



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Fit Over 50: Make Simple Choices Today for a Healthier You– Part 2

**Guest(s):** Dr. Walt Larimore

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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:** Well, welcome to this Friday edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh with your host, psychologist and best-selling author, Dr. James Dobson. Thanks so much for joining us today. God has tremendously blessed our ministry during these past few years, despite the national and global unrest. We truly appreciate your faithful and consistent support and we continue to fight for the institution of the family thanks to your prayers and your financial contributions. Now, let's get to today's program. In just a moment, we're going to hear the second half of Dr. Dobson's conversation with his good friend, Dr. Walt Larimore. They'll continue discussing Dr. Larimore's 2019 book called *Fit Over 50*. This book encourages believers to have a balanced, healthy lifestyle in all spheres of their life.

On yesterday's broadcast, Dr. Larimore explained how we can accomplish that goal. He described how our relational, emotional, physical, and spiritual health must all be cared for. Today, Dr. Dobson and his guest will give some specific examples of where people often struggle in each of those health categories. Now, before we begin, let me remind you of some of the accomplishments that Dr. Walt Larimore has achieved.

He retired from direct patient care in December 2021 after serving for 41 years as a family physician. He also delivered 1,500 babies during that time, as well. He completed his residency in Family Medicine at Duke University Medical Center back in 1981 and completed a general practice teaching fellowship at Queens Hospital in Nottingham, England, back in 1978. He previously served as vice president and family physician in residence at Focus on the Family. He did so from 2001 to 2004. Dr. Larimore is also, an award-winning medical journalist and a best-selling author of more than 40 books, including the topic of today's program, *Fit Over 50: Make Simple Choices for a Healthier, Happier You*.

Walt and his childhood sweetheart, Barb, have been married for 49 years and they make their home in Colorado. They have two grown children and two grandchildren. As we begin this second half of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Dr. Walt Larimore, Dr. Dobson will ask Walt about some research that he cited

in *Fit Over 50*, that has to do with prayer. Now, there's a lot of ground to cover, so let's get started.

Dr. James Dobson: You have the results of some research done on prayer in your book and I think you wrote that only 50% of the people pray every day.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Yeah, it's just... And it seems like it...

Dr. James Dobson: Half the people don't pray.

Dr. Walt Larimore: We've got kids that say, "What's God's will for me?" Well, God's will for you is that you rejoice always.

Dr. James Dobson: Pray without ceasing.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Pray without ceasing that it becomes spiritual breathing for you as you go through the day. People say, "Well, I don't have time to pray." And I'll say, "You do it as you go." You don't have to necessarily... It's nice to carve out time. And, was it, Charles Wesley who said, in his busiest time of his life, he didn't have time not to pray and prayed an hour every day, but God waits to hear from us?

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. Now, let me ask the question that some are thinking. "I don't know how to pray. You're talking about walking into the presence of the God of the universe and making a little speech to Him. I don't know how to do that." Help them.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Yeah, Jim, my encouragement to people is that prayer is not some sort of formal, mystic activity. It's just conversation. So, however you imagine God, a father, a grandfather, a best friend, a mentor, a guide, a coach, just talk to Him and maybe that's questions. Maybe it's listening to Him by reading His Word. I use a little thing that I was taught by my mentor, and that was, if today is the 30th of the month, then I read Proverbs 30. It's my discipline for the last 45 years. And then, I read Psalm 30. It's the 30th of the month. So, I read Psalm 30 and then, I add 30, I read Psalm 60 and Psalm 90 and Psalm 120. And it takes 10 minutes, 15 minutes.

Maybe it's journaling for you, even if you have never journaled. I have a young man I'm mentoring now. He doesn't write. He doesn't journal. And yet he's begun. Just got a little tiny notebook, it's real thin, and every morning, he just takes a few minutes. He either writes God, a question or two, or a statement or two, or a request or two. Use an old, I call it, the CATS, of confession in the morning, just to confess anything where I've fallen short and the "A" of CATS is adoration. It's just, God, I adore you and Jim, we live in Colorado Springs. We can look out our window and just adore the Lord with the Rockies that we see.

