



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Jesus Followers – Part 2

Guest(s): Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. And today, we present to you part two of a conversation between our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton and his special guests, Anne Graham Lotz and her daughter, Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright. Our guests are discussing their book called *Jesus Followers: Real-Life Lessons for Igniting Faith in the Next Generation*. This conversation originally aired in the beginning of the year and both parts one and two are included in our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection. Now, if you enjoyed part one on yesterday's program, I know you'll enjoy part two. And if you'd like to hear both parts in their entirety all in one sitting, just visit drjamesdobson.org. While you're there, would you consider making a year-end gift to Family Talk? Did you know that we have a matching grand in place? That's right. You can double the impact of your donation. So any gift you make to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute will automatically be doubled now through the end of the month. To make your donation online, just visit drjamesdobson.org.

Now, a bit about our guests for today's program. Anne Graham Lotz is the daughter of renowned evangelist, the late Reverend Billy Graham. She's an international speaker and a best-selling author. Anne is also president of AnGel Ministries in North Carolina. Rachel-Ruth is Anne's daughter. She has shared God's word at numerous events across the country and serves on the board of directors for AnGel Ministries. Rachel-Ruth is a graduate of Baylor University and she's married to Steven Wright. Together, they have three daughters.

Now, as some of you may know, last year, Rachel-Ruth suffered a serious heart ailment and was in intensive care for a quite some time. We asked you to pray for her, and you did. I'm pleased to tell you that she has recovered, is managing here condition and is back to ministering to others. That's good news indeed. Now, let's listen to part two of their conversation on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: So great to have both of you back Anne and Rachel-Ruth, it's such a delight to have you on the broadcast today.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you for having us back. It's one thing to be invited the first time, but then to be invited back, that's a special privilege. So thank you so much, Tim.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, we love the truth, we love the stories and we love strategies about how to win this war in because we're in a battle. The Scripture says, "Train up a child and the way he or she should go, and when they're old, they won't depart from it." Their mom and dad's listening right now, they want to claim it, they are claiming it. They're saying, "God, please, help us in our family," and you guys are helping us on that journey. Congratulations again on your new book, *Jesus Followers: Real-Life Lessons for Igniting Faith in the Next Generation*. And let me come back to you and let's start out this way. We're in a battle. I think everyone listening knows that it seems like all hell is against our families. I don't know what's happening in modern day culture, but it's a war. Speak to the issue of the fight that you see. What are you seeing out on the front lines?

Anne Graham Lotz: If I could say this, that if you're saved, if you've been to the cross and put your faith in Jesus, you have potential for God. So that's not up for grabs.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love that.

Anne Graham Lotz: And some people have it more publicly than others, but we all are called to be followers of Jesus, to witness, to our faith, to worship Him, to walk with Him, to work for Him. And that can take all different avenues. So I believe it's not just people who are visual or visible in the Christian community, leaders that we know as household words that are under attack, I believe all believers are under attack. I feel like what's against us in our culture is an anti-Christ, anti-God movement. And when they try to redefine marriage, that was shaking their fist in God's face. When they try to redefine genders, that's shaking their fist in God's face.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Anne, I'm so with you on that, we're in a fight. Rachel-Ruth, you know what I love is I love how you come back. You understand today's generations, you know there's so much competing for our attention, for our affection. There's so much moving us away from God and ripping at the family, but you're fighting for the family. You want to challenge young families to get this right. You've got three daughters, you're in the middle of the fight, speak to the issue what your mom's talking about.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: She always says the demons have been unleashed. And so they are going after this young generation. And it is so sickening to me to see what's happening. And I think that even that quarantine when everybody had to go into their homes, it really did a number on a lot of kids, including my oldest daughter. I mean it really hit her hard in being confined to the house and not being able to graduate from high school, have a graduation or go to prom or anything like that. And so even though we can say it was a pandemic, all this is really work of the enemy that is trying to deflate these kids' dreams and keep them from going to church on Sunday, get them used to not going into a church building on Sunday. And you can just see the enemy at work here.

And so, if there was ever a time for people who know the Lord to live out their faith in front of people, it's now. And we have got to show them that even in a world where compromise is just what everybody does, we have got to show them, know we're not going to compromise, and we live according to God's Word in every way. We don't just pick and choose, we need to know God's Word for one thing, but live according to God's Word in every way. And it's heartbreaking for me, as a parent, who I have from day one taught them God's Word, I've brought missionaries into the home to share with them, I've done everything I can, and then to have my oldest daughter really struggling with rebellion, it's difficult. But that verse that you read or you talked about at the very beginning, "We train them up and then when they're old, they'll not depart from it." And so that's my prayer, we keep investing, keep loving, loving, loving our kids and being that light to them and then pray that they will come back to the words.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You guys break the book up into four key areas, witness, worship, walk and work. We know this. The Scripture says that the Lord loves righteousness. We also know that Paul said we're to train ourselves up into godliness, that we've got work to do. Just like the athlete you're talking about athletes, we work hard every day, we bust our tail every day to try to compete and to have success. We've got to do the same thing in our faith walk. That's what you're saying here for a moment, right Rachel-Ruth?

