



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Perilous Fight – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Ben Carson

Air Date: June 10, 2024

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. When you watch a movie about your favorite superhero, there is usually a battle of good versus evil. And this rings true in the real world, as well. This battle drifts into affecting the many areas of our lives, and if we don't stand and protect what is good, our godly principles and values, we see evil begin to take hold. And the outcomes then are quite devastating. For example, if a young man and woman marry and one of them is tempted to cheat, they have potentially just destroyed that marriage. But if that same couple puts God first, they can more easily avoid temptations altogether.

Today here on Family Talk, Dr. James Dobson will be joined on the program by a special guest, Dr. Ben Carson. Dr. Carson has just released a new book entitled, *The Perilous Fight*, about the cultural struggles facing families today. And here now to further introduce today's guest is our own Dr. James Dobson, right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk. And it's a great honor for me to have as our guest today, one of my good friends, I wish I could spend more time with him, Dr. Ben Carson, who served as the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery, making him the youngest major division director in the hospital history. And he performed the first only successful separation of craniopagus, and that was in 1987 and the story goes on from there.

He's also the author of 13 best-selling books and has just now published a brand new one, and we're going to talk about it today. The title of it is, *The Perilous Fight: Overcoming the Culture War on the American Family*. And that's a subject that I care deeply about and the book is wonderful and I hope you will come to know it and will read it too. He's joining us remotely today and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to talk to him, not only about this book, but about other things. Let me take you back, Dr. Carson, to that surgery. How did it come to be

that you did the first such surgery at that age, 33 years of age, is that what I understand?

Dr. Ben Carson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: How did that come about?

Dr. Ben Carson: It's very interesting. I had gotten very interested in the whole subject of craniopagus twins, and I was wondering why it was that so many of them died during the attempts of separation. And I did some investigation and discovered that it was primarily exsanguination or bleeding to death. And I was thinking when we got to the critical part of a craniopagus separation, instead of facing what all surgeons have faced before, which is massive bleeding, we could pump all the blood out of the body, and then reconstruct the blood vessels and then pump the blood back in. And then I said, "why am I thinking about this? I'm never going to see a set of twins like that."

Literally about three weeks later, we got the call about these twins in Germany and they had been searching all over the world for anybody who might have an idea of how they could be separated. And I explained what I had been thinking about and we put together a team at Hopkins and everybody said, "That sounds like it would work." And that's how it got on the docket.

Dr. James Dobson: That was the very first time. Now, did you do other such cases?

Dr. Ben Carson: Well, I did a lot of very difficult cases, but never had attempted a craniopagus separation. So I think all the other cases kind of prepared you for that. No question about that.

Dr. James Dobson: When did you retire?

Dr. Ben Carson: I retired in 2013. I had specifically determined when I was going to retire because someone told me that neurosurgeons die early. And I didn't believe it, so I wrote down the name of the last 10 that I knew who died, calculated the average age of death, and it was 61. So I determined that when I turned 61, I would retire and I did. But I didn't stay retired very long, I failed retirement.

Dr. James Dobson: And did what?

Dr. Ben Carson: And that's when I entered the political arena, ran for president and ended up as the secretary of department of housing and urban development.

Dr. James Dobson: As in the Trump Administration. How did you find that? Was that difficult or was this something you enjoyed?

Dr. Ben Carson: It was difficult at the beginning because the Democrats were playing hardball, they didn't want to give me any of my people. So it was five months before I had

any assistant secretaries and eight months before I had a deputy secretary. So every day was like drinking from the fire hydrant and couple that with the fact that the fiscal situation at HUD was a disaster. They had not had an audit, a federally required audit in eight years. They're required to have an audit every year, you couldn't do an audit because there were so many material defects.

So we managed to convince a senior partner at Ernst and Young to come, it took a lot of arm twisting. But he finally came. He said, "Ernst and Young would never have taken this department on as a client." But he put together a team and they got it straightened out. HUD's probably the best run agency in Washington now. And once we got the right people in place, we were able to get an enormous amount of stuff accomplished. It made a really big difference.

Dr. James Dobson: How'd you find working for government after being in medical setting?

Dr. Ben Carson: It was okay. It was kind of frustrating sometimes dealing with some of the political characters who really didn't necessarily want people to get out of poverty and be self-sufficient. Because that's their power base, so they're not that interested in helping with things like that.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you think you'll try it again?

