



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Building Intimacy with God

Guest(s): Chuck Swindoll and Shirley Dobson

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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: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for joining us today. Now, before we begin today's program, I want to share with you some important news regarding our JDFI family. As many of you know, Dr. Tim Clinton has served as co-host for our Family Talk broadcast for nearly six years, but did you know that Tim is also the president of the American Association of Christian Counselors, also known as AACC? And over the past few years, it's no secret that our nation has been suffering through a mental health disaster like we've never seen before. Now, to respond to this critical need, AACC has literally more than doubled in size just over the past three years alone. Given the weight of leading this effort, Dr. Tim Clinton is stepping away from his role here at JDFI to focus his energy and attention on AACC. We are grateful for his contributions to our ministry and he leaves with our deep appreciation and our profound prayers.

Now, alongside Dr. Dobson, of course, the JDFI is blessed to have our senior vice president of public policy, Gary Bauer, along with the Honorable Michele Bachman, and both available to speak into many cultural issues that families are facing even today. You will be hearing more from them in the coming months for sure on these important topics.

Well, friends, we have made it to the middle of the week. Hooray! As you look around outside, you may have noticed the leaves on the trees are in fact changing color. You might've started wearing sweaters again. Perhaps you've noticed that smell, pumpkin and apple spices in the air. Fall is certainly here and God's wonder is all around us. In James chapter four, verse eight, we read, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." How comforting it is to know that our Lord wants us to build an intimate relationship with Him. But the question is how exactly do we do that and why is it so important for ourselves and especially for our country?

On today's edition of Family Talk, we're going to hear a classic conversation about the vital importance of prayer itself. It is essential to make prayer a part

of our daily lives, and it's also crucial for the protection of our nation as well. We have two very special guests joining our host, Dr. James Dobson, for today's conversation. One of course you'll recognize is his wife Shirley Dobson, and the other, longtime friend Dr. Chuck Swindoll. Now, what you're about to hear was recorded in the early 2000s. Some of the discussion refers to the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001, and to the time when Shirley Dobson was still serving on the National Day of Prayer Task Force. Even though this program was originally recorded a couple of decades ago, the Scriptural truths discussed still remain relevant even today.

Of course, Shirley Dobson is nationally recognized for her leadership skills and her many contributions to Christian organizations and other groups advocating for the family. Beginning in 1991, Mrs. Dobson proudly served as chair of the National Day of Prayer Task Force and did so for the next 25 years. Through the efforts of the task force itself, tens of thousands of prayer gatherings were established and conducted all over the country. Of course, Dr. and Mrs. Dobson have two grown children, Danae and Ryan, and two grandchildren as well.

Our other esteemed guest for today's program is Pastor Chuck Swindoll. He has devoted his life to the accurate, practical teaching and application of God's Word and His grace. After proudly serving in the United States Marine Corps, Chuck Swindoll enrolled in Dallas Theological Seminary, from which he graduated magna cum laude in 1963. Chuck Swindoll has served as senior pastor to congregations in Texas, Massachusetts, and California throughout his career of more than 50 years. In 1998, Chuck Swindoll founded Stone Briar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, and has continued to serve his thriving church as their senior pastor ever since. And his listening audience extends far beyond the local church body. Pastor Swindoll's radio ministry, *Insight for Living*, airs in many radio markets all around the world with a mission of teaching the truths of Scripture and presenting a message of genuine hope and encouragement.

Chuck Swindoll is also the author of many books including *So You Want to Be Like Christ? Eight Essentials to Get You There*, and this book will be the focus of today's conversation here on Family Talk. Chuck and his wife Cynthia reside in Texas and together they have four grown children, 10 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. With that, let's join our own Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Shirley Dobson and Dr. Chuck Swindoll, right here, right now on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, with us today is the chairwoman of the National Day of Prayer, Shirley Dobson, and welcome back, Shirls.

Shirley Dobson: It's very good to be back, Jim. Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, the other guest is my great friend of 30 years, Dr. Chuck Swindoll. He's the founder and senior pastor of Stone Briar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, and is the author of many, many Christian books, one of the most loved authors in the country. In fact, he holds more gold medallion awards, which means

something to authors, I can tell you, he holds more of them than any other Christian author to date, and that's quite a statement. Chuck, thanks for joining us today.

Chuck Swindoll: I'm glad to be with you, Jim and Shirley. It's going to be a great time together.

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, I checked a record today and you were a guest on this program for the first time in 1981.

Chuck Swindoll: I was a very young man back then.

