



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Essential Legacy of Fathers: A Conversation with Jerry Newcombe – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Jerry Newcombe

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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: Hello and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Family Talk is the listener-supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. To learn more about the ministry and mission of Family Talk, visit drjamesdobson.org.

Since creation really, men have been tasked by God with the responsibility of fatherhood. We are to be accountable for raising our children on biblical principles and offering them godly counsel. Well, today on Family Talk, you're going to hear the first half of a conversation Dr. Dobson recorded a couple of years ago with author Jerry Newcombe. Dr. Newcombe is the executive director of the Providence Forum. He also serves as the senior producer, on-air host, and a columnist for D. James Kennedy Ministries.

He has authored or co-authored 33 books, including *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?*, *A New Birth of Freedom*, and *The Unstoppable Jesus Christ*. In fact, that last title will be the topic of Jerry's conversation with Dr. Dobson today. Jerry Newcombe holds a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in communication. He's also earned a doctorate of ministry as well. He and his wife, Kirsti, have two grown children and three grandchildren, and they make their home in South Florida. Let's join Dr. Dobson and his guest, Dr. Jerry Newcombe, right now on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: With me in the studio today is Dr. Jerry Newcombe. He's the author of a new book called *The Unstoppable Jesus Christ*. He's written 29 books that I know of, probably more than that. He is an award-winning TV producer for D. James Kennedy Ministries. Of course, Dr. Kennedy's gone on to Heaven, but I tell you, he was one of the finest men I ever met and one that I considered to be a very close friend and I miss him today.

But Dr. Newcombe, in that capacity, has been instrumental in producing over 70 one-hour TV programs. He has a master's degree from Wheaton College and a doctorate of ministry from Knox Theological Seminary. He's an associate pastor at New Presbyterian Church in South Florida. He's been married to Kirsti for

nearly 40 years. They have two children, two grandchildren, and one more on the way. Dr. Newcombe, thank you so much for joining us today. It is a real honor to be able to talk to you.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Oh, well, thank you, and the honor is all mine. It's fascinating to me that this has been something I've wanted for years and prayed about, "Please, Lord, let me talk with Dr. Dobson sometime." It's a real blessing to do it. Actually, this is being recorded on the 38th wedding anniversary of my wife and me.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, my goodness.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: 38 years ago, we said, "Ya, I do," in a bilingual service in Norway.

Dr. James Dobson: Congratulations to you both.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you actually came and interviewed me on one occasion. I understand that it was about my dad, but I don't remember much of the detail.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Well, it was in 1993 that I went there to Colorado Springs and I interviewed you. Basically, the gist of the story was that you were going through, as an adolescent or as a teenager, you were going through a bit of a rebellious period or at least a difficult period. Your mother asked your father to reconsider his schedule, because he had a schedule just chockfull of all kinds of preaching assignments.

What he ended up doing was curtailing a lot of those speaking assignments, to a great degree, so that he could stay home and invest more in you, while still doing ministry locally, but he was not traveling on the road so he could invest time with you. It really paid off. You even said in the interview that basically the ministry that God has launched through you, with Focus on the Family and Family Talk, all of the James Dobson Ministries, really were an outgrowth of your dad doing that. Your dad taking that time and investing like that paid off in great spades for all of us.

Dr. James Dobson: That's one of the reasons that I admire him so great and revere him, because let me put some more flesh on those bones. I was 16, my dad was an evangelist and he was gone a lot, and my mother raised me. That worked out pretty well until I got in my mid teen years and then I decided I knew more than she did. I never really went into outbroken sin. I was a virgin when I got married and so was my wife, Shirley.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Me too.

Dr. James Dobson: We really never did depart from our commitment to Christ, but I was starting to run with the wrong crowd. I had gone to a party one night. We didn't drink in

those days, but I knew I shouldn't be there. My mother drove by and saw it. When I got home, she said, "Well, where'd you go tonight?" I told her, and she said, "Do you feel good about doing that?" I said, "Yes, not only do I feel good about it, but I'm going to do it again." I'd never taken her on like that.