Dr. Ben Carson: I will do whatever the good Lord wants me to do. I'm committed to using whatever gifts and talents and opportunities He's presented to me to help save this country.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we want to talk about your book today. But before we do that again, I'd like to go back to your childhood. Your mother was quite a lady, tell us about her.

Dr. Ben Carson: She was an amazing person, probably the wisest person I ever knew. I always say if everybody had my mother, we wouldn't have any problems.

Dr. James Dobson: What made her such a good mom?

Dr. Ben Carson: Well, she was born to a very large family in rural Tennessee, bounced around from house to house, never really had a stable place to live. Achieved less than a third grade education and got married at age 13, trying to escape all of this poverty and blight, and they moved to Detroit. And some years later she discovered that my father was a bigamist. He was a part-time preacher and a factory worker and a bigamist. So obviously that resulted in a divorce. And there she was with the task of raising two young sons in the inner city by herself. But she was a person with great faith in God and she absolutely refused to be a victim, no matter what was going on.

Dr. James Dobson: How did she come to know the Lord like that?

Dr. Ben Carson: She met a Christian woman when she was in the hospital having had a suicide attempt. And fortunately it wasn't successful. And she met this woman who started telling her about the Lord and she accept it fully and it changed her life.

Dr. James Dobson: She saw to it that you all came to know the Lord?

Dr. Ben Carson: Absolutely. She was always talking about the Lord. And she couldn't really read, but she struggled to try to teach herself how to read because she wanted to read the Bible and she wanted to read books about Jesus. And she absolutely refused to be a victim, no matter what was ... if anybody was a victim, it was her. But no, she absolutely refused to be a victim and she wouldn't let us be victims.

Dr. James Dobson: What I remember most about your previous visit here was that you were not doing well in school. You were kind of fooling around and not paying attention to what-

Dr. Ben Carson: I was a horrible, horrible student. Probably the worst you have ever seen. And all the kids used to tease me and call me names. And they all thought I was stupid, the teachers thought I was stupid. The only person who didn't think I was stupid was my mother. And she was always saying, "Benjamin, you're much too smart to be bringing home grades like this." I brought them home anyway, but she always had something encouraging to say.

And it was her faith that made her go to the Lord and say, "You got to show me what to do, but I don't know what to do. And I don't want my boys to end up like me. They need to be educated." And God gave her the wisdom. He gave her the wisdom to look around because she was working as a domestic. She was cleaning people's houses. She would leave at 5:00 in the morning and get back at midnight going from house to house to house because she didn't want to be on welfare.

And she opened her eyes and she said, "These people who live in these fine houses, they don't seem to watch a lot of TV. And they seem to read a lot of books." So she came home and imposed that on me and my brother, and we were not happy campers, I got to tell you. In today's world, we probably would've called Social Services. But we had to read the books. I didn't like it very much. But after a while, I actually began to enjoy reading those books because we were very poor. But between the covers of those books, I could escape poverty, I could go anywhere in the world, I could be anybody, I could do anything.

I started reading about entrepreneurs and surgeons and scientists and philosophers, and it dawned on me in each one of their cases that the person who has the most to do with what happens to you is you. It's not somebody else, it's not some circumstance. And I stopped listening to all the negative people around me who were saying, "You can't do this. You can't do that. The

society is stacked against you." I just threw all that stuff in the garbage, started thinking about what I could do. And my mother was being severely criticized by her friends. They were saying, "You can't make boys stay in the house and read the books. They'll grow up and they'll hate you." But I think she had the last laugh because one son became a brain surgeon and the other became a rocket scientist. So maybe she knew what she was talking about.

Dr. James Dobson: She would not settle for you're doing poorly in school. She really insisted that you study.

Dr. Ben Carson: And she did succeed in teaching herself to read. She got her GED.

Dr. James Dobson: That's the amazing thing is she wanted you to read, but she couldn't even read herself.

Dr. Ben Carson: That's right, she couldn't read the reports that she made us do. But she got her GED, she went on to college. And in 1994, she got an honorary doctorate degree, so she was Dr. Carson too.

Dr. James Dobson: What a story. Was she able to help you with your lessons? Or did she just insist that you do it?

