



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Planting Shade Trees – Part 2

Guest(s): Dennis Swanberg

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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: Hello and welcome to Family Talk. Family Talk is the radio home of Dr. James Dobson, America's preeminent Christian child psychologist and best-selling author of many books, including *Dare to Discipline*, *The Strong-Willed Child*, *Bringing Up Girls* and more. We are so glad that you found our program today, as we are sharing the second installment of a series that we're calling, "Planting Shade Trees".

It's about leaving a legacy for those who will come after us and it features author, comedian and speaker Dennis Swanberg. "The Swan", as his friends often call him, speaks to about 150 organizations, faith-based groups and corporations every year. He has authored nine books and created over two dozen DVD or CD productions. You can go to Dennis's ministry website at denniswanberg.com to find out more about this popular JDFI ministry partner. Dennis Swanberg is a graduate of Baylor University, where he majored in both Greek, as well as Religion. He earned a master of divinity and a doctor of ministry at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Dennis served as a local church pastor for 23 years before stepping down from that role and stepping up to the microphone to speak on stages and platforms all over the world. Because of his ministerial background, you know that when you listen to Dennis speak, you'll not only be entertained, but you will also hear biblical truth. Dennis Swanberg is married to Lauree. They have two grown sons, Chad and Dustin, and the Swans make their home in Granbury, Texas. Here now is Dennis Swanberg, with a hilarious and pertinent presentation about leaving a legacy by planting shade trees right here on Family Talk.

Dennis Swanberg: You all had shade trees in your yard, amen?

Audience: Amen.

Dennis Swanberg: Don't you love those shade trees, where you can get in those shade trees underneath there and just kick back, relax, remount and reload? I tell you, we've

got a lot. Oh, I've got a lot of those shade tree memories. I think back to those days out there at grandma and grandpa's house. Couldn't beat grandma and grandpa's house, amen? I tell you, I get out there with Grandma and Grandpa when I was just a little fella. I'd say "Mamaw, Papa, Grandma, Grandpa," how you call them everything. Mimi, Pops, Pow-Pow, Wow-Wow, papa, mama.

Why can't we just have grandma and grandpa, but I don't know. "I like Mimi. I like Mimi." "Well, they've always called me Pops." Okay, well let's move on but I'd go with Grandma and Grandpa, that's what I called mine. I remember it was a big deal to go out there to their house and spend the night and I'd say, "Mamaw, grandma, papa." See, you got me saying it now, "Mama and papa." I'd say, "Can I spend the night with you?" "Okay, come on out. Come on out, man." Grandma and grandpa Johnson, my mama's parents, they just opened those doors all the time.

Come on, just come on and all the other cousins, "Can we come too?" "All right, all of you come on." Sometimes there'd be all of us, some of them, one of us and just a few of us but man, we get out there and all the memories, a lot of memories there on the farm. I remember we'd eat preserves. Preserves, preserves. We had preserved everything. Grandma had watermelon rind preserves, tomato preserves. I'd mush them tomatoes up and she'd say, "Squish them. Squish them. Squish them," and I'd mash them up and then we'd cook them and put sugar in there.

Tomato preserves, add a bunch of sugar. It goes a long, long way. Sometimes, we'd have a dream sandwich. A dream sandwich. Take two pieces of bread, put some butter on there, some sugar on there, put a tomato on there, put some fig preserves on there and then dream what kind of meat you wish was in there. How many of you have been there? Have you been there?

That was good. That was good. Low in caloric intake. I remember we'd have those sandwiches and we'd have times when we'd watch television with grandpa. Grandpa, he just enjoyed couple of shows: *Gunsmoke*, *Have Gun, Will Travel* and that was about it. He'd say, "Turn it off. Let it rest. Let it rest. Let it rest." We'd sit there and be watching television. We'd drink a big old RC of Cola because it had 12 ounces in it. Those other bottles just had 10 and we felt it was better stewardship in the kingdom to have 12 ounces.

I grabbed that thing with both hands when I was little boy, just put it up there, put the mouth over the whole bottle. Sometimes, I've just eaten some vanilla wafers and they went back in there with a back wash. Some of you kids do that to your daddy. It didn't bother grandpa. He'd say, "Give me some of that." Oh, and then but nighttime would come and it'd be cold sometime down there in Central Texas. Cold.

Grandpa's house was old. Grandpa was born in the corner of the house that he slept in. He went to be with the Lord when he was 94. That's a long time in one corner. I felt I spent some time like that in the corner at schools forever and

ever. Grandpa was in that corner. That was his corner, his bed but when I'd spend the night with him, he said, "You can sleep in my bed." He's old Swede. I'd get in there, but it'd be cold because you see, grandpa would turn all the little floor furnaces off, our little butane gas heaters off because he is afraid that we might be gassed during the night.

