



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Finding Peace in Uncertain Times

Guest(s): Dr. Dobson interviewed by Brian McNulty

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Brian McNulty: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Brian McNulty. I'm sitting in today to help out with a very important program. I'm with Dr. Dobson who has joined me online today. We wanted to come to you with important information on COVID-19, the crisis in front of all of us. But also to talk about the ministry, the James Dobson Family Institute, and some of the things that we're doing here now to continue to reach you. With that, Dr. Dobson, welcome.

Dr. Dobson: Thank you, Brian. It's good to hear your voice. People should know you're Vice President of Media at Family Talk, and it's a real opportunity for me to get to work with you.

Brian McNulty: Well, thank you. It's always a joy to work with you. The entire team that's come around us in this new time of challenge, they've risen to the case and we're so grateful for everyone that works each day to make the radio program. I need to ask you, how are you doing and how is Shirley doing?

Dr. Dobson: Well, so far, Brian, we're doing very well. We're sequestered in a small condo out of state where I go to write my books, and I'm working on my 72nd book. That's how I'm spending my time here. I just absolutely love being with Shirley. I've always felt that way about her. We've been married for 59 years and it's amazing I don't get bored with her. And we're enjoying this time even though it's a stressful time because of what's going on in the country. We're just trying to ride out the storm like everybody else. Our daughter, Danae, comes and goes. She makes forays to the market for food and supplies, and we only leave the house to get exercise by walking the streets in the afternoon.

I want to tell you it's a very eerie experience because there's no one here, no one there. This is a busy place. It's usually bustling with people, but now almost no cars go by and it's like we're alone in the universe. I'm sure many of our listeners are experiencing the same thing, but America has never seen anything like this, and the stress level I think it competes with World War II.

As for our extended family, including our grandchildren, they appear to be healthy and we're very, very grateful for that.

Brian McNulty: Dr. Dobson, you have a staff of almost 50 at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. And I know that when this started to materialize as a reality, last month even you were talking about it, and now it's a world pandemic and it's come to the US, you wanted to make sure that your staff was okay. Tell me what plans were made so that they could keep working from home.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah. Well, I just said that we are sequestered to try to avoid the virus. We've tried to do the same thing for our JDFI staff there in Colorado Springs, and we're just praying that the Lord will bless them and care for them, too. We have, speaking of Shirley and me, we've never taken a salary, so that isn't an issue. But our ministry was ahead of the curve in asking our entire team to stay home for the foreseeable future, so they've been there for a couple of weeks, and we are continuing to pay their full salaries because we care about them too.

And as a matter of fact, this is not a commercial, but I would really appreciate those in our listening audience who can help us do that, to make whatever contribution they can. I know you've got your own pressures and problems, but we're asking our friends to help us maintain this support for our great coworkers. We really do consider them part of our family.

Brian McNulty: Well, we feel the same way. You and Shirley have done nothing but be servant leaders throughout every step of this ministry. Anyone listening, your newsletter, your amazing monthly newsletter that comes in the mail, a lot of people receive that, and if you aren't receiving Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter, go to drjamesdobson.org and sign up for the newsletter today. That's drjamesdobson.org. The newsletter going to continue?

Dr. Dobson: Oh, absolutely. As a matter of fact, we're continuing in everything that we were trying to do before, we're just kind of spread out and we're improvising. And I'm just really pleased by the incredible gifting of our staff that's been able to get this done, including setting up this conversation. The governor of Colorado has now mandated that people stay home except for essential services. It's kind of technical and difficult to do it, but you guys are getting it done and I want to thank you for it.

Brian McNulty: We haven't seen anything like this. It's almost unprecedented. I'm going to give you a forum to offer advice to parents, okay? Parents who have little kids in the home. What do you say to moms and dads as they struggle with this incredible uncertainty that's before us? They don't know what the future holds. When will they go back to work? What about the money and the bills? Schooling the children. A lot of them have their kids in public or private school. They don't homeschool. What do you say to people are dealing with massive amounts of uncertainty, a litany of issues?

