



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Medical Missions Abroad

**Guest(s):** Dr. Richard Furman

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

**Roger Marsh:** Welcome to Family Talk with your host, psychologist, and best-selling author, Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh. On today's program, we are bringing you an inspiring story of a man who listened to God's calling on his life. Dr. Richard Furman is in studio talking with Dr. Dobson about leaving his successful career as a doctor to follow God into the mission field to help those who desperately need it. Let's listen in now to his story on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is Family Talk. You can hear us at this spot five days a week, and we talk about the family and the issues of relevance to it. And there's no end to the topics. It's as infinite as all of God's creation is infinite because it involves parenting and it involves marriage and medicine and many other subjects.

And speaking of medicine, if you have been listening to Family Talk in recent months, not so recent, in fact, it goes back a couple of years, you'll remember that I've had as a guest, Dr. Richard Furman, who is a vascular surgeon. He's a godly man. He works with Franklin Graham and with other organizations that we're going to talk about. And he's back with us today.

I just love this man. His heart is for the Lord and his great passion is to preserve health and life, not only in his patients through the practice of medicine, but also in the foods that we eat and the exercise we take and the weight that we carry, and many other things that are of relevance to people who are trying to preserve the bodies that God has given us.

So Dr. Richard Furman is back with us today, and we're not going to talk primarily about medicine today, although we could. We're going to be talking about the man himself and his passion and what he's doing now. Dr. Furman, it's always a pleasure to have you as our guest.

**Dr. Richard Furman:** It's a real pleasure to be here.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Furman is past president of the North Carolina Chapter of the American College of Surgeons and the past president of the North Carolina Surgical Society. He has been a two-term governor of the American College of Surgeons. He's got vast experience, 30 years in the practice of medicine. And he has also co-founded something I want to talk about now, which is the World Medical Mission, the medical arm of Franklin Graham's ministry, Samaritan's Purse. You get your fingers in a lot of pie, don't you?

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, whether I try or not, it seems to happen.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well, let's go back to the Medical World Mission. What is that? I know a little bit about it because I came to speak at the Cove to 400 physicians who had been brought together by World Medical Missions. And you and I met and developed a friendship that will last as long as you and I do, I think. And we sat together at a banquet and realized how much we have in common. And at that time, you described for me the 400 physicians at that time who came to that conference who were themselves devoting their lives to people in medical need on the mission field. Explain how you came to start that.

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, it is one of those stories where it's always good to look back and see the Lord's hand in what's been happening because it's a story that I could have never put together. Franklin Graham could never put together, nor my brother. But it started, Franklin Graham was a senior at Appalachian State University, which was in Boone, North Carolina, where my brother and I were surgeons. And Franklin and I became friends because we rode motorcycles together.

Dr. James Dobson: Still do.

Dr. Richard Furman: Still do. And during that time, my brother and I, Lowell and I went to a Billy Graham crusade in Asheville, North Carolina, and they found out we were surgeons, and they asked if we would give four to six weeks of the next year to go to India to work at a mission hospital, which we did. Well, we got over there and our eyes were opened. No comparison to the need at Mission Hospitals compared to Boone, North Carolina or anywhere else in the U.S. So we came back and we told Franklin, "Hey, we need to start an organization where we encourage doctors to go to these mission hospitals." And he said, "That's not a need." I won't say we argued, but we discussed that he didn't think it was a need. So he said he would write some hospitals to see if there was a need. He wrote 29 hospitals, 18 of them wrote back and said, "Yes, send them now. We need doctors short term now."

Dr. James Dobson: I said at the top of the program, you and I have quite a bit in common. I was at USC School of Medicine, you were going through what you just described, and the year was the same. 1977.

Dr. Richard Furman: 1977.

Dr. James Dobson: You were describing the World Medical Mission. I was starting focus on the family virtually at the same time. And I didn't know you didn't know me, but the Lord was working in both our lives. Here we are here today talking about our passion for what the Lord led us to get involved in those days. The World Medical Mission has gone on now. Even when I was there two years ago, there were 400 physicians there. You're now sending more than 600 per year.