Dr. James Dobson: It is beautiful.

Dr. Walt Larimore: The confession, adoration, thanksgiving. Lord, thank you for life. Thank you for what you've given me. Thank you for even giving me the desire to pray and that "S" of CATS is supplication, just whatever your requests are, but write that down and then, visit it the next day, and the next day, and the next day. And Jim, that tiny little seed, that tiny little spark, God, haven't you found? God will honor that.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, absolutely.

Dr. Walt Larimore: You'll want not to miss that time. It becomes an intimate special time.

Dr. James Dobson: When I'm going out the door, even if we've already prayed, there are times when we will say, we dare not leave this house, this day, without going in the spirit of the Lord. We don't know what waits out there for us. It may be good news, bad news. We don't know what's there. He does. Just ask for His blessing on this day. Not that everything will go right, because that's not life, but knowing that He's there, and He's with us, and He understands.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: It just puts a different cast on the entire day. Let me go back to what we were talking about before, last time. Talk about sleep, especially as you get older, there is a myth, I believe, that you need less sleep as you get older. I don't find that true in my life. Is that a myth?

Dr. Walt Larimore: That's a total myth. The research doesn't show that at all. God has designed us for rest. He's designed us, not only for the Sabbath rest, but He's designed us for sleep. Those who have computer thinking, this is your time to reboot. So, this morning, I was doing some writing and things were junking up and I knew, it's time to reboot. I just need to clean out some of those old files and restart with resting the computer, reboot it, and everything worked better. That's how sleep's designed to be. But I also believe that sleep, this is just my individual belief, is that sleep's a time that God, in our spirit, communicates. That God, in our spirit, communicates with us, subconsciously. Don't you find there's times that you wake up in the morning and you feel like the Lord's reminded you of something? And I think that happens with sleep.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes. Well, the book we're talking about is *Fit Over 50: Make Simple Choices Today for a Healthier, Happier You*. This book is loaded with practical advice. In the program, yesterday, you said you don't talk at all about dieting and I understand that, but you do talk about diets.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Oh, but nutrition, it's critical.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Dr. Walt Larimore: It's critical and it's not supplements. You and I have talked about alternative medicine supplements for 25 years, and I'm a fan of anything that has evidence showing that it works, but in the supplement world, which is a non-regulated world, in our country. We're the only advanced civilization in the world that does not regulate natural medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements. So, much can be said in advertising and on the internet and TV.

Dr. James Dobson: A lot of junk too.

Dr. Walt Larimore: A lot of junk that's just not true, but what is crystal clear, is that good nutrition benefits us from our head to our toe. And so, every year, the *U.S. News and World Report* gathers together between 60 and 90 nutritional and health experts and they look at all of the literature on all of the nutrition plans, all of the diets, and then, they rate them based upon the evidence of what's the best diet for a diabetic or someone with cardiovascular disease, or someone who wishes to lose weight, for example. Which is the best commercial plan? And they rate them all. And, I think, they rate between 60 and 70 plans. And in the most recent year...

Dr. James Dobson: Let me guess. It's a Mediterranean diet.

Dr. Walt Larimore: By far. By far. And it's not that the Mediterranean diet is a particular, specific diet. It's just that it is a diet from around the Mediterranean countries. And the Mediterranean diet in Italy is far different than Southern France, which is far different from Spain, which is far different from Northern Africa.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. What is it?

Dr. Walt Larimore: But they have similarities.

Dr. James Dobson: What is it?

Dr. Walt Larimore: Well, the similarities are lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, dairy products, most of them have a little bit of wine, but you don't have to have that component if you're not led that way. Not a lot of highly saturated meat, not a lot of red meat, but there's freedom in that area. So, it's a good, nutritious, wholesome natural diet.

Dr. James Dobson: When I think of Italy, I think of pasta, but you don't mention that.