My mother was a great disciplinarian, but a very loving mother. She just looked at me like she couldn't believe that I would defy her like that, and she said, "Well, I'm going to talk to your dad." I said, "You do that," and then I went what she thought was into my room, but I went around the corner and I listened. She called my dad, who was a thousand miles away, and she said only three words, "I need you."

My dad was the prominent evangelist in our denomination and he was scheduled for four years into the future. He was doing what he felt God called him to do, but he saw that he was needed at home and he got on a train and came home. He canceled the entire slate of four years of meetings. He was pretty emphatic about what happened when he got home. To my shock, I hadn't done anything really evil, but to my shock, my dad put a sign in the front yard that said For Sale. The next thing I knew, our house was sold. My dad took a pastorate so he could be at home with me. We went to a little town called San Benito, Texas, South Texas. The next thing I knew I was on a train heading south.

Because of that commitment, my dad pulled me back from the brink. I was heading in the wrong direction, the bridge was out and he saw it. My mom asked him simply to help her and he came and gave me priority. We hunted and we fished and we reconnected. I got even better acquainted with the man who was gone so much. My life turned around and I've really never had a problem with that kind of authority since.

But the important thing that I think I said to you the day you interviewed me was that my dad paid a price for that. By the time he went back into the evangelistic field, when I graduated from high school, the younger men didn't know him and some of the older men, his pastors, had forgotten him. He really never achieved the prominence that he had before. But to my knowledge, he never looked back and he did what he needed to do to save his son.

I sit here today, probably doing what I'm doing and what I've done for 44 years because that man cared enough to invest in me. I tell you, that's a good man. I hope the message, then when I talked to you before and even today, who are working too hard and gone too much and becoming successful men will take another look at what matters most and give priority to those that depend on you at home.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Yes. Oh, that's a terrific testimony, even just to hear it again, it's amazing. I understand when your dad died, that his tombstone reads "He Prayed."

Dr. James Dobson: That was his life.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: He asked for that on his footstone because that was his life. He often prayed as much as three hours a day. He lived in the presence of the Lord. In the little town where he was first a pastor, a tiny little Nazarene church, he was known as the man who had no leather on the toes of his shoes because he spent so much time on his knees that he wore his shoes out, the toes of his shoes, before they were worn out on the soles. That really did characterize him. Because of that, he had a wonderful ministry, but his most important convert, at least from my point of view, was me.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Yes, and his ministry continues to this very day in you.

Dr. James Dobson: It does. I've written a lot about him. There's so many stories that I could tell, but this is your day and your program. I'm really interested in knowing how your teen years developed and how you got the call from the Lord.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Well, I grew up in a traditional home, church going and so forth. When I went off to college, I'll be honest with you, I was looking for avenues to meet girls. I tried different things, including even going to bars and so forth. I wouldn't recommend that to anybody. But a friend invited me to a Bible study and I didn't really know much about that, so I went to this Bible study and I was impressed by all the girls that were there.

I went back and pretty soon I got to actually meet a lot of these people. I don't mean the girls or whatever, I just mean lots of these nice people in this inter-
varsity Christian fellowship group at Tulane University, which is where I went to undergraduate school. After a while, I got really challenged to consider the claims of Jesus Christ. I did some of my own research and ended up essentially committing my life to Jesus Christ. That was back when I was a freshman in college at the age of 18. It totally changed the direction of my life.

Then if you fast forward from that day, or that time, to about three years later, when I went off to Wheaton graduate school, it was there in the registration line that I met my wife to be, who was coming from Norway. God provided me with a beautiful woman after all. She is my wife and now we've been married 38 years, we had two wonderful children and two terrific grandchildren, with one grandchild even on the way.