Didn't want to have a fire during the night. Turned it all off. No insulation in that house. Cold, friend. Are you hearing me? Cold. You see grandpa, because of that butane gas, just in case, he left the window open next to the bed, about six inches. Wind just whipping on your bed, just whipping across you. There was times when my little hair would just blow in the wind, but it didn't bother grandpa. He lived to be 94.

They put quilts on me. That was back when women quilted. What's happened to some of you all women? Most we get out of you all nowadays is a little Afghan. "A little Afghan for Jesus." Man they quilted back then and they'd quilt together. They'd get together and quilt. Love the ladies would come and they'd quilt and they'd share things and they'd talk about stuff and life and share things about other people. That's where intercessory prayer began, see?

Are you with me? Either that or you know how you had those telephones back that we had a party line. We were two longs and a short and we shared a party line with other farms and if it wasn't even... Maybe it was two shorts and a long and it wasn't yours but if you were bored. Some of you all need to ask for forgiveness, I can tell right over there. We'd pick that phone up and listen in so we'd know how to pray for that family more effectively.

I'm just giving my testimony, sir. Okay? Just giving my testimony. We'd be there and we'd be underneath those quilts, sometime two, three quilts. Cold. Four, five quilts. Cold. I'm going to tell you something, when you're six years old and they put that many quilts on you, however they lay them on you, that's how you sleep the rest of the night. There is no way you can get out of that. I remember my mama when I got home a couple days later, my mama asked me, "Did you wet the bed?" See, I was a bed wetter until I was in the sixth grade.

No drugs, no alcohol, just bed wetting. I said, "No, ma'am. No, ma'am." "You didn't?" "No, ma'am, I did not wet the bed. I did not wet the bed." "I'm so proud of you." My little mama Pauline Bernadine, I wish you could just see, "I am proud of you." See, I knew you could do it. I knew you could do it. I said, "I did not wet the bed." "I am so proud of you." I said, "I wet the quilts." I know. I'm terrible, ma'am but I just had to share that story. I felt led.

I just really realized that I look back on those days. Those are a lot of memories and we had some good times back there at the country. My mom and daddy, they're great people, Floyd Leon and Pauline Bernadine. They're great folks. Great mom and dad to me and now they're great grandparents, good grandparents to my boys. I have great memories of them in those days and even

in these days, just the other day, my little mama Pauline Bernadine, my daddy Floyd Leon, 6'2", 220.

I was bonding with him. We were talking about days of old and stuff and I said, "Mama, tell me about old daddy. What was old Floyd Leon like when he was a boy, a young man, when you all were dating?" "Well, Your daddy was aggressive." "My daddy, Floyd Leon, Deacon Floyd?" "Well, he wasn't always a deacon." My daddy? I said, "Mama. Mama." I said, "Listen, did daddy kiss you on the first date?" "Oh, yes. Right on the mouth. Took my breath away. I asked him where he learned to kiss like that and he said siphoning gas."

Oh, some of you young couples are going, "Oh, well. It went right over their head." Why do you think these couples stay married for 50 years? They learn to siphon gas early. I tell these young couples now if I do a little counseling, I say, "Have you ever siphoned some gas? You need to work on that." Anyhow, oh but I love my mama and daddy and the memories of the country and life, they planted shade trees for me. Shade trees of joy and shade trees of laughter, shade trees of the Lord.

Sharing Jesus with me at an early age, I love all those shade trees. There's a lot of shade tree planters out there, shade tree folks. I think of Billy Graham. Billy Graham and he's planted shade trees all over the world, shade trees of hope and wisdom and joy. I even imagine Billy would even say, "I love North Carolina because there's trees over there and I love trees over in Montreat and we enjoy the trees and the shade for all those years. Then I imagine there's folks like old Slim Pickens.

"I guarantee you one thing, in Texas, we enjoy a shade tree. Sometime you get a little oak and you sit underneath there for a while. Out in the sun, it's 110 under the oak. It's 105 and feels good." Or a John Wayne, "Let me tell you. When you're on the trail, look for a little shade along the journey. I love those shade trees, kick back and relax and enjoy." That's right, shade trees. You can't beat a good shade tree and you can't beat a good shade tree plant or folks that have done something for you.

Yet, they've never really enjoyed that particular shade for themselves. I think of those that have gone before me, guys like old Billy Graham. What a great man of God. I remember listening to him preach when I was a little boy and I remember one time he preached something like, "The seven things that God can't do. Seven things God can't do. Number one, God cannot lie." I went, "That is good. That is good. That is good." God can't turn His head upon a repentant son on and on and on and on.