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That it really is about, you've got to pour this into our kids and it's not just about religion. There's an attunement piece here that says we've got to have a relationship with our kids and entry point so that when they go through periods of rebellion, they know we're there in the midst of it with them, we're not abandoning them, we're not bailing, we're not coming at them, we're coming alongside of them with this goal, right?

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. In fact, I really walk around tired all the time because I stay up till 1:00 and 2:00 in the morning, so many nights just counseling my girls, listening to them, giving them time. I don't rush them through a conversation because I want to go to bed, I just sit there and listen to them and pray with them and hug them. And I want them to know I'm there for them, I love them. And I think a lot of times it does take a lot of time and it does mean sacrificing other things in your life in order to give your kids that time and attention and love that they really need. Because if they're not getting it from you, they're going to go to somebody else that's going to counsel them wrong or just do whatever they want to do and nevermind anything because nobody cares or nobody's going to give them time.

And so, it's the least we can do as parents and it is something that takes a lot of energy. And so you really have to go all out like you would as an athlete, like you would when you're wanting to lose weight and you're on a diet, whatever it is, we've just got to be very vigilant in that.

Anne Graham Lotz: One of the things Rachel-Ruth has done really well, she doesn't compromise the truth. And I think parents, when they see a child in rebellion or just going a different way, we tend to move the goalposts, we don't want to be so firm, we want to make it easier on them, and so we just let down in our stand on the truth. And Rachel-Ruth has been great in that she has not backed down from the truth, she has not backed down from the boundaries which God has set.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It must put a lot of joy in your heart to see that work in Rachel-Ruth and the girls and more. But Anne, I'll say this, the Word says out of the heart, and so, you can't give what you don't have. So, if you're not spending time in the Word of God, if you're not worshiping the Lord, if you don't have that vibrant relationship, you don't have anything to give. Right?

Anne Graham Lotz: That's right. And I've seen Rachel-Ruth, she talks about me spending hours on the Word, she does also and teaches an online Bible study that because of COVID went viral and she has over 7,000 women worldwide in her Bible study on Tuesdays, but I've seen her spend hours in the Word. When you teach it, you have to spend more time in it. And so, with everything she's got going on, she has spent hours in the word, hours on her knees, and the leftover hours, she spent listening to her girls. So she's busy, no wonder she's tired, but that's what it takes. And if our children don't receive it now, you keep quoting the verse, "When they're old, they won't depart from it." But it doesn't say what happens between the time when you raise them and when they're old, it'd be a time in there that they walk away from it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. I think some people would probably step back and say, "Wait a second, this is the Graham family, this should be natural. This is easy. This is automatic for them." But in the book, Rachel-Ruth, you dedicate a section to the hard work piece of grinding it. It just is we've got to show up every day to get this thing done. If we don't show up, suit up and get after it, it's not going to happen.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Yeah, it's exactly right. It does take a lot of hard work and it needs to be, like you said, out of the heart, the mouth speaks, it has to be something that's in your heart. And I desperately want to know the Lord. I want to love Him. I want to make sure that I'm following living according to His Word because I love Him, I just love Him. And so, I think that's the key, you've got to love the Lord, and then it just naturally, it's hard work, but it comes easy because you just love Him.

Dr. Tim Clinton: One of my prize possessions is a Bible of my dad. Every ounce of open space is written in, you can see his heart, you can see what God was teaching him, you can see what he preached. And as I was going through the book *Jesus Followers* and reading the stories, what I was struck by was the authenticity of this is real-life Graham family. And I looked back and both sides of the family, for your girls, Rachel-Ruth, all the way back up through. But Anne, your mom and dad and the realness, even late in life, your dad, your mom, they constantly bathed in the Word of God and it just flowed out of them. It's natural, and I can see that coming out of you, Anne, I can see it in you, Rachel-Ruth, I can only imagine

what your girls are like. But Anne, tell us about those latter days of your dad's life, your mom's life, and what's in your heart as you reflect on them.