Dr. Richard Furman: Right. The first year we sent seven doctors out, and that's why I was pointing out, it is nice to look back and see the Lord's hand in what you've done. We're now sending over 700 doctors a year to different admission hospitals. We supply 42 different mission hospitals.

Dr. James Dobson: And these guys pay their own way.

Dr. Richard Furman: They pay their own way. Our expertise is knowing where the need is. If a surgeon calls and says, "Hey, he can take four weeks off or six weeks off," we can tell him, "Okay, there is the need for a general surgeon. The greatest need is in Bangladesh at [inaudible 00:07:37] Hospital in Bangladesh," and we'll send him there. If it's at Tenweck Hospital in Nairobi, we'll send him there or her there. But that's the idea is that we know where the need is. So-

Dr. James Dobson: And the need is enormous. It's tremendous. You're seeing dying children. You're seeing people with huge girders or tumors or cancers. You're seeing people with heart disease. You're seeing people who have genetic malformations, cleft lip and so on. It must be tremendously rewarding to go to people who have no money to pay. They don't know and may not be able to even thank you adequately for what you do. And yet the Lord has sent your physicians in at their own expense to try to treat these in many cases, very pitiful patients.

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, that's true. And the thing is, most of these mission hospitals give the best care in the country. And these patients can come and get the best care. But the one thing that I want to point out that makes World Medical Mission different than say Doctors without Borders or other organizations that send out for cleft lips or pallets or whatever, that our emphasis is on saving a soul. Now we want to do the very best. We want to make the platform of the very best medical care they can get. That's our platform to tell them about Jesus. And that becomes so important when you think about it. It's much more important to improve the health of the soul than the health of the body because the soul is eternity, is eternal. And that's what we talk to our doctors and we send them there with that idea that we want to do the very best job we can so the people can see that we're Christian doctors and we can present the Lord to them.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, you are asking people not just to go for seven weeks or a summer, a couple of months. You are asking if they want to make a career of this. Are they doing that? Look at these big medical centers that are all over the country. They have the latest of equipment. There's a lot of money to be made there, and you learn a lot in a big medical center. Instead, they're going off to Bangladesh or to Tenweck Hospital, places which barely have enough equipment to treat patients

and give their entire lives to service to the Lord. How do you talk them into doing that?

Dr. Richard Furman: This is the most exciting aspect of World Medical Mission, I feel since we started, and I think it goes back about 10 years. We realized that these hospitals, the doctors were retiring, and they were not getting replaced. So you take a hospital that had five doctors, it gets down to two, then it gets down to one, and then they turn it over to the government, or they turn it into a clinic. Anyway, the mission base is gone. So I started finding out, well, what's the problem? Why are they not getting doctors to go? Well nowadays, these young doctors, they owe so much money. They think, well, they will get out and work for two or three years, pay our debts off, then we'll go to the mission field. But they weren't doing that. So we came up with this plan. We call it the Post-Residency program.

We get them right out of residency and we will support them for two years. We'll find them where the need is, get them to the hospital, and support them for two years in hopes that they would stay on for 32 years. And when we first started, we would send these doctors over just to see if they were a fit for that particular hospital. And we were only getting 20 to 25% that were staying full-time. Well, it just was a wake up call one day. We said, what we are called for, what the Lord's wanting us to do is get full term mission doctors there that'll be there forever, for their life, their mission life, their medical life.

So we changed our application. If you feel called for full-time, medical mission work apply. Our long-term rate has increased to 82%. And that's what we're there. We see these hospitals now flourishing, Franklin Graham with Samaritan's Purse, hospitals were being run down. They needed replenishing. Some needed rebuilding. Samaritan's Purse is rebuilding these hospitals, rebuilding Tenweck and other hospitals, building new operating rooms, built a nursing school at another hospital in Kenya. Anyway, Samaritan's Purse and World Medical Mission has, we feel called to keep these mission hospitals going and to keep our effort is now to sustain the mission hospitals to go now with these new young doctors.

Dr. James Dobson: That must be exciting.

Dr. Richard Furman: It is. It really is.