Dr. Walt Larimore: We don't because some of the pasta can be helpful, especially in the milieu of that entire nutritional plan. If it's just pasta by itself, well, then you've got a lot of starch there. You don't have more of the negative carbs, if you would. If you think in terms of protein, carbohydrates, and fat, there are good and bad forms of each. There's good fat, and there's bad fat, and there's good carbs, and there's bad carbs, and there's good protein, and there's bad protein. So, even with pasta, having a whole grain pasta is a little bit healthier than one that's not,

but the pasta's not the main part of the meal. It's a small part of the meal. So, it's, actually, in Italy, just a small part of one of the courses. And I've had the privilege. Barb and I have had five sabbaticals in Italy. It's our sabbatical heaven, if you would. And the pasta dishes in Italy are very small. It's not like ordering a pasta dish here in America where you can feed a family of five with it.

Dr. James Dobson: How about the red sauces?

Dr. Walt Larimore: Mm-hmm.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Is that included in the Mediterranean diet?

Dr. Walt Larimore: It is. It is.

Dr. James Dobson: That's what I think of.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Well, it's because it's the stewed and cooked tomatoes and it's interesting that tomato is a wonderfully healthy food, but in a stewed, cooked fashion, may even have more health benefits, some of the nutritionists tell us.

Dr. James Dobson: This book depends a whole lot on discipline. You don't talk about that, but that's really what it is. In order to maintain a healthy lifestyle, you do have to exercise discipline at all levels. Exercise, what you eat, and seeing a physician regularly, there's a lot of discipline involved here. How do you get that, if you don't have it?

Dr. Walt Larimore: Let's use you as an example. So, when you and I first met, I think you had, at that day, just walked for the 2900th day or something. What was your largest number in all the...?

Dr. James Dobson: I don't know, but it's gone on for 26 years.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Well, the first day you decided to start walking every day, you didn't walk five miles. What'd you walk?

Dr. James Dobson: I had just had a heart attack. So, I had to work my way up and out of that.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Bingo.

Dr. James Dobson: It's amazing what that exercise did.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Bingo, but you had to start...

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Walt Larimore: With a small step. So, the premise of this book is that, look at these steps and then, pick one that's simple, that you want to do, that you can do, and start it,

and start slowly. And then, when you have success with that step, then, out of the 200, pick the next one that you want to do, but don't do it by yourself. If you live alone, pick a friend or an accountability partner that will join you in this journey to health, or if it's your family, maybe it's your kids, or maybe it's your grandkids. For me, it's Anna Kate, and Sarah who Skype Barb and I, or FaceTime Barb and I, every week. And, "What step are you taking now Papa?" They call Barb, honey. "What step are you taking now?" They're our little accountability partners.

Dr. James Dobson: My wife, Shirley, has a lifelong commitment not to sweat. She hates exercise. She hates it and she knows she has to do it. She knows she must. And yet, she fights it like crazy and I've had great difficulty getting her to come down to our exercise place, which is in the basement and I don't like going down there by myself. I want her to come with me and so I've hounded her about it. Finally, one day, she came down and she was carrying her little white shoes. She has very small feet and she said, "Okay, I give up, I'm going to do it."

Dr. Walt Larimore: Wow.

Dr. James Dobson: "I'm going to do it. I'm starting today. This is the day. I'm going to put these shoes on. I'm going to get on the treadmill and I'm going to exercise every day. But, before I do, I've got a phone call to make." She ran up the stairs and she didn't come back and one year later, those little white shoes were still leaning against the wall. She has now done it and she is doing it. I'm very proud of her.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Oh, wait. It may have been, a year ago, or whenever it was, that, that would not be the step for her to pick. It might be something else, but then find someone who...

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it wasn't a whole lot she would've picked.

Dr. Walt Larimore: In fact, we've got information about the research, now. They call it, "bathing in nature," of the health benefits of getting outside, even research in the urban cities, of people who will go and just sit in a park or sit in a green space or even an empty lot, but to get outside, a little fresh air, a little green, and the health benefit that, that has emotionally, and the health benefit that it has physically. Well, can you combine a little quiet time with a little walking, with a little sitting outside, or maybe walking at a park, but how can you put some of these things together?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Where you have a healthy meal, but you have it with a couple of friends or maybe a couple that you're mentoring. So, how can you find? Find some steps you like. Begin to do them with someone else that'll hold you accountable and be a partner with you and then, begin to see that these proven techniques blossom in your own life.