Anne Graham Lotz:

To be honest, there's a lot of grief and emptiness because nobody will take the place in my life with my parents. And my husband went to heaven about three years before my father did, so grief is real. So I don't want to downplay that, but as I look back on the life of my mother and father, my father in particular, my mother seemed to have more life up until the point she went to Heaven. My father got quieter and quieter and when we would pray with him, he would come out with this preaching voice Amen, or I'd read Scripture to him and he would do the same thing. When I read Scripture, you could see in his eyes the strength of his spirit. So his outward man was truly fading away, but his inner man was strong up until the end.

So I don't know why God allowed my parents to linger so long to be so incapacitated, but one of the things I've wondered, Tim, if in doing that they didn't go out with accolades, they didn't go out with banquets honoring them, they didn't go out with medals and awards, they went out lying in bed, unable to do anything for themselves, caregivers who did, and I wonder if it kept them focused and I wonder if it kept them humble. And my mother, she lost her eyesight before my father did through macular degeneration. So she had her secretary printout Scripture verses, the letters on the page had to have been two to three inches tall so you could only get a few words on a page. But she had big black notebooks full of these words where she could read that. And she had them on her bed all spread out and she'd be reading her Bible, but printed out with two or three inch high letters.

And then my father, I think having seen her example, because of macular degeneration, he also could not see or read his Bible. His caregivers printed him out in big posters around his room. Even in his bathroom, he had these big posters of Scripture, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ." And it was just precious, the way they clung to the word, even when they would've had an excuse not do, I can't read it, I can't see it, but they came up with practical solutions to that so they could see it, they could keep reading.

And when Rachel-Ruth and I and my other daughter, Morrow, and my grandchildren would go up when mother left, then we had daddy all to ourselves for about 10 years or more. And so it was so much fun because he gave us his full attention as Rachel-Ruth has said. And she's used that as an example, by the way, in the book of God the Father who gives us full attention. And my father transferred that image of God the Father to my grandchildren and to my children, that when we're in his presence as many people pulling on him, he still gives us his full attention. And Daddy did that. And he was fun. He was sweet. He loved to talk with the girls, they were never intimidated by his old age or feebleness.

And I think some of the grandchildren were, they didn't know how to act around him. But my granddaughters, they loved him so much that they would stand by

the hour by his bed, talk to him, ask him questions, interact, we would sing to him, we would play music for him, we'd read Scripture to him. So it was a very precious time as well as being hard because we had him to go home to. We had him so much to ourselves for so many years and then got that call one morning that he had gone to Heaven. He was waiting for breakfast, and at 99, he just walked into Heaven. So it was stunning in his suddenness, even though at 99 you would think we were expecting it, but precious memories and he finished strong in his spirit.

My mother finished strong, I spent the night with her her last night on earth and she still had that sparkle in her eyes. As Rachel-Ruth is described, still had that joy, still could lift up her hand to welcome me, really precious. So I want to finish strong like they did.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Those moments, those visualizations, they go deep into our heart and our soul. My mother, Anne, lost her eyesight and she struggled late in life. What I remember about her was she loved to listen to tapes a lot. She wanted Scripture read to her, and then she would sit down at the piano and play without eyesight, the old hymns that I would listen to. Sunday morning, she would get out and play the piano before church because she played in church. And so, I can hear all those old hymns and see that's the stuff that goes deep in our hearts. Rachel-Ruth, I'm going to come back to you because there's a connection here. And the connection is your dad died way too young. And you tell the story about your mom taking care of your dad, and you also tell the story of watching your mom battle cancer and more. Take us into what it's done in your heart, what you've seen, what you've witnessed.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: My dad was great. He always said he wasn't a bump on a log. He was so full of life and so much fun and always active. And we always played sports together growing up and just so much fun. And then to see the diabetes that he had wreak havoc on his health and bring him to a point where he was on dialysis for six years, the last six years of his life. And then just all the things that came from that, just really hard. In the last three years in particular, my mom had to take care of him 24/7. So counting out all of his pills and doing all this stuff. At one point, I had to give him his insulin one day and I was like, "Oh." He's like, "Just do it. It'll be fine." And I took the needle and tried to put it in his stomach and I poked him like six times.

And he was like, "What are you doing?" But it was so funny. But he had a great sense of humor about everything and never complained. In fact, his guys, he was such a man's man, and he taught all these men in these Bible studies in the area and they called him God's gladiator. I mean, he really was one of David's mighty men, I mean, what I would've pictured them being like, and just this tough New Yorker, but just so fun. So to see him kind of deteriorate was difficult, it was hard. And when the Lord decided to take him, he was sitting by the pool and that's how my mom found him. And it was probably a sweet way to go because if he had been walking, you could have fallen if he had passed out onto the concrete. But he didn't, it was soft in the pool.