Dr. James Dobson: And the Lord is blessing in that endeavor too, isn't He?

Dr. Richard Furman: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, most of the Christian world is aware of a man named Kent Brantly, I believe?

Dr. Richard Furman: Right. Kent Brantly.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. And he was in Liberia-

Dr. Richard Furman: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: And contracted Ebola.

Dr. Richard Furman: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: Recall for us that episode, because that's really an inspirational story as well.

Dr. Richard Furman: Kent Brantly. Well, he was one of our post residents that went to Liberia. He went to the hospital, worked there, and Ebola broke out. And as you know, he got Ebola. And he was at the point of death. And it is a good little story about there was a vaccine, a medicine that they were going to try to see if that might help. And that medicine went elsewhere. And finally we got it to the hospital, gave it to him, and he began to improve. We flew him back to Emory Hospital where he was treated and then released, and he will go back to the mission field someday full time-

Dr. James Dobson: He's going to return-

Dr. Richard Furman: He will return.

Dr. James Dobson: And he put himself at risk to treat these seriously ill dying patients and himself paid a price for it. And the Lord healed him with the help of World Medical Missions.

Dr. Richard Furman: Yes. And that's where Franklin Graham and Samaritan Purse came in. They arranged for a flight to get him back to Emory, to get him back to the States. He came so near dying, that medically speaking, he was within hours of dying, and they didn't know if this medicine would work or not. And there was a nurse there that we thought had Ebola, the beginning of Ebola. And Kent Brantly had said, there was just, we thought just one ampule of the medicine. And Kent Brantly said, don't give it to me, give it to her. But as it was frozen, as they were opening it up and throwing it out, saw that there were three ampules that you gave like a week apart, and all of a sudden Kent got worse. And so they decided at that moment, no, let's give it to Kent. And within hours he was improving to the point that we thought he had a chance. And that's where we brought him to Emory.

Dr. James Dobson: I would love to interview him sometime. We had planned and invited him to come and it didn't work out, but maybe we'll get that opportunity. You just got back not too long ago from Mosul in Iraq?

Dr. Richard Furman: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: What took you there?

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, Samaritan's Purse has a field hospital. They've just developed. Kenny Isaacs is in charge of it. He's a great leader. He's put together this mobile hospital that first took down to Ecuador at the earthquake. I was able to fly down with that hospital. It can be put up in 24 hours. Two operating rooms, intensive care unit, just has all the right equipment and to run as a hospital.

Well, World Health Organization, asked if Samaritans first would put that up in Mosul. Now here's the problem. Mosul, a lot of people were being killed. They could get them to ambulances, but there was about 15 miles out of Mosul, they wouldn't let certain ambulances across that border. They wouldn't let certain people across that border. And so a lot of people were dying. World Health Organization asked if we'd put the field hospital inside that boundary.

That was more dangerous because we were closer to all the fighting. But they went in there, they put a big two-foot thick concrete wall all the way around the five acres or whatever it is around the hospital, the field hospital, which is just our tents. And then they had guards with machine guns, all kinds of protection. And that's how it was set up. So I just went over to see what it's like, evaluate it, and see what was going on. And it was a very emotional type situation to realize what ISIS was doing. But we were there with Samaritan's Purse and the field hospital with two chaplains. There were people, Muslims being brought to the Lord because they were in the hospital, and it was just unbelievable what was going on.

Dr. James Dobson: You have developed something that you refer to as a mobile field hospital, which being mobile can go to wherever the greatest need is. One of them in Boone, North Carolina right now, will eventually be, I suppose, more or less deployed to a place of need.

Dr. Richard Furman: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: How many of those do you have?

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, we have one ready to go all the time. And just like when there was the earthquake in Ecuador, we loaded it up, took it down there. We left there for the city because their hospital was destroyed. So that hospital is still being used right now, but we keep one in reserve. So like in Mosul, we had one ready to go. We have that in Mosul. We'll leave it there when we leave. But we have another one whenever it's needed again. But this is something that Samaritan's Purse has put together. They use doctors that can go and stay usually a month at a time. Some are World Medical Mission doctors, some are doctors that just have that interest to go to places like that.

