



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: John Bornschein: The Legacy of a Life Saved from Abortion

Guest(s): John Bornschein

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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.

Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. As you may know, Dr. Dobson has been a strong advocate for life for decades. Every person has been designed by our creator and God sees each one of us as a precious creation. In fact, the words of Psalm 1:39 ring particularly true, "For you have created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful.

I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth." These words of David ring true for all stages of life, including the pre-born. On today's classic edition of Family Talk, Dr. Dobson sits down with Pastor John Bornschein to discuss John's powerful pro-life testimony and his devotion to the fight for life. Well, there's a lot of conversation to get into. So here now is Dr. James Dobson to further introduce his guest on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: We have a guest here today who has been working with Shirley and me for what, John? 20 years.

John Bornschein: Mm-hmm.

Dr. James Dobson: Several years ago you started a church near here in Colorado Springs out by Fort Carson.

John Bornschein: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And tell me about your church?

John Bornschein: Oh, well, how many broadcasts do we have?

Dr. James Dobson: Plenty.

John Bornschein: I love talking about our church. It's one of those where you just say, "Okay, God is pushing and he's getting us out of our comfort zones." And for my wife and I, that's what he did. We were very comfortable in our service and work with the ministries that God has put under your charge and your amazing wife's charge with the National Day of Prayer.

And I've had the privilege of serving her for 12 years. And the need for prayer in America is great. If it's ever a day when we need prayer, it's today. And yet at the same time, God was burdening us to get behind the pulpit, get into that place of shepherding, of being with people. I think the greatest burden I was starting to see is prayerlessness.

And instead of talking at pastors, I wanted to talk with them. I wanted to come alongside them and understand their burdens, praying with people, mobilizing prayer right here in Colorado Springs. And so God gave us a family of military people, people who are serving our country day in and day out and it has been growing every year. So it's Calvary Fellowship, Fountain Valley, and we are just excited to be serving there.

Dr. James Dobson: Now John, we're going to do something very unusual today. You have had a family history that will touch the hearts of our people. I know where you came from and I know some of the circumstances, particularly in the lives of your mother who was very young at the time.

And you have written your story and you have a copy of it in front of you. I could interview you about it, but I would like you to just read what you have written because it is really very remarkably stated. And let's start with you reading that. We don't often read things on the broadcast, but I would love for you to do that today and then we'll talk about it.

John Bornschein: Well, thank you. I will do my best not to choke up. Every time I read this, it's very personal for me.

Dr. James Dobson: And you started at the top, there's a line at the top of this statement. It's almost a letter and it says, "I am alive because of prayer."

John Bornschein: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell us about it.

John Bornschein: Well, let me read this and I pray that these words touch someone today as you're listening to this. This is my story. It's very real, very personal. Let me take you back to 1973. During that year, gasoline was 40 cents a gallon. The Sears Tower opened in Chicago, the US withdrew its troops from Vietnam. Skylab had launched into space and Nixon declared, "I am not a crook" during the Watergate hearings. Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs during the Battle of the Sexes tennis match.

And the Supreme Court rendered a decision on January 22nd making abortion a US constitutional right. It was also during this year that the course of my life was dramatically altered before I had ever taken my first breath. You see, it was 1973 that my mother, only a teenager at the time fled for her life. She was running away from the sexual abuse she had endured at the hands of her stepfather. Living in perpetual fear, her only recourse was to run.

She made her way to California where she found a group of other troubled teens. The leader of the pack was a smart but wayward mechanic who was also a drug runner. Trouble is a magnet for the lost, an oasis to the broken. The group welcomed my mother and she followed her angry heart into their open arms. The phrase, "Troubled youth" does not adequately describe the rebellious outcry that became her defense against vulnerability.

In her mind, she would never again be the victim. Yet in the midst of bad choices and a lifestyle that was sure to lead her to prison, she became pregnant. This seems to have been the inevitable outcome of this environment of "Free love" with an endless supply of drugs and alcohol. So like so many others in her position, she made the only choice that seemed right. After all, how could she possibly raise a child when she couldn't feed herself and had little desire to be alive?

The man responsible encouraged her to abort the baby, and she did. The effects to her body were harmful. She bled horribly and the scar tissue was severe. Suddenly aware of the brutal reality that she had just become victim of her own choices, she cried out to God for help. A God she didn't know and resented. But this experience didn't stop her from returning to the lifestyle she knew. It wasn't long before she became pregnant again.

Despite the scar tissue, shocked and disbelieving, she again determined to end this life interruption. But as she contemplated an exasperation, the God she had cried out to answered her. At that moment, she knew she had to take a stand. God had intervened. My mother made the decision for life and chose to carry her baby to term.