Dr. James Dobson: What happens when you have a patient who plays by the rules, he's not healthy, and he knows it, and he believes you, and begins to change his life? What happens to his demeanor and his emotional stability? Is it almost an inevitable consequence from doing that?

Dr. Walt Larimore: Well, what's interesting is, a couple feedbacks that people get as they begin to get healthier is people say, they look younger. They'll say, "What vitamin are you taking? What's your simple technique? You look younger, you look better," but as really overweight people begin to lose weight, they can start getting negative feedback. Because people say, "What's wrong with you? Are you sick?" Because you're actually getting to a normal weight and it's so uncommon, in our society, now, that you begin to look abnormal, but it gives you a chance to testify. A chance to bear witness, if you would, that, "No, I'm just eating better. I'm beginning to work out. I've lost weight. My numbers are improving. I feel better than I ever have." Now, where I thought you were going to go is what about the person who begins this process and then, hits a roadblock.

They have that TIA, or that stroke, or something goes wrong and we talked, the last time, about how I believe that when you had your stroke and when you had your prostate cancer, it was because you were improving your health, that you did so well with those and so, there is benefit, even in the midst of the storm. You think of the palm tree, that's healthy, that's deeply rooted, and you think of the palm tree that's not, and you think of the same hurricane winds hitting each and one gets blown down and one weathers the storm and comes back more strongly. I think that's the picture of the health that God gives us in Scripture, is that we're to start strong, continue strong, finish strong, to grow to know Him more deeply and sweetly, while making Him known to others. We glorify Him with our body and, Jim, that's how you started us out yesterday.

That, that isn't just a suggestion, but that's our commandment. You hear people say, don't we, in church, all the time, they say, there's the three T's. You need to steward your talent and your treasure, right? And your time. Well, let's add a fourth T. And that is, the temple of the Holy Spirit. That God commands us to steward our time, our talents, our treasure, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. So, what the research shows is that the more evangelistic a person is, the less healthy they are, that the more conservative of us religious folks tend to be more overweight. Maybe it's those potluck dinners. I don't know, but, Church, it's time to wake up and steward the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. James Dobson: Is this book written for those that have really got a lot of work to do and they need help in getting started?

Dr. Walt Larimore: It is.

Dr. James Dobson: I think that's what you've done here is you've shown the pathway, how they can address the things that they've worried about. We all want good health, goodness. And so, and yet, we don't know exactly how to muster all that discipline we've talked about.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And this book starts them on the right path.

Dr. Walt Larimore: And it can be a gift to someone whose over 50. Someone you've been praying for or you're thinking for, and you want to help them spiritually, and you want to help them physically. What's fascinating, to me, is, and we had so many wonderful endorsements for this book. I couldn't believe how they came in, but so many people who endorsed the book said, could you change the name? Because everything you talk about here applies to younger people also.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Yeah. It's not just over 50.

Dr. Walt Larimore: So, read it before you give it away. I think you'll find benefit.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, in the program, yesterday, Walt, you talked about four wheels to health. Tell us what those four wheels are again, summarize for us, what we have just heard.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Well, when people are lifting barbells, they'll do reps or they're doing pushups and they'll do reps. And so you can remember that exercise term reps. And so, the R is relationships. It's being in healthy, nontoxic, accountable, loving relationships with family and with others. Family, friends, your faith community that... R is reps. The E is for emotional and mental health that we work to be as emotionally healthy as we can. And there's not many people in this room or listening to this program, that haven't had emotional scars in the past, that don't... Carry emotional burdens and learning to heal from those and grow from those, is the second of the four wheels.

Dr. James Dobson: In the book, you refer to that arena with two words, avoiding anger and forgiveness.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Forgiveness. Two chapters, one on each. Anger, cynicism, bitterness eats at a person's soul. Unforgiveness is, we've always heard the analogy. Unforgiveness is trying to poison someone else by drinking dilute cyanide, you harm yourself. You eat out your own heart. Jesus commands us to forgive others as He forgives us. And so, that doesn't mean you forget. In fact, I don't think we do forget, but it means forgiving. It's an ongoing active process. Spent a whole chapter talking about the health benefits of forgiveness and the health harms of unforgiveness. And the same thing happens with anger, cynicism, and bitterness.