Dr. James Dobson: The more I hear about Samaritan's Purse, the more impressed I am by the mission, by what it accomplishes. I think it was a year ago that I had the opportunity to bring in some friends along with my son Ryan and his son Lincoln, my grandson. And we had an opportunity to visit Samaritan Lodge there

in Alaska, right near to Lake Clark. And they brought in wounded soldiers, including husbands and wives in many cases, restore their marriages and introduce them to Jesus Christ, baptize them.

Many of them are remarried, recommitted to each other. We sat and watched that. And the water at Lake Clark, I guess it's called out there, is frigid cold. And these men who have lost legs or arms or other body parts, walk out into that frigid water and are baptized by the chaplains who are there. It's a wonderful program. I'll never forget that day. My 9-year-old grandson went with us and watched that process and came home and asked to be baptized. And he was. They're just wonderful things like this. You don't call it a camp, what do you call it?

Dr. Richard Furman: No. It is called Operation Heal Our Patriots. And it's a site, what it was was a fishing camp there on Lake Clark and Samaritan's Purse bought it and turned it in... We got volunteers to go up and redo the cabins. And it's really nice, as you know. And we bring in couples, and I think we're the only organization that brings in couples for, it's like a marriage retreat. But there's some, I remember one couple when they got to the airport, the husband, he stomped out. He said, "I'm just not going." And he stomped out of the airport and another friend went and got him and said, "Yeah, you need to go." Well, that couple ended up renewing their marriage vows at the end of the week. So it's that type of situation.

But you mentioned you were impressed with Samaritan's Purse, but we appreciate what you have meant to Samaritan's Purse and World Medical Mission all these years. Like you mentioned, going and talking to all of those doctors about World Medical Mission, about going to mission hospitals.

Dr. James Dobson: I want to say that you guys are doing a fine job.

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, thank you. And you have to realize the main thrust on that, and we're building a church right now in one of those villages or rebuilding a church that was destroyed. And this is how we go into it. We want it to be service to the Lord. We want to glorify the Lord. And so the main thrust is to rebuild the church, go in and help the church. And the communities are small, so they come into the church and that's where we center everything. We make a youth center out of it and try to make it God-centered community rather than all of the drugs and all the problems that you're talking about, because that's their only hope. The Lord's their only hope.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we've been talking to my friend Dr. Richard Furman, and has devoted his life really to the World Medical Mission and has been here several times at Family Talk, and it's a pleasure to have you back. I just wanted our listeners to know the good things that are happening. There's a lot of depression going on in the world today. Everybody feels like it's going to hell in the hand basket, and there are times that I believe it is. Our country's in great trouble, and yet here is something that we can pray for and help to support. And speaking as president

of Family Talk, I'm honored to have the chance to let people know what you're doing.

Dr. Richard Furman: It's a real honor to be here, and we appreciate your input in the Samaritan's Purse and World Medical Mission both.

Dr. James Dobson: Give Franklin my regards.

Dr. Richard Furman: Okay.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a great reminder of how God can use us for great and mighty deeds. That was an encouraging conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his special guest, Dr. Richard Furman, the head of the World Medical Mission.

Now, if you'd like to learn more about the World Medical Mission or Samaritan's Purse, simply go to our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

Dr. Dobson's lifelong mission is to support families in growing closer to God and to becoming healthier and happier. Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we know you'll really be encouraged on your journey with your own copy of the book written by Dr. Dobson called *The Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide*. It's our gift to you 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 book is a go-to guide for families at every stage of life. From toddlers to teenagers.

It also includes information on how to make your marriage last through those ups and downs. Again, to get your copy sent right to your door, simply click the link on the bottom of our broadcast page when you go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Or if you prefer, you can select the resources tab at the top of the page and then click onto store. From there, simply search for *The Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide* and place your order.

I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for joining us today. May God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow closer in your relationship with Him, and be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Well, thank you everyone for tuning into our program today. You may know that Family Talk is a listener supported program, and we remain on the air by your generosity, literally. If you could help us financially, we would certainly appreciate it. God's blessings to you all.