Dr. Dobson:

Brian, if there ever was a time when we need to depend on the Lord, it's now because uncertainty is everywhere. We have countless questions and few answers coming in. But to a degree, life has always been uncertain. This is not new. We never know when we are going to experience what I call a "suddenly," that it'll break into our lives and change everything.

I remember that night when I came home from work and I was making a hamburger for Shirley and dropped it on the floor, and she realized that I'd had a stroke. That changed everything for us and could have been the end of my life, so you never know. You have to depend on the Lord. The situation is set up that way where you have to depend on Him, and that's what Shirley was describing when she wrote her little book, *Certain Peace in Uncertain Times*.

The scripture tells us, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace; whose mind is stayed on thee?" That's Isaiah 26:3. There is no other source for security, not during a crisis like this or any other time. We have to depend on the Lord.

As for what you tell your children, the answers you give them to their questions will depend on their ages, of course. Generally speaking, youngsters... This is really important. I hope everybody hears this. Children draw their sense of security almost entirely from their mothers and fathers. If they sense that their parents are fearful and stressed, that uneasiness will be magnified in the minds of kids.

In other words, you tell them what they need to know such as why they're not going to school and why daddy isn't working, but you do it without terrifying them. Unless it's necessary, don't bring up hypotheticals of hospitals and sickness and other things. Point them to Jesus and assure them that He is our friend. He promises never to leave us; and answer their questions honestly, but also with confidence. Don't let them know you are shaken by this if you are.

Children are products of habit. They don't deal with change very well and this has changed everything. All of a sudden you've got a house full of people who don't leave. You got people on each other's nerves and you got conversations that children are not used to hearing, and it's just made for trouble. It's made for difficulty, and especially with what's going on now. President Trump said recently that this viral attack is very much like a war. And it is.

And I remember a story that I've shared before, I hope I'm not repeating it for too many people. But my great grandmother and I were in the backyard, and this was shortly after Pearl Harbor, and all of this was going on. There was such anxiety, the church people were all talking about it and my parents were talking about it, and I couldn't help but observe it at five years of age. I was standing out there, my great grandmother and I, we called her Nanny, was standing with me and a fighter plane flew over. And we both looked up at it and she said, "Oh my, there's a man up there that we need to pray for."

And I said, "Why, Nanny? Is he going to crash?"

And she said, "No, honey, but there's a man that God loves and he's got a family and we just need to pray for his safety."

I didn't know what she was thinking, which was that young man is going to be in combat very shortly. He's going to be in great danger and we need to pray about it. But the way she put it did not raise anxiety for me. She took it to the Lord and said, "We've got to pray about this."

You just have to be mindful of what children are thinking and feeling. You don't have to raise those anxieties that are so troubling for a youngster.

Brian McNulty: That is a wonderful illustration and God bless your Nanny for doing that.

You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Brian McNulty. I'm the Vice President of Broadcast and Media Services here at the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm jumping in today. Dr Dobson has joined me. He wanted to speak directly with us and answer a few questions and talk about this crisis, the things that are affecting our country and our world.

Dr Dobson, you've referred to it recently on Facebook and online as "our world family in crisis". Can you explain to me what you mean by "a world family" and how would you ask the world to look at this?

Dr. Dobson: I think I've heard that there are 160 countries that are facing this attack from the coronavirus. That's billions and billions of people, and they all have their troubles. I mean, some probably don't have enough food to eat. Some of them are violently ill, some of them have governments in chaos. Who knows in 160 countries what could be going on?

We have to depend on the scripture at this time because it addresses things like this. One of my favorite verses is the 91st Psalm where David is writing and they're going through a civil war and they were in great difficulty at that time. And his comments on that day and what he wrote in that 91st Psalm fits our situation today. Because he says, and I know our listeners are familiar with it, "He who dwells in the shelter of the most high will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in whom I trust. Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers." I love this imagery. "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge: his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night; nor the arrow that flies by day." That refers to war. "Nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness; nor the plague that destroys at midday."