If we've got people listening that are angry people, they need to learn to deal with that. And that may, actually, require some pastoral counseling or even a Christian counselor to help you figure out how to overcome that. I think the easiest way I envision it is, in my mind, all anger comes from unmet expectations.



Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Walt Larimore: That if you expect something, mildly, and it doesn't happen, you'll be disappointed. If you expect something strongly and it doesn't happen, you'll be angry. So, if you get angry, to me, the simple thing is fair. What was I expecting? And then, Jim, the critical question is, is that expectation righteous or not?

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Arch Hart, who was a guest on this program many, many years ago, you know him.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Wonderful man.

Dr. James Dobson: And he had the best definition for anger and forgiveness, in a simple phrase. He says, "Forgiving is giving up my right to hurt you, for hurting me."

Dr. Walt Larimore: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: It's letting it go. It's not saying the other person was not wrong in what that person did.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: The chances are, he or she was, that it is saying, "I'm not going to hold you accountable for that and I'm going to give up my right to strike back at you for hurting me."

Dr. Walt Larimore: Do you remember, when you were interviewing R.T. Kendall, from Westminster?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, that was a wonderful program.

Dr. Walt Larimore: *Total Forgiveness* was the book and he looked at you and he said, "Dr. Dobson, if I choose not to forgive someone, I am not giving them what I've asked God to give me."

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, man. That's moving.

Dr. Walt Larimore: It may not be an exact quote.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh yeah, I think it is.

Dr. Walt Larimore: It was powerful.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. When we were at Focus on the Family, that book and that interview was number one for the year.

Dr. Walt Larimore: And no surprise. Forgiving is living. And I encourage you to explore the chapter on anger and forgiveness. And if you're dealing with that or someone you love is dealing with that, it can be lifesaving and life changing to help them begin to deal with that.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. I think we've covered two wheels. We've got about 30 seconds for the other two.

Dr. Walt Larimore: So, R-E-P-S, reps. So, the relationship health, "E" is the emotional health, "P" is the physical health, and as we've talked about for two shows now, "S" is spiritual health.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Walt Larimore: And for any of our listeners who are wrestling with that, who haven't yet come to peace with God, the gospel is explained in this book. Read it, pray about it, think about it. And if you will take that step of inviting Him in, He will change your life, relationship, emotional, physical, and spiritual, starting that day and forever and ever. And, Jim, you've preached that for how many years?

Dr. James Dobson: Quite a while. We are going to close with this question to you. Dr. Walt Larimore, are you living up to your own standard?

Dr. Walt Larimore: I practice what I preach, but only because I have a wife, and two children, and two grandchildren, an accountability partner, and a mentor who hold me accountable. Jim, I don't think I would alone, but the body of Christ isn't designed to be alone. It's designed to be a body. And so find folks, that'll walk this journey with you. Prayerfully, you'll be successful.

Dr. James Dobson: Thanks for being with us on these two days. I've really enjoyed talking to you. Thank you for being our guest the 81st time, maybe. And let's do it again.

Dr. Walt Larimore: Jim Dobson, I love you, and I appreciate you, and thank you for this privilege.

Dr. James Dobson: It's mutual.

Roger Marsh: Well, what a practical, insightful, and inspiring interview we've heard over the past couple of days, here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and I hope you've enjoyed this discussion. As a quick reminder, the four types of health that Dr. Dobson and Dr. Walt Larimore emphasized on today's program are relational health, emotional health, physical health, and spiritual health.

By the way, you can learn more about Dr. Walt Larimore, the book, *Fit Over 50* and his many other helpful writings by visiting our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and then, once you're there, hit the tab marked "Today's Broadcast." If you have any questions about Family Talk or the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, be sure to give us a call as well.

Our phone number is (877) 732-6825. And we are standing by 24/7 to answer your questions, to take your prayer requests, to pray with, and for you. Again, that number is (877) 732-6825. Well, that's all the time we have for today and for this week, be sure to join us again on Monday for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Till then, I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you have a blessed weekend.

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