Yet, you know what? I've never had the joy of meeting Billy Graham and doing Billy for Billy. Maybe he's never had the joy of hearing me, I don't know. It makes me nervous sometimes when I do Billy. Had a little lady tell me one time, "I don't think you should do Billy. He is a man of God." I said, "Well, what about me?" "We don't know. We don't know."

I tell you what old Billy Graham, he's planted many a shade tree and for me, and as I go and speak and entertain, and if I can do a little Billy for someone, they just go, "I'll do Billy again," and I said, "I'm glad to do it over and over and over forever and ever and ever." The way I learned to do Billy was I was watching *The Tonight Show* one night years ago. Johnny Carson was talking to Billy and Billy was talking back to him and Billy said, "Johnny, you're a sinner and I'm a sinner." Johnny said, "What about Ed?"

Ed McMahon, him too. I was watching that and I just said, "Ed too. "Johnny, you're a sinner." All of a sudden, I learned and I picked up Billy. I get to do him all over the world, impersonations. He planted a shade tree for me that he's never sat under or maybe someday I'll get to entertain him. I'd love to do that. If I ever get to meet Billy, I've already got it in my mind, what I'm going to do. If I walk in the room, I'm saying, "I want you to stay right there, I'm coming to you. It will only take me a moment to come and I have no literature. I'm here." I want to do Billy for Billy.

Then I think of those others like a John Wayne. He's been a character a long, long time and yet, I never got to meet him. He never got to meet me. He's been a blessing to me, a shade tree for me to entertain folks because everybody loves the Duke. Of course, *The Andy Griffith Show*. Oh, Don Knotts, Barney, "Now listen. Listen, listen, listen to me. This body is a weapon. Listen.

I'm going to tell you something, I've enjoyed people all over the world. I love singing. I can sing acapella, acapella, acapella." But the Barn, I've done him forever. Everywhere I go. They say "Do Barney." I go, "Well, listen, okay. Get it together." Do a little Ernest T. Bass, "Charlene, Charlene. I love you, Charlene." Then old Barney would say, "He's a nut."

Maybe if we met, he'd tell me that I'm a nut but he planted a shade tree, don't you think for me and for you? A shade tree that he never ever got to sit under. Well, you go through the Bible and you come across folks that have done the very same thing. Get your Bible. I'm going to get mine and turn to Jeremiah chapter 32. This is a tremendous passage of Scripture. I just love this Scripture and it's talking about in the days of Jeremiah when God's people hadn't been faithful, when God's people had disobeyed, were worshiping other gods, not being faithful to the true God.

God warned them through the Prophet Jeremiah over and over again. He said, "Listen, I'm going to tell you something now." He said, "Listen, if you don't straighten up, I'm going to let the Babylonians come in and they're going to take over and you all are going to be dispersed and it's not going to be the same. It's going to be no more. Are you listening," but they wouldn't let listen. Jeremiah would preach and preach and preach. He'd preach for 40 years but nothing happened. No one walked the aisle. No one paid him attention.

That would be likened unto a Billy Graham that would preach here and here in this city, in this crusade and that crusade and no one ever come. No one comes.

If no one ever came, it's the same thing with old Jeremiah. He preached and he shared, and in the midst of the time, when the Babylonians were coming in to take over, the Lord was dealing with old Jeremiah. In verse six, and Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came to me saying, behold Hanamel, the son of Shalom. Your uncle is coming to you saying, buy for yourself my field which is at Anathoth, for you have the right of redemption to buy it."

In other words, before you leave, there is a field that you could purchase. It's basically in your family. Now, your family's going to want to get rid of that piece of property. They want to get a little money and get out while the getting is good. They know that you're a softie and they're going to come to you and ask for you to buy it. I want you to buy it because you see, I have plans. One day, my people will come back to Jerusalem and when they come back, they're going to need a place to live and they will have the field at Anathoth to come and once again, houses and fields and vineyards will again be planted in this land. If you will, let Swan have a little Liberty with the text. One day, folks will come back and there'll be shade trees here again.

Do you know to this day, one of the biggest things you can ever do in the Holy Land is to plant a tree? I've been over there several times and the big thing is for people to bring trees and donate trees and plant trees in honor of those that have gone before them. That is a big deal there. Let me tell you something, it was big then with Jeremiah. I want you to plant your life and your witness and your testimony here even while others are leaving.