Dr. Ben Carson: She could help us when it came to wisdom, how to think about things. Obviously she couldn't read or interpret any of this stuff. But she had very good common sense. And I'd rather see a person with common sense any day than somebody with a bunch of Ph.D.'s who's a fool.

Dr. James Dobson: How'd you feel about your dad leaving you?

Dr. Ben Carson: I was devastated. And I prayed every night that they would get back together. And as a young child, I couldn't understand why God didn't answer my prayer. But later in life, I fully understood it. Because my father was into drugs and gambling and women. Women are okay, but you only need one. And that would've been a really bad influence on me. So God knew exactly what He was doing.

Dr. James Dobson: How did you get into medical school?

Dr. Ben Carson: Well, by the time I finished high school, I was a top achieving student. Did very well on the SATs and won a scholarship to Yale. And after a slow start at Yale, because I was used to easy inner city high school, to go from there to a high-powered Ivy League school was a real shock to my system. I really had to learn how to study.

But once I learned how to study, it came to me pretty well. And I got into medical school and I thought that that was the last hurdle. Because I wanted to be a doctor since I was eight years old and I was finally in medical school, I said,

the last hurdle has been completed. I'm going to make it. And then I did so terribly on the first set of comprehensive exams that my counselor encouraged me to drop out of medical school.

He said, you're not cut out to be a doctor. You're just going to torment yourself and everybody else, and we can help you get into another discipline, it's not too late. I was devastated. And I just went back to my apartment and I prayed to God to show me the way because I said, "I'm sure you want me to be a doctor, but this is not working." And then I started thinking, I said, "What kind of courses have you always done well in?" And I realized I did well in courses where I did a lot of reading. And I said, what kind of courses have you struggled in? And I realized that I struggled in courses where I listen to a lot of boring lectures. Because I don't get anything out of boring lectures, absolutely nothing, zero. And I was sitting in six hours worth of them every day.

So I made the executive decision to skip the boring lectures and to spend that time reading. And the rest of medical school was a snap after that. And years later when I came back to my medical school as the commencement speaker, I was looking for that counselor because I was going to tell him he wasn't cut out to be a counselor. Because there's some people who are just so negative, negative, negative. They can always find a reason you can't do something. What if they spent that energy trying to figure out how you could do it?

Dr. James Dobson: That's an unbelievable story. And from there on, you did well in medical school.

Dr. Ben Carson: I did well in medical school. And I just had an affinity for neurosurgery. I thought when I entered medical school that I was going to be a psychiatrist. I had no interest in surgery whatsoever. But as I listened to some of the lectures of the neurosurgeons, I just taken by it, it just fascinated me. And I started moving that direction, people have discouraged me. At that time, there had only been eight black neurosurgeons in the world.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you serious? Is that really true?

Dr. Ben Carson: Yeah, absolutely. But God doesn't distribute talent based on race. And He gave me just an eight sense of neurosurgery and what to do. And I excelled in those rotations. And that's how I ended up at Johns Hopkins, they only took two people a year out of 125 applicants.

Dr. James Dobson: Was your mother proud of you?

Dr. Ben Carson: Well, people would always say to her, "You must be really proud of your son." And she would always say, "I really am, and I'm proud of Benjamin too." Because my brother did well too.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that's an incredible story. And you shared it with me or part of it when you were here before and we didn't get a chance to ask for the details.

Dr. Ben Carson: Well, one of the most gratifying parts of my life was to be able to make her last year's very comfortable.

Dr. James Dobson: How long has she been gone?

Dr. Ben Carson: She died in 2017, so seven years ago.

Dr. James Dobson: Did she know what you accomplished?

Dr. Ben Carson: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. She got to travel all over the world and the accolades, people just loved her. She got to see it all. And she lived with us for the last 20 years.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you ever reconcile with your father?

Dr. Ben Carson: Well, the last time I saw him was the day I got married. He did come to the wedding. But we never had a close relationship.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, are you still interested in medicine?

Dr. Ben Carson: I love medicine and I love to see good things happen with medical care in this country. Which means we're going to have to change some things. And integrate personal responsibility into healthcare because that's the only way we're ever going to get the cost under control.

Dr. James Dobson: How many grandchildren do you have?

Dr. Ben Carson: Eight of them.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you really? You have been blessed.

Dr. Ben Carson: And you and Shirley have been married now for 60 something years.

Dr. James Dobson: 63.