And doctor, if I may just intervene, I think this was one of my original letters I wrote. I want to just make sure that the audience understands that you were a critical piece to that. And I shared that with you in a separate letter that as I was writing these words, my mother and I, we didn't have an open conversation really about this. And it didn't come out till later where she finally unveiled to me that God had used you. She heard your voice on the radio. She had heard others speaking into her life and it was a Holy Spirit moment and I-

Dr. James Dobson: Was talking about abortion?

John Bornschein: You were. I think 1975, 76, right in that area, you were a voice for the unborn. And to this day when she found out that I was going to be working with you, she

had never told me up until a decade into my tenure at Focus on the Family that you had done this. She was so embarrassed. She was so wounded by her own past that we didn't even talk about these things. And she said, "It was Dr. Dobson's voice on the radio that was one of those Holy Spirit moments that turned me around that day."

Dr. James Dobson: So that influenced her. Hearing that broadcast influenced her.

John Borschein: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: To not have the abortion.

John Borschein: That's right. That's right. God used that. That was one of the many voices she heard. And she didn't listen to Christian radio. She wasn't a believer. She was coming from an extremely broken home. And I'll elaborate on that a little more here with this letter, but I just want you to know that it was because of your faithfulness to stand in the gap. She just remembered your young, passionate voice and defending life. And I think it was later where you said, you wouldn't cast a vote for anyone who would dare take the life of the unborn. And she just remembers that passion. So I really am here today because you stood in the gap.

Dr. James Dobson: John, I give the Lord the credit for that because I ached over what was happening. That was two years into the *Roe v. Wade* decision and era. And my pastor was not talking about it. Other Christians, at least in the Protestant realm didn't seem to understand it, didn't seem to care. It never came up. And I had many Christian friends saying, "Why you get all excited about this? This is the law of the land.

This is what the constitution says." And I began railing on behalf of the unborn child. And it was a message that was placed in my heart by my heavenly Father and by frankly, my earthly father who had a big impact. But for you to be one of those that says, "This baby was saved because of that work," I am very, very grateful for that. And I don't take the credit for it. Go on with the letter.

John Borschein: Okay. But this experience didn't stop her from returning to the lifestyle she knew. It wasn't long before she became pregnant again, despite the scar tissue. Shocked and disbelieving, she became determined to end this life interruption. But she contemplated in exasperation. The God she had cried out to, answered her. At that moment, she knew she had to take a stand. God had intervened.

My mother made the decision for life and chose to carry her baby to term. But here's the cold reality, there wasn't a red carpet awaiting her when she returned home that night. There were no flowers in a thoughtfully positioned vase. There was only the reality that she was about to become a young mom. She still had no idea how she was going to make it through tomorrow, let alone the next day or the day after that. She had no support and no plan.

But that wasn't a problem for the God who had just touched her heart. He was about to make a way in the wilderness. And I praise God for the pregnancy centers across America that are doing this service for women every single day. They aren't just engaged in the business of saving babies, they're engaged in the business of saving lives by reaching out to the moms and dads that society has turned its back against. They are God's hands in action, giving medicine to the broken-hearted and hope to the hopeless.

That's only the beginning of her story. There were still more turns and twists to come, but God was present in each part of her journey. My mother decided it was time to move forward with her life. She moved, took a new job and tried to create an environment suitable for her new son. She knew the best place for her son was at a church and there just happened to be a small but growing church down the road from her new home, Teri Road Baptist Church.

She contacted the church, acquired the van schedule, and prepared to send me off to Sunday school the next weekend. As much as she wanted to, she felt that she couldn't take those first steps into church herself. She was too ashamed of her past. She was scared she would be judged, confronted, but she didn't want those fears to hold back her son. Her strength and firm resolve against vulnerability would serve her well to push through those tough decisions.

So my mother did one of the bravest things I can remember. She walked me right through the front doors of that little church. And you know what? Not one person put their finger to her chest, judged her for her previous life. No, the body of Christ acted like the body of Christ, welcoming her with open arms. Now I have fond memories of Sunday school, friends, fun and stories of hope and redemption.

I took home all of my art projects, those illustrated stories of Noah, Moses, and Jesus. My mom would take those projects into her hand, smile, pull me in with a warm embrace. She would then put magnets to all four corners and proudly display them on the refrigerator. Little did I know that each weekend those stories were opening her heart to God more and more. At just eight years old, I was an evangelist. As a result, my mother started attending regularly, gave her heart to Jesus Christ.