Dr. James Dobson: Very young and with filled with promise, right?

Chuck Swindoll: Well, I don't know about that. I was a very young man. None of this seems all that real. You talk about a friendship that's been really for more than 30 years, and it honestly seems like last year we were sitting there in that little restaurant in Long Beach and the four of us, you and Shirley and Cynthia and I, were laughing about so many things. Our kids were all real small and you had started this brand new radio ministry and we had met at a conference you may remember in Seattle. And you said, "Let's get together," and I actually followed up on that, so we had some great times. It's been great ever since.

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, going back to that first visit in 1981, I wonder if you remember what the subject of that interview was?

Chuck Swindoll: Okay, this is going to be an absolute guess, but I'm going to guess something about the family. Marriage, home, family.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, you're right.

Chuck Swindoll: How's that for a guess?

Dr. James Dobson: It was about marriage and I believe it was before you published *Strike The Original Match*.

Chuck Swindoll: Oh, okay.

Dr. James Dobson: So I think you were thinking in those terms at that time, but it was a wonderful program and it was the beginning of a great friendship.

Chuck Swindoll: Thank you, Jim.

Shirley Dobson: Chuck, I have to tell a story about you and Jim. I think as you're aging, you're getting to look more like each other.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh really?

Shirley Dobson: But anyway, this lady got on the plane and she was coming down the aisle and she spotted Jim and she recognized him and she stopped and said, "Oh, oh, oh, I know who you are. You're Chuck Swindoll." We all had a good laugh about that.

Chuck Swindoll: I got a better story than that, Shirley. I'm in front of our church meeting folks as they walk by, and one lady walks up and says... She had been there through the whole message. She says, "Oh, Dr. Dobson, I just want to tell you how much I appreciate your ministry." She says, "I've got your book here and I'd like for you to sign it." It was one of your books, Jim, and so I said, "Sure, give me the book." I signed it. She said, "Oh, thank you, Dr. Dobson. I've waited half my life to meet you." And I signed your book. The whole message, she thought she was listening to Jim Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: This is radio and not television, so I guess it's a natural mistake to make. Shirley, speaking of the passage of time, did you know in 1991 that this is going to be the rest of your life that you were signing up for?

Shirley Dobson: No, I didn't. In fact, Vonette had the National Day of Prayer for eight years, so I figured, well, six or seven years, that would be a good ministry. If I had known it, I would've run down the street screaming, scared to death,

Dr. James Dobson: But the Lord still has His hand in your back.

Shirley Dobson: Apparently. Apparently so.

Chuck Swindoll: That's often the way it is. The great things God plans, we go into it reluctantly and not knowing most of what's ahead, and nothing of what's ahead, but not knowing most of what it will require. Had we known all of those things, we probably would've never done it.

Dr. James Dobson: The greatest honor for us, Chuck, is that the Lord obviously had a plan, and I think for the three of us, he had a plan that's been unfolding ever since. Shirley, I want to explain on your behalf that there is no self-serving aspect to the National Day of Prayer. You're not trying to build a big organization or create some kind of legacy with this outreach. It is what it is. It's a deeply felt desire to call the nation to prayer on behalf of the people and their leaders and the military and their families and their churches. You and I, Shirley, are very concerned about our country right now, not only with regard to our security as a nation, but relevant to what we see as the retreat from morality and righteousness that is just gaining momentum. Chuck, are you reading the culture that way too?

Chuck Swindoll: Yes, there's no doubt about it, Jim. I just actually returned from one of the few conferences I do each year, and this was one that is for flag officers and their spouses for people from Capitol Hill, for ambassadors that are in the DC area, to come apart and to be together and to share their lives and to enter into each other's experiences. And I get the heartbeat of what is happening inside the

beltway by being there, and there is a definite drift away from things eternal. There is no doubt in my mind. Oh, I was thinking it. Shirley spoke a moment ago. Remember the days following 9/11?

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Chuck Swindoll: We didn't even have to announce. Everybody was calling our church saying, "When are we going to get together and meet?" And we opened our doors to a time of prayer. We didn't have to guide anybody. We didn't have to explain to anybody. The place was packed that following Sunday with people whose hearts were beating heavily for the protection of our people and for the guidance for our nation, and praying for our President and asking for protection from terrorism. It came in like a flood. It's interesting that they didn't want an organization. They didn't need a big plan. They just said, "We need a place to pray." And I'll tell you, we could have prayed for four hours. The spirit that was in that meeting, we still talk about it. It was electric.

