glory, hear our prayers. Amen.

Roger Marsh:

Amen. What a great message from Dr. Michael Youssef today here on Family Talk. Mom and dad, make it your goal to be the source of encouragement, a safe resting place, and a listening ear for your children, no matter what age or phase of life they are currently walking through.

Now, if you'd like some more tips or advice on how to be a godly parent, visit our website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). We have a great library of resources available for you there. Or you can always give us a call. We're here for you 24/7 to answer your questions, send resources, or pray with you. Our number is (877)-732-6825. That's (877)-732-6825. Now, to learn more about Dr. Michael Youssef, *Leading The Way*, and The Church of The Apostles in Atlanta, visit our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). And before we leave the air for the day, Dr. Dobson has something special to share just with you. Doctor?

Dr. James Dobson:

Hello, everyone. I'm James Dobson. Before we end this program, I wanted to remind you that right now is a great time to partner with us at James Dobson

Family Institute. Every dollar you give will be doubled thanks to a very generous matching grant. This match will stay in place until we've hit our target. I hope you will stand with us in our fight for marriages and families. If you are able to support us, know that any amount that you give will have a major impact on the people that we're able to reach. Learn how you can partner with us and participate by going to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) or call (877)-732-6825. That's (877)-732-6825.

Roger Marsh:

Now you can also send your tax deductible donation to our ministry mailing address. Are you ready for it? It's The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, PO Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949. We are so grateful for your support and your gift of any amount.

Well, that's all the time we have for today. Be sure to join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for listening.

Announcer:

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