Dr. Ben Carson: 63 years. Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: She's a great lady. And we're really enjoying this time of our life.

Dr. Ben Carson: Praise the Lord.

Dr. James Dobson: It's hard to believe, I suppose. But the greatest thrill that we have is spending time together in the house alone. We have now, at this stage of our lives, been able to just be together to talk, just to experience one another. And I am so grateful for that.

Dr. Ben Carson: Amen. That is the best. Lord know what He was doing when He put people together in marriage, didn't He?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, He did. How did you meet Candy?

Dr. Ben Carson: We met at school, at Yale. Even though we were both from Detroit, we had to go to New Haven to meet each other.

Roger Marsh: That's sweet.

Dr. Ben Carson: But we're coming up on our 49th anniversary in July.

Dr. James Dobson: Incredible. How did you get into Yale?

Dr. Ben Carson: Well, I had done very well on the SATs and I had a lot of extracurricular activities. I had become the City Executive Officer in ROTC, and the smallest amount of time that anybody ever reached that rank. So there were a lot of things that they looked at.

Dr. James Dobson: Did the university welcome you?

Dr. Ben Carson: Yeah, I never had any particular problems. Were there some people who still were Neanderthals? Of course, there were. I remember once I was getting ready to go to dinner and I heard two of the students talking in the laboratory, and one of them said, "You're not going to dinner with that Blackie are you?" And the other guy said, "I certainly am." And people change over time, the one who said that actually became a famous actor, really had a change of heart. I think he just had not been exposed to Black people before.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Did you face discrimination at Yale?

Dr. Ben Carson: Not overtly. I don't think.

Dr. James Dobson: Anywhere else?

Dr. Ben Carson: There are people who find discrimination in everything. I'm not one of them because I'm not looking for it. And it really depends on the way that you think about things. If you think somebody dislikes you, then everything they say, you're going to say, "See, I told you they didn't like me."

Dr. James Dobson: You'd look for it, you'll find it.

Dr. Ben Carson: That's exactly right. And if you think they really like you and they said the same thing, you say, "See, I told you, they really like me." You find what you're looking for.

Dr. James Dobson: May I ask you to close in prayer?

Dr. Ben Carson: Absolutely. Kind Father in Heaven, thank You so much for this time that we've had together to discuss the things of Your Kingdom in our lives. We that You will

continue to bless the ministry of Dr. Dobson and be with him with his health issues and with Shirley with her health issues. And with the whole organization as we face dark times in the history of this earth. But no times are really dark when we look to You for our salvation and for our comfort and for our direction. Because we know that whatever is going on here is only temporary. And what You have planned for us is eternal. We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. James Dobson: Wonderful prayer.

Roger Marsh: Well, I hope you've enjoyed hearing more about and learning more about the life of Dr. Ben Carson today here on Family Talk. Be sure to join us again tomorrow as Dr. James Dobson will continue his conversation with his good friend, Dr. Ben Carson. They'll be discussing Dr. Carson's new book entitled *The Perilous Fight*. Now, if you'd like to learn more about Dr. Carson, his ministry or his new book, simply visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Father's Day will soon be here, and a father holds a lot of power in the lives of his children, either for better or for worse. Families have understood this fact for centuries. So when children are asked who their heroes are, the majority of kids who are fortunate enough to have a father will say, "It's my dad." On the other hand, when a father is uninvolved or one he doesn't love or care for his kids, it does create an ache, a longing that will linger for decades.

Now, if you're a dad and you'd like some encouragement and tips on how to invest in your children's lives, we have a couple of resources to share with you. First of all, sign up for our free new five day email series called "Dads, It's Time To Step Up." Our prayer for every dad and father figure who encounters this resource is that you can fully lean into the Lord as you walk as a father. Now to receive your free five day email series, simply click on the link at the bottom of today's broadcast page when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

In addition, there's a brand new devotional designed specifically for fathers and sons, and created by Mark Hancock and the team from Trail Life USA. It's entitled *Trail Ready: 101 Devotions for Dads with Boys*. Now, to reserve your copy of this encouraging and insightful devotional, simply visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk, and then click the link at the bottom of today's broadcast page. We'll be happy to send you a copy as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today. This will make an excellent resource to give as a gift to the father or father figure in your life. To reserve your copy over the phone, call 877-732-6825.

Well, 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.