Now, when I'm with these folks that I was with at this conference, believe me, they are at the cutting edge of decision-making. These are people who make decisions and it impacts thousands of lives, and I'll tell you, these men and women that gather are people of prayer. They're the first to say, "We may have stars on our shoulders, we may have the rank that causes other people to salute, or we may have a role in Congress that people admire, but we all need to say to each other, and we admit it, our needs are totally in the hands of God, and so we call on God for that."

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh just jumping in here for a brief moment to remind you that we've been listening to a classic program featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Shirley Dobson and Chuck Swindoll. They've been discussing the importance of prayer in a Christian's life, especially in the midst of challenging and uncertain times. Now, today's conversation was recorded nearly 20 years ago at a time when our nation was still reeling from the events of 9/11. That's when Shirley Dobson was still serving on the National Day of Prayer Task Force. The Scriptural truths in this episode remained relevant and timeless today though, over 20 years later. And so with that, let's jump back into today's program here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, I just returned from Washington and had a chance to meet with the kind of people you're talking about, some of them on Capitol Hill, some of them in the White House and otherwise, and I saw concern everywhere I went for the nation and its national sovereignty, and I heard it over and over again. Furthermore, in the last couple of weeks, my heart has been burdened, I mean heavy, as I have seen reports of spring break activities and the debauchery and sexual immorality and the drugs and the alcohol and things that are occurring, and everybody seems to think that's okay. It just is further evidence to me that we're in a moral crisis in this country.

Chuck Swindoll: Yeah, there's no doubt about it. And when we read even from ancient days that God's people are to humble themselves and pray and seek God's face to have the nation healed, we realize this is nothing new. It has been on a long drift. The fallen nature of humanity is increasingly more evident, and it's now impacting our government, the ranks of the military, even churches across the land. The need for us to come back to that promise is incredibly important. It's of highest importance.

Shirley Dobson: And Jim, you said when you came back from Washington that no one, neither political party, had an answer for the problems that we face, and it's because it's not a military problem.

Chuck Swindoll: That's correct.

Shirley Dobson: It's not a governmental problem. It's a problem of the heart. It's a spiritual problem. This battle that we're waging is a spiritual battle and it can only be fought on our knees, and I wonder what it's going to take for the American people to realize that it's going to take a city that's going to be wiped out before we realize that we can't handle this on our own. We don't have the know-how. We don't have the weaponry. It is beyond us. Only God can solve this problem, and prayer is the hope for our nation, and my heart this year is that people will gather and put a prayer shield around this nation to protect it.

Dr. James Dobson: You and I have been praying about that in our personal prayer time, praying for this country, praying for our President, praying for our leaders on Capitol Hill, praying for the military, and you frequently refer to that prayer shield. That comes from Psalms, doesn't it?

Shirley Dobson: Yes, it does. In Psalms, it says, "The shields of the earth belong to the Lord," and I believe on 9/11 that he lifted that shield just enough so we could look evil right in the face and see what could really happen if He ever removed that shield from our nation. That's why it is so important for us to get on our knees and come before him in humility and repentance and beg Him for mercy, because the Bible also says, "In your wrath, Lord, remember mercy."

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, you have written a book called *So You Want to Be Like Christ? Eight Essentials to Get You There*. And you talk about prayer in this book. We don't have time for you to list the eight essentials, but give us a summary of the message of this book.

Chuck Swindoll: Well, I think it was important then, and it still is to me, that people understand that godliness doesn't come automatically. It doesn't just flow out of one's life, no matter how much one may love the Lord. I think there is the necessity for us to understand we must carry out responsibilities that are commanded of us in the Scriptures. I touch on eight of those areas, and you're right, one of them is prayer, which I simply calling out. And another is humility, bowing low. And the reason I wrote the book is because I think in this drift we've talked about, we

become proud people. We begin to operate independently. We complicate our lives with things that aren't essential. The tyranny of the urgent wins the day and silences the things that are important.

We are not a people of self-control. We are not a people who surrender, who release our grip on our rights. I think it was Lou Holtz, the coach, who said... 25 years of coaching. He's the one that led Notre Dame to a hundred victories in 10 years. He said, "In my years of coaching, the difference between the athlete then and now. Back then, the athlete came with the desire to carry out his responsibilities and good teamwork as a player. Now it's all about rights and privileges." Isn't that interesting?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it is.