Dr. Dobson: I wonder how many people are listening to us and in the middle of the dark night they have awakened and looked at the ceiling and wondered, "Am I okay?"

Is my family all right? Is everybody going to make it through this?" But the Lord says here He knows our fears and He is with us.

I think it would be a real good idea, depending on the age, to read that 91st Psalm to your children. My grandson was taught to memorize that scripture because it allays the fears that many young people go through, especially young children. And that's one that I would share and there are many, many others.

Brian McNulty: I am so encouraged to hear you bring the Word right to the center of the conversation. Thank you for doing that. And I know our listeners appreciate it too.

I'd like to switch gears and ask you a question about clinical research. Now, a lot of people know you're a doctor. You worked in clinical research at USC. Can you give us any perspective on clinical research and the maze that may be going on right now? What's been done in your estimation for progress on this virus, if any, and what should we be praying for?

Dr. Dobson: Well, none of us can predict where this thing is going. Until and unless our medical scientists can find a cure or a vaccination very quickly, it'll probably be with us for some time. I have confidence in the scientific establishment and they are working feverously to find answers. But until they come up with solutions, it'll probably get worse before it gets better. That's what all the predictions are. But this virus appears to be less deadly than some of those in world history, and that's fortunate. But as far as where this thing's going and how it will unfold, I don't think anybody knows.

Brian McNulty: Well, all eyes back to the Lord. Let me ask you, sir, is there a chance to minister or evangelize in this new dynamic? I mean, I'm in my house, is there something stirring, a movement afoot with millennials and the public-at-large?

Dr. Dobson: Well, you heard the interview that I did just a few days ago with Greg Laurie and Barry McGuire, two great friends. Of course, Greg Laurie is the senior pastor at Harvest Church in Riverside and other places. He's heard around the world. And I had the chance to interview him the other day and it was very moving. If our listeners have not heard that two-day interview, I wish you would get it.

Brian McNulty: That air date was March 26th and March 27th. Go to the broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Click on March and it's right there, March 26 and 27. We're also going to re-air it on the weekend program.

Dr. Dobson: Well, let me address your question directly having to do with the spiritual implications of this. When people are fearful and agitated, as so many people are today, they tend to look to the Lord for solace and for safety, and that appears to be happening on a huge scale today. We can't measure it fully, but we see evidence of it. And it is our hope and our salvation that the Lord is doing something, not only in America but around the world.

People here in this country have run away from the Lord and from His truths in recent years, and they're turning back to what some remember their grandmothers saying when they were children. The answers that they seek right now are where they've always been, and it just really excites me to think that we might see the beginning of a third Great Awakening. We've had two of them in times past, in times of trouble, and it's amazing what happens when there is a change going on, a crisis going on.

Brian McNulty: This is awesome to think that something so positive could come out of this. But how do you respond to those who believe that this could be the beginning of judgment for our sinful world?

Dr. Dobson: I have heard people say that, Brian, and I understand where they're coming from. But it's always risky to begin saying, "this is what the Lord is thinking and doing." And for these reasons, I'm just very cautious about doing that because only time will reveal His plan and purposes.

The scripture in Proverbs 25:2 says, I love this scripture, "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out of matter is the glory of Kings." In other words, God is not going to tell you everything He's thinking and doing, but you will sure see it and it becomes evident as time goes on. We do know that the almighty is a God of both love and wrath. And in that context, America deserves judgment. I think we can all see that.

We've murdered more than 60 million of his precious babies in cold blood, and he was knitting them together in their mother's womb and they were ripped from that place and left to die on a porcelain table. And we've drenched ourselves in pornography and filth. You know only 5% of brides are virgins when they're wed? And on it goes. God sees all that. Does it not seem consistent with scripture that the Lord God Almighty would eventually say it is time for retribution? Is this such a time? I don't know, but He is up to something. And I do know this. God will not be mocked. Isaiah 3:9 says, "The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sins like Sodom. They do not hide it. Woe to them. They have brought disaster upon themselves."