Dr. James Dobson: When the Lord called you, and I assume it was a traditional call, you knew that the Lord was asking something from you, is that correct?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Yes. It was, I'd say, pretty soon after I committed my life to Christ that I really did feel like I wanted to serve him in full-time capacity, as opposed to becoming a business person or whatever. Obviously, God has different callings for different people and we need great people in this calling and that calling and so

forth, but I did feel early on in my Christian life that, yes, I want to serve the Lord full time if I can.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you resist that call?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: No, not really. No, I wanted to do it. It was just a matter of trying to figure out the best way to do it. After I graduated from Wheaton grad school, actually, I didn't even finish graduating, I still had to stay around and finish that up later after working, but I started working at Christian radio and I really enjoyed it. In fact, I remember we used to put your programs on and if I recall correctly, your program was 15 minutes a day, not 30. I remember when it went up to 30 and it was like, "Oh, this is good stuff."

I was working at a Christian radio station in the early 1980s in the Chicago area. It opened my eyes as to just the incredible impact and ministry that Christian radio can have and often really does have. You've been a big part of that, as well as Chuck Swindoll and D. James Kennedy. I've often thought about this, if England had the same kind of this day in and day out Christian broadcasting that you can get right there on your local channels, I don't mean from short wave radio or some other kind of satellite or something like that, but just your regular channels, if these other countries, especially in Europe, if they had the same kind of ministry that we do in Christian radio, I'll bet you the results will be different. In other words, I'll bet you there'll be just a lot more evangelism and evangelicalism, both, in Europe.

I think Christian radio has played an incredible role, and of course Christian TV as well, and I've been involved with that, with Dr. Kennedy's ministry for 33 years now.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I firmly believe that. In fact, I was in London when the whole concept of Christian radio hit me and I realized I could reach far more people through that means. At the time, I was at USC School of Medicine and I was enjoying what I was doing, but I saw the family starting to fall apart and felt like I ought to do something to preserve it. I resigned and started a little radio program in a little two-room office. I had no idea where that was going and it just exploded. Within five years I had 400 employees and just all kinds of things were happening, but it taught me what a tremendous medium radio and television are in reaching the gospel.

My dad, for all that I've told you about him being a prominent minister, he usually spoke to 200 people, 250 people, nothing like it occurs in the megachurches today. It's largely through the medium of radio or television that has opened that field. I have no doubt about the fact that the Lord drew me to it.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: D. James Kennedy, who you've referenced obviously in this program before, he was reached as a young man through a radio broadcast. I'm sure the story, but

the gist of it is he had no place in his life for God. He was in his early twenties and he was successful as a manager of an Arthur Murray dance studio. Whereas his radio had had some nice music on the night before, and unfortunately, he was perhaps hungover or whatever on the Sunday morning, not going to church or anything like that, suddenly the radio alarm went on and instead of having this nice music, there was this preacher.

Before he could bound out of bed and turn off the preacher, the preacher said something on the radio that grabbed Dr. Kennedy's attention. He said, "Suppose you were to die and then you stood before God, and then God said to you, 'Why should I let you into my Heaven? What right would you have to enter into my Heaven?' What would be your answer?" Dr. Kennedy thought, "Well, that's an important question, because I'm going to die, we're all going to die one day, and if this is true, what would be the answer to that?"

He ended up listening, and at first, he didn't agree with the fellow. Then he went to a local newsstand, this was back in the early '50s, and he said, "Tell me, do you have any religious books here?" Dr. Kennedy said, when I interviewed him about this one time, he said, "Oh, I shudder to think now what I could have received," but the fellow did have a copy of *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. He said he got that book, he read it, and by the end of the week he gave his heart to Jesus Christ. The rest is history, but it shows how incredible Christian broadcasting can be in whatever outlet you can have it get out to.