And so, the Lord just gently took him to Heaven because he probably passed out. So as tragic as it was and how I was desperate in the hospital, I'm like, "Dad, don't leave." I mean, I was just begging him to stay even though he was gone, I think he was gone. I'm thankful that he is there because he would not have tolerated everything that's happening right now. He would not have been wearing a face mask. But my dad just, he was great, but it was also difficult for my mom taking care of him, and it wasn't easy. And anybody who knows diabetes, it can make you angry, and when your sugar gets too high or whatever, and mom had to deal with all that and she did it beautifully, beautifully. So here's this woman who speaks on stages and goes to the White House and does all this stuff and now she's in the home with this new calling in her life to take care of dad. And it wasn't easy and mom did it.

Anne Graham Lotz: I just want to interject and just say, I didn't have to do that. That was my joy. I loved taking care of my husband, I loved staying home with him. And yes, there were hard times and yes, he wasn't always pleasant, but I loved Danny Lotz and so it was a pleasure to me. And this is one thing I think God allows us to go through dark times, hard times, fiery trials as Peter describes. And the reason is so that our children and our friends and our family can see the reality of our faith. Because in those dark times, those hard times, when life is crashing and around us or it throws us a curve ball, that's when our faith becomes so evident to people around us. Peter says, it's in those fiery trials that Jesus is revealed. And so, I feel like the Lord allowed me to go through that with my husband and then later with my own cancer journey to show people the reality of Jesus in my life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We are out of time. Anne, I want to give you a first shot of the clothes for us. I want you to speak to those who are out there maybe with some tears in their eyes and they're saying, God, my family, right now, I want you to do a miracle. I want something to happen so that they see Jesus in me and that they'll hold on to that faith because that's the only thing we have.

Anne Graham Lotz: If I can just encourage people who are listening, make sure that you've come to the cross, confessed your sin, told God you're sorry, claim Jesus is God's sacrifice for your sin. Ask Him to forgive you. Believe that He rose up from the dead to give you eternal life. Receive the eternal life He offers. Open up your heart and invite Him to come in, surrender your life and follow Him. Be a Jesus follower all the way from this day forward, all the way home to Heaven, every day of your life. And if you've done that, if you have a firm grip on the baton, then please know God loves you. Yes, He does, God loves you and that's why He gave His own son for you. If nobody else needed a Savior, needed a Lord, He would've sent Jesus to you. God loves you and He loves your family.

So all I can say is get on your knees, tell Him your heartbreak, tell Him your concern, and then just live out your authentic faith in front of whoever's watching your children, your friends, your neighbors, your coworkers, your fellow students, whoever it might be. Just be authentic as you live for Jesus.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Rachel-Ruth, your final comments, I mean, it's never too late.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: That's right. And the thought that came to my mind when you said this was that if you're going through a trial right now, it doesn't mean that the Lord doesn't love you. And whether you've got rebellious kids or a difficult marriage or a death in the family and you just think, ah, just one bad thing after another happens, Jesus loves you and He's teaching you something through this process. So just say, Lord, what is it you're trying to teach me, and cling to the Lord in the difficulties. Because everybody's going through difficulties right now, just cling to the Lord, fall in love with the Lord and love your kids, love them no matter what stage they're in, what hard thing, what difficult thing. If they're doing great, just love your kids and be a light to all those around you because time is short. And so now is the time to put our focus on the Lord and just to spread the love of Jesus to everyone.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a delightful couple of days together. The book *Jesus Followers*, you need to write this down, you need to go up online right now, get your bookstore, get a copy of *Jesus Followers: Real-Life Lessons for Igniting Faith in the Next Generation*. The authors, Anne Graham Lotz and her daughter Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright. Such a joy to have both of you. Again, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, their family, the entire team at Family Talk, we salute you and pray God's continued blessing over both of you. Thank you for joining us.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you so much.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Thank you.

Anne Graham Lotz: God bless you, Tim.

Roger Marsh: Well, that was the conclusion of a touching conversation between our co-host, Dr. Tim Clinton and his guests Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright. Now if you enjoyed this two part discussion, consider getting a copy of the 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection. For a suggested donation of \$50, you can order a six CD set or a digital download version, just visit drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. The digital download order link is featured there in bold and the link is shaded in holiday green. Now to order by phone, just call 877-732-6825. And remember, any gift you give to the JDFI will instantly be doubled by a special matching grant that is in place right up until the end of the year. You'll have to act by midnight on New Year's Eve, December 31st though, to be part of that match. So reach out to us by phone or online today. I'm Roger Marsh and I hope you'll join us again tomorrow for another edition of Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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