Chuck Swindoll: Even on the athletic field, back then it was about how can I work with this team and we together win this game? Now it's, "These are my rights, these are my privileges," a spirit of entitlement that has wrapped itself around us like tentacles. And so I wrote the book so people would understand becoming like Christ is not something that's just going to take place because you get older or because you've been in the church all your life. It will take place when you begin to apply the disciplines of the Christian life, simplicity and surrender and whatever.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Chuck, some of those hundred victories came at the expense of my beloved USC.

Chuck Swindoll: Yeah, I knew you'd mentioned that.

Dr. James Dobson: So Lou Holtz is a friend of mine because I've forgiven him for some of that, but oh my. Well, I think our listeners can feel our hearts here. If there could be hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people calling out to God saying, "Lord, we have no resources that can deal with the problems that we're facing." There is only one answer. And that answer is a revival, a return, a renewal to the spiritual principles and understandings that have guided us and guided this country from the days of the founding fathers.

Shirley Dobson: That's right. We shouldn't just be praying for our nation on one day, we should be praying regularly for our nation. And National Day of Prayer does have a program called Freedom Five where we're asking people to spend five minutes a day praying for five centers of power: the government, the media, education, church, and the family, because we interact with some of those segments every day. And that's a way we can keep our country and those centers of power before the Lord in prayer.

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, in a world of spiritual confusion where even many churches seem to have forgotten what Christianity's all about - I'm not indicting anybody, but it

has happened in many places - I'm glad there is you. And I appreciate what you've done on the radio for all these years.

Chuck Swindoll: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Our programs, in fact, have been back to back for-

Chuck Swindoll: They have, haven't they?

Dr. James Dobson: ... many years, and there's been a partnership between us. I love you like a brother and appreciate you.

Chuck Swindoll: Well, thank you, Jim. I thought about you the other day when I was reading in First Timothy, I thought about you and Shirley. The second chapter begins with, "First of all, I urge that in treaties and prayers and petitions and thanksgiving be made on behalf of all, for kings, for all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." Aren't those great words?

Dr. James Dobson: Oh man, that's beautiful.

Chuck Swindoll: He says, "First of all," that there be prayers and petitions and thanksgivings. And so I will at this moment step into the role of a fellow pastor and say to all of you who are pastoring churches, remember, first of all, lead your congregations in prayer. Prayer for our nation, prayer for our men and women who lead us as cities, as states, as a nation, and who make these huge decisions. Pray for those who give them counsel.

Dr. James Dobson: Chuck, I don't believe there's any more fitting way to close out this program than to ask you to pray for the nation. Pray for us, Chuck.

Chuck Swindoll: Almighty God, we pause to reflect on your character as we seek wisdom for such a time as this. In these unsafe days, You remain all-powerful and able to protect us. In these uncertain times, You remain all-knowing, leading us right. In the unprecedented events that we're facing, You remain absolutely sovereign. Our times truly are in Your hands. Therefore, Lord, our dependence on You is total and not partial. Our need for Your forgiveness is constant. Our gratitude for Your grace is profound, and our love for You is deep. Therefore, we ask that You guard and guide our President and all who serve the people of these United States. May uncompromising integrity mark their lives. And we also ask that You unite us as truly one nation under God. May genuine humility return to our ranks, and may that blend of integrity and humility heal our land as You have promised. In our Lord's name we pray, Amen.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a powerful prayer for our nation, and please keep it in your heart and mind to pray for our country and our nation's leaders as well. You've been listening to Dr. Chuck Swindoll and Mrs. Shirley Dobson, who joined our host,

Dr. James Dobson, today on this classic edition of Family Talk. Now, if you missed any part of today's program or if you'd like to share it with a friend or a family member, just visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And while you're there, remember, you can enjoy listening to many other Family Talk programs covering a wide range of topics, including faith, family, culture, marriage, and parenting.

As you know, Dr. Dobson has been standing up for the family for over 40 years. Marriages are the foundation of the family, and Dr. and Mrs. Dobson have a heart to encourage strong God-led unions, which lead to strong families. Together, they wrote the very popular devotional series, *Nightlight for Couples*. They also authored *Nightlight for Parents* as well, and we are excited to announce the practical and biblically based lessons from these books are now on video. To watch these encouraging videos, all you have to do is go to drjamesdobson.org/marriage-parenting. That's drjamesdobson.org/marriage-parenting. There you'll have access to free marriage and parenting videos to view at your convenience, and if you're interested in ordering either of the night like books, or perhaps even both of them, there's a link for ordering on that page as well. Again, drjamesdobson.org/marriage-parenting.

I'm Roger Marsh, and from everyone here at the JDFI, thank you so much for making us a part of your day. Thanks for listening, as always, 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.