Dr. James Dobson: Jerry, you'll recall that I was given the honor, one of the highest honors I've ever had, of preaching. I'm not a preacher, but I had the honor of speaking at Jim Kennedy's funeral. I talked about what you just said. The version of it that I heard, and that I said that day, was that he originally said no to the call of the ministry and fought it because he wanted to be a dance teacher. Can you believe that? Here's a guy with all this talent in the world and he now knows what God wants him to do and he resisted it, I guess, for a year or two.

Then finally, when he yielded, look what the man did. The Evangelism Explosion alone is one of the divisions of his ministry. The last I heard had resulted in six million people coming to Christ, it's probably much greater now, all because he yielded. But I want to say to the young people who are out there, if God is calling you into full-time ministry, you dare not turn him down.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Amen, you're absolutely right. Boy, I totally agree. You know what, at the end of the day, it is so fulfilling. I don't know that there's anything more joyful to experience than to be used by the Lord, to actually do something where you feel like this impacts somebody, it impacts somebody's life for the gospel. As you were saying earlier, at the very outset of this whole program, there's incredible spiritual battle that we're in, where Satan, it's as if he's pulling out all the stops, but as Jesus said, and you quoted Him, we should not fear because He has overcome.

In fact, if I could real fast, the book that I wrote here called *The Unstoppable Jesus Christ*, the original title was *The Unstomppable Jesus Christ*. If I could explain the story real fast, I just thought you might find this interesting, because it's that same kind of that anti-Christian spirit that is so pervasive. There was a college class a few years ago that I read about in this book, where the professor said, "Okay, everybody take out a sheet of paper and write the name Jesus on this paper. Now put the paper on the floor, get up and stomp on the paper." In other words, stomp on Jesus. Well, there was one student in the class who said, "No, I'm not going to do that," and then he got out of the class and he basically told the world what this professor had assigned people to do and how boneheaded it was.

That made me think about the unstomppable Jesus Christ. In fact, that was the working title of this book, but then I thought, well, most people aren't going to know what it means. But I gave one example after another where, frankly, we know that Jesus is going to win. Sometimes it seems that that is not so, sometimes it seems like the other side is winning, but as Bill Buckley put it one time, he actually introduced a Christian debate between a Christian and a skeptic about 15 years ago and he said in the very introduction, he said, "If during the course of this debate the skeptic disappears in a puff of smoke, then reckon that Jesus up in Heaven has just cleared his throat." I thought, oh wow, that's so true.

We need to put all this stuff in perspective. The spiritual battle is there, it's very real, evil is very pervasive and has made incredible inroads in our culture, but at the end of the day, we know that God is on our side and that we should be striving to do what George Washington said. Our first president, he said, "Unless we imitate Christ," whom he called the divine author of our blessed religion, "We can never hope to be a happy nation." When you think about it, are we imitating Christ, as a nation? No. Are we a happy nation? No, but we would be if we imitated Jesus.

Dr. James Dobson: Boy, Jerry, I really enjoyed talking to you today and I wish we could do it again. Can you give us another day?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Sure.

Dr. James Dobson: There's so much we have in common and we see things the same way. I've heard of you and the things that you've done for a long time, and now this book, *The Unstoppable Jesus Christ*. I paused when I saw that title and I wondered about it, and I see now what you were getting at. We need to talk more about the culture and your book, let's do that next time if you will.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Okay, great, thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: God bless you, friend. Thanks for the wonderful work that you do.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Well, thank you, appreciate it.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Family Talk and that was part one of Dr. Dobson's conversation with author and radio host, Jerry Newcombe. You can learn more about Dr. Newcombe, his role at D. James Kennedy Ministries, his books and more when you visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

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Well, thanks again for listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk today. We couldn't do what we do without your prayers and your faithful financial support. I'm Roger Marsh, hope you'll join us again tomorrow for the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's fascinating and helpful conversation with Dr. Jerry Newcombe. Until then, may God continue to richly bless you and your family.

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 can help us financially, we would certainly appreciate it. God's blessings to you all.