And I accepted Christ right there with her. Eventually she became the church secretary, planned the youth programs and even went to work for Dr. Charles Stanley in Atlanta, Georgia. What a turnaround. Sure, she made some mistakes, but God had a greater plan for her life and she took the baton and ran with it.

Dr. James Dobson: The essence of it is that your mother was totally, completely lost. Like you said, she had no plan. She had no future. There was no one to take care of her. And yet she heard a message of love and accepted a relationship with Christ and he began to work in her life and also in yours.

John Bornschein: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Now John, we need to know the rest of the story. This explanation that you wrote and that we just heard you read goes back to the year 2000. But the truth of the matter is you didn't know that you were the little baby that was about to be aborted.

John Bornschein: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And you didn't find that out until you were grown.

John Bornschein: I did not. In fact, my mother and I, we just didn't talk about this. This is one of those pasts that I can't imagine the burdens that my mother was holding onto for all of these years. And in fact, I had already started my work alongside you and was doing the work of ministry. And she finally came forward and said, "I need to tell you something. You need to know the truth of how God has worked in this situation."

Dr. James Dobson: So you didn't know any of the story that we just heard?

John Bornschein: No. No. I knew that my mother had been through difficulty, but I didn't know that I was the baby that almost wasn't. In fact, I didn't know how many decisions to take life that my mother had to bear for so long. I made three decisions before you to take the life of those babies.

Dr. James Dobson: And they were aborted?

John Bornschein: They were, all three. All three. In a very short period of time.

Dr. James Dobson: And you were saved?

John Bornschein: I was. You see how God has worked in this? It's been amazing. If I can't just for the last four years, I just want to share with your listeners. We had the privilege in 2012 of talking about some of this, about my history growing up and what God had revealed. And you invited me on the broadcast because I wrote you a letter and I wanted you to know that you are a warrior in this culture.

I wanted you to know that after my mother shared with me what she had finally opened up to convey to me that you needed to know that because of your obedience to Almighty God and standing in the gap, I was here today as a result of that. And I just couldn't wait to tell you so I pinned you a letter just to personally thank you for that. And then you invited me on the broadcast. Well, because I told my mother, "Guess where I'm going? I'm going on the broadcast with Dr. Dobson," the conversation-

Dr. James Dobson: And she said, "Don't you dare."

John Bornschein: It was hard.

Dr. James Dobson: What'd she say?

John Bornschein: It was hard. I mean, because she had only given me a glimpse of her struggle and the pain that she had gone through. And this was dividing our family, all of this history and the pain that was involved. And it's one of those things, even as a believer, you just go, "Let's focus on what God is doing now. Let's not talk about that. Let's not bring that up. Where we're at is where God wants us to be."

But what she hadn't really addressed was the fact that in her were all of these wounds that were still deep down inside scars, brokenness, a feeling of worthlessness that she truly could not be fully redeemed by the blood of Jesus. She had made too many bad choices and that God was still upset with her over these things. She hadn't released that. And so here on the outside we looked like the perfect Christian family to everybody.

I'd already been working in ministry. Everything looked like it's going great. And then she finds out, I'm going on the broadcast with you to talk about some of our life journey. And she just broke down and wept and just finally unleashed, "Here's the truth. You need to know that I have had three abortions and I was this close to making you number four.

And had it not been for God using that man to stand in the gap, you may not be here today." And she has carried that shame. And through this process, doctor, ever since our last broadcast on this, people need to know that it has opened up conversation in our family that has brought so much healing. What they heard was a story of hope and there was even greater hope on the horizon.

Dr. James Dobson: John, there is healing for others at that point, which is why I wanted you to be here. We're talking to a lot of people, a lot of women particularly who have walked this same path. It may not have involved abuse, but it has certainly involved sexual sin and the sin of abortion. And yet, even though God has forgiven them, they haven't forgiven themselves. But they can find that forgiveness because God is the God of not only current sin but sin that he is forgiving and canceled. And that will be very encouraging to a lot of the people who are listening to us. What else did your mother tell you?

John Bornschein: Oh, my. Well, after our broadcast, the journey felt like it only began. Here I thought we were now telling of the testimony of the work that Jesus Christ had done where my mother coming out of this horrific start and how God really brought me down a path of ministry service, this ministry person who would never have been had you not stood in the gap, had she not listened to the Holy Spirit. And I wouldn't be here pastoring a church today, had that story gone the way the enemy had wanted it.

Dr. James Dobson: How does that make you feel to know the role that the Lord played in your life?

John Bornschein: It is so humbling. I mean, when he says in first Corinthians chapter one that he uses the broken things, he uses the weak to bring down the strong, the foolish to shame the wise, I think that is my resume. And I think that all of us, we really can identify with that, that God intentionally plucked out the weakest. He picks King David and he wasn't even in the room. His own dad didn't even think that he was to be king of Israel. "You go take care of the sheep, the boys and I have this."