In answer to the question, we know that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and he will not be silent forever. But his justice and his love are our mainstay. Is this a time of judgment? I don't know. I hope no one will quote me in saying I think it is, but I think it sure could be.

Hey, Brian, as we come to the close here, can I ask you a question? Let me turn the tables on you and ask you a question.

Brian McNulty: By all means.

Dr. Dobson: Share with our listeners about Family Talk and about its reach at a time like this. Everyone seems to be asking similar questions and we don't just speak to

people through radio, but through the media generally. Talk about those other platforms and avenues that we're depending on.

Brian McNulty: That's right. We are on over 1300 radio stations daily, and that is certainly a way to access the program. But also you've got Facebook, and we're putting posts up of encouragement and hope and positive information every single day. We also have videos that take some of our content and redesign it, and those are up on Facebook and on our website.

To minister, to touch is something that we love to do. I think you would agree it is purpose-driven work, and everyone that is here at the ministry loves to work on the person-to-person level.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Brian McNulty: People may not know this. Our constituent service line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and we're there to pray with you. You can dial us at any time at (877) 732-6825 and speak to someone who is there to listen and pray with you.

A lot of ministries are doing great work at this time. We're just happy to be one of them. The radio program, the newsletter, the social media, the appearances that you've made on other radio and TV programs, I think it's all part of our country coming together. Would you agree?

Dr. Dobson: Well, it's what I was making reference to a few minutes ago. That as the church, as a physical body, the building that we have called the church is not able to do its work face-to-face because of the virus. We turn to all these other avenues that the Lord has made possible and it probably reaches far more than would have been reached sitting in pews.

Brian McNulty: Dr. Dobson, as we close, would you be willing to pray for us?

Dr. Dobson: What do you think, Brian? Prayer is the centerpiece of everything we're trying to do. It's a pleasure to not only pray in this context of an interview, but to pray with people who are listening. Let's all do that.

Heavenly Father, we come before you in humility and reverence today, knowing that you care for every one of us. You see all the fearful people out there who just feel absolutely lost today in this time of upheaval and chaos. You see the sick and the wounded. You alone know the future. We ask you to have compassion on your children. Draw us to you as the Psalmist wrote, "That He would cover you with His feathers and under His wings you would find refuge. His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."

For those who don't know you personally, I pray that you will touch each one of them and draw them into a relationship with you. And I pray that they will

repent of sins and you will grant them salvation and wholeness. Assure them that their sins will never be remembered again as far as the East is from the West. Enter into a precious relationship that offers eternal life to each one who believes and accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and savior.

Thank you again for hearing our plaintive prayer today. Lord, we don't have all the answers. We don't know where this is going and there is a spirit of fear out there. Settle that anxiety, I pray, and may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Roger Marsh: This is Roger Marsh and you've been listening to a special Family Talk broadcast. Dr. Dobson has been talking about the current COVID-19 crisis with our Vice President of Broadcasting, Brian McNulty.

I pray that you've been encouraged by Dr. Dobson's words here on this program. This certainly is one of the most troubling times in our history, but thankfully our God is unchanging and faithful no matter the circumstances. Now if you'd like to know more about trusting in God, we encourage you to call us at (877) 732-6825. Our staff is still taking phone calls and we would love to hear from you. Our number once again is (877) 732-6825.

And while you're on the phone with us, be sure to ask about Mrs. Shirley Dobson's book called *Certain Peace in Uncertain Times*. This is an insightful resource which will lift your spirits during these anxious moments that we're experiencing as a nation. Request your copy of the book *Certain Peace in Uncertain Times* by calling (877) 732-6825. Or you can go online to drjamesdobson.org.

Well, that's all the time we have for today. Be sure to tune in again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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