You plant your life here. It says in verse nine, "I bought the field, which was at Anathoth, from Hanamel, my uncle's son. I weighed out to him silver for him, 17 shekels of silver and I signed and sealed the deed and called in witnesses and weighed out the silver on the scales. Then I took the deeds and purchased both the sealed copy, containing the terms and the conditions and the open copy, and I gave the deed to purchase to Baruch inside of everyone for everyone to know, because I knew that they needed to last for a long, long time because," look there in verse 15, "Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land." Jeremiah planted shade trees that he never ever sat under.

There's been people like that in your life, people like that in my life. People that have planted their life, planted their witness, planted their possessions, that maybe they didn't enjoy but you've enjoyed. That's the way it is in the Kingdom. That's what Jeremiah did. You see, they didn't know what to do with Jeremiah. They couldn't live with him or live without him. Some wonder if he went to Babylon and died or died on the way. We don't know.

All we do know is that while some were going to Egypt and putting their money in Swiss bank accounts, so to speak and others were going to Babylon, we know that God had a plan for those that would return one day and then one day, they did return and when they came back and they were coming back to Jerusalem, the little boys were asking their Papaw's and saying, "Papaw, where are we going to live?" He said, "We're going to live in Anathoth." Maybe he's one of

those kind of men that had a big tummy and a short tie like one of our neighbors.

"We're going on back now. We're going back there. We've got a place to live. Now let's go. Jeremiah bought the field at Anathoth, boy. We're heading on back there." They go back there and they have a place to live all because of Jeremiah. I think of others. I think about folks like a Thomas Edison who had 1,098 patents before he was 30. His whole life in about 120, before he was age 30. This guy is brilliant, that his school teacher didn't think he was that brilliant but he literally planted some shade trees for us, you know what I'm saying?

As Barney Fife would say, "Listen, he planted the light bulb and the light bulb. It comes on for you and me and then the phonograph, where we have a little music." He did all of that. He didn't get to know the lights of New York City but we've known the lights of New York City. We've known the lights of the big cities of the world and we know lights today and light shows that just blow our mind. He planted a shade tree that he never really got to sit under. When I think of aviation, Charles Lindbergh.

As Jimmy Stewart would say, "Charles Lindbergh, I was Charles in the movie *Spirit of Saint Louis*. When I crossed the ocean, little did he know that he was planting a shade tree of aviation," or as Billy would say, "More like years ago, even before that, there were two young boys on the front row of a church and their daddy was a preacher and he was preaching and said if God had intended man to fly, he would've given man wings." Nevertheless, those two boys of his who played with deacons' kids one day went out to Kitty Hawk, the Wright Brothers and took off in a plane. Their daddy said, "Those deacons' kids are messing my boys."

The Wright Brothers, they planted shade trees for us that they never sat under. They never knew what a 747 was like or a 777. On and on I could go. They planted shade trees such as the case for Jeremiah. Such is the case with those famous folks that we read about, but also such was the case for the Swan with my own family.

Roger Marsh:

Dennis Swanberg is a good friend of Dr. Dobson and Family Talk. His quick sense of humor and seminary training really set him apart in the world of Christian speakers and it's been our pleasure to share programs that feature Dennis over the last two days. We'll be airing part three of this series, which we're calling, "Planting Shade Trees" coming up on tomorrow's broadcast. Make sure you join us then.

To learn more about Dennis Swanberg, his books and ministry or if you missed any part of today's or yesterday's broadcast, please visit drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. That's drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Or you can always give us a call at (877) 732-6825. We have team members standing by 24/7 to answer any questions you might have about the JDFI. We're also here to

take your prayer requests, big or small. That number once again is (877) 732-6825.

Now, before we go, I want to tell you about a special campaign that we are supporting here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. As Easter quickly approaches, wouldn't it be great if there was an easy way to introduce people in your community to the Lord, to have an opportunity that isn't confrontational, even a blessing to them as well? Well, this is exactly what we're providing with our new Life Baskets initiative. Here's how it works.

First, pray for God to put a person or maybe a family on your heart, who He would like you to share the gospel with. Maybe a neighbor, coworker, someone else in your extended family perhaps. Then take a simple basket, which you can get anywhere: Hobby Lobby, Walmart, online, and load it with treats and other goodies for that person or family. Add an invitation to your church's Easter services, along with a small Bible and a gospel track, and then take it to that person and watch the Lord do His work.

Now for more information about how to create a life basket and also helpful links for what to put in it, go to drjamesdobson.org/lifebasket. That's drjamesdobson.org/lifebasket. We can't wait to see what God does with this initiative. Well, thanks again for tuning in today to Family Talk. Be sure to catch us again tomorrow for the third and final installment in our series, featuring humorist Dennis Swanberg on the topic of leaving a legacy and planting shade trees. That's coming up next time right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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