And he always uses the underdog, and I just praise him for that. I think everyone listening today can probably look in the mirror and feel like an underdog from time to time. And that's who God uses. And it's so exciting. And ever since we shared that story, I had the privilege of sharing that story with you on the broadcast, my mother and I had these moments of healing that I can't put to words. She came to one of the galas.

After I came on the broadcast with you, I was invited by a number of pregnancy centers to share my testimony. And the last one that was here in Colorado Springs, she came to and they gave her a standing ovation. She then signed up with that pregnancy center here in Colorado Springs, went through the healing process, had a memorial service for the three babies whom she had chosen to take their life, named them because she felt the Holy Spirit gave them names and now she's counseling other women. This all happened in the last six weeks. So I mean, this is fresh and it's exciting and it's all because of you, doctor. I can't serve you enough of my gratitude.

Dr. James Dobson: You're over-stating that, but it's a miracle anyway you slice it. And you've got brothers and sisters in heaven that you don't know about or haven't known about.

John Bornschein: Haven't. And the way they go through a memorial service, how she bought clothes for them and put that right underneath their candles and had a memorial service.

Dr. James Dobson: Did she get healing from it?

John Bornschein: Oh, our relationship is unbelievable right now. The release, the feeling that God has forgiven her, that she's had that moment of reconciliation with God has brought such healing into our family. She now has had her mom come and now living with her two weeks ago because she wants to be a caretaker. She feels this release of just service now. And it's just amazing. The domino effect, the ripple in the pond, whatever you want to call, it's impacting our whole family story and all of that because a man on a radio who honored God said, "Choose life." Oh, praise God. What a story.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, John, referring to my situation. As you know, I left Focus on the Family and everybody thought I was going to retire and expected us to. And I said to Shirley, "I just feel God's hand in my back because the job is not done. The babies are still being killed, families are still falling apart, and we have an opportunity to reach a lot of those people. And how can we go sit on a front porch someplace?"

John Bornschein: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: "And retire?" And that's why we're still here because we're attempting to do what we can in a broken world, a broken society. John, you give me encouragement, you give me strength, and I am grateful that you now are out there speaking on these subjects. You said you've been to a crisis pregnancy center. You feel called to do that?

John Bornschein: I do. And in fact, I'm encouraging my mother to do the same. In fact, we talked about that, of would she ever be a voice for women going through this? And I said, "That would be a Holy Spirit move of God." And now she's counseling and she's serving in a pregnancy center. I believe she will. And I'm excited for what God's about to do.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, John, I appreciate you, Shirley appreciates you, and I'm so glad that you came to be with us today. Appreciate you being here to talk about what could be an unmentionable subject. This could be something that neither you nor your mother could talk about. This could be something that you'd never revealed to the outside world, but God's done a miracle here.

John Bornschein: He has.

Dr. James Dobson: In your life, in her life, and now in the lives of those you touched.

John Bornschein: Amen.

Dr. James Dobson: And I'm grateful for that.

John Bornschein: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Thanks for the kind words that you said, but we know who gets the credit.

John Bornschein: Oh, we love you Dr. Dobson and I know all your listeners around the world love you. So thank you for standing in the gap.

Roger Marsh: Wow. A truly incredible story of love and redemption here on Family Talk. And if you'd like to learn more about John Bornschein, his story, or his church, visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Even though *Roe versus Wade* was overturned in June of 2022, the fight for life is far from over. To push the pro-life

movement forward in a post *Roe* world, we need to reach more hearts and minds to make abortion unthinkable.

In today's culture, we are still facing some significant challenges such as the mail order abortion pill, and the continuous slander of pro-life organizations. Fortunately, pro-life leaders, Kristan Hawkins and Dr. Robert and Carlotta Jackson say there is reason for hope. You can listen to their powerful testimonies on the "Standing Strong for Life" CD. It's a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

In it, you'll hear how God is moving in mighty ways to end abortion once and for all in this country. Now we'll be happy to send you a copy of the Standing Strong for Life CD as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of Family Talk today. To get yours simply visit our website at drjamesdobson.org, then select the resources tab, and then click on store.

From there, simply search for the title, "Standing Strong for Life" and make your request known. We are a completely listener supported broadcast outreach. We truly appreciate your prayers and financial support so thank you for requesting this special resource today. I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you'll join us again tomorrow for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Till then, have a blessed day.

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

Roger Marsh: Hey, everyone. Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at drjamesdobson.org for helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.