



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Rediscovering God in America

Guest(s): Newt Gingrich

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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: Hello, and thanks for listening to Family Talk. Family Talk is the radio home of Dr. James Dobson, America's preeminent Christian child psychologist, and a leading voice defending traditional family values and righteousness in the culture. I'm Roger Marsh, so glad you found us today.

Well, you don't have to look very hard at our nation's history and legacy to find the influence of God and Christianity. In fact, many of our founding fathers were outspoken in their belief that without morality and virtue, liberty and human rights would be impossible for a nation to obtain. Our guest on today's classic broadcast agrees with that point of view. His name is Newt Gingrich. Newt Gingrich is a politician and an author who served as the 50th Speaker of the United States House of Representatives from 1995 to 1999. He is a *Fox News* contributor, podcast host and chairman of Gingrich 360, a multimedia production and consulting company based in Arlington, Virginia. He and his wife, Callista, live in McLean, Virginia, and have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Newt Gingrich joined Dr. Dobson back in 2007 to discuss his book, *Rediscovering God in America: Reflections on the Role of Faith in Our Nation's History and Future*. Here now is Dr. James Dobson to introduce his special guest.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, we're going to place a phone call to the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, to talk about his book, *Rediscovering God in America*. I have known Mr. Gingrich for 12 or 13 years. I worked with him quite extensively when he was Speaker of the House. We often talked about teaching abstinence to young people and the pro-family and pro-life issues that we care about so deeply. And so, I was in his office off and on during that time. He has a remarkable grasp of the culture. He has a PhD in European history and an understanding world events, and it shows in what he says. Newt Gingrich was elected to the Congress in 1978. He was *Time Magazine's* man of the year in 1995, the same year that he was elected to be Speaker of the House. Hello, Mr. Speaker.

Newt Gingrich: It is great to be with you.

Dr. James Dobson: It's a pleasure to have you on our program. I appreciate your joining us, and we want to talk about the subjects that are of interest to our faith and to the country today. I'd like to start by talking about your book, *Rediscovering God in America: Reflections of the Role of Faith in Our Nation's History and Future*. I think this is the first time you've addressed the topic of that nature, isn't it?

Newt Gingrich: Well, it's the first time I've written about it at length. I, for a long time, have had a part of my basic speech which talks about the fact that we are endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights and that's what the Declaration of Independence says, and you can see it right there at the National Archive. But when the Ninth Circuit Court ruled that saying one nation under God in the Pledge of Allegiance was wrong that, to me, was a final blow in the secular war against the religious basis of American liberty.

That's why I decided I had to write *Rediscovering God in America* as a historian to lay out the historic facts and to illustrate them by using the monuments that people can see in Washington so that it's not a question of theory or it's not a question of somebody's ideology. It is a fact. It is a fact that the Declaration of Independence says we are endowed by our creator. And then, I wanted to really have a very small, but very fact based introduction so that if you have a secular friend who doesn't believe all this, you can just hand them that small volume or give them the audio tape, and you'll see that it's irrefutable historically.

Dr. James Dobson: We can't rediscover something that isn't lost. Have we lost that historic understanding of God in the country?

Newt Gingrich: I think the American elites, starting with the Supreme Court decision in 1963 on school prayer, have been engaged in a relentless effort to secularize the society to drive God out of public life, to drive the Thanksgiving out of Thanksgiving, to drive the Christmas out of Christmas, to create a secular America on the European model. It's an expression of the radicalism of the French Revolution, which was an anti-church revolution, basically violating all of previous Western traditions and very different from the American tradition, which was just... The American Revolution was a revolution within the context of the Scottish enlightenment, which was very respectful of the role of God and very respectful of the importance of seeking guidance from God. The French Revolution was quite the opposite. I think that the American secular elites are really shaped much more by that French experience than they are by the American experience.

Dr. James Dobson: You wrote in the introduction to that book that the secular left has been inventing law and grotesquely distorting the Constitution to achieve a goal that the founding fathers would've found to be a fundamental threat to liberty. Now, that's a quote. Expand on that.

Newt Gingrich: Well, let me say that the founding fathers, starting with George Washington, were very direct about this, and this includes Thomas Jefferson. All of them believed that freedom was cultural first and legal and political second, and that if you did not have a culture that subordinated itself to God and you didn't have a culture that recognized that our rights come from God that, in the long run, you couldn't preserve freedom in a purely secular society. Their writing is very clear on this. This is not some contrivance or some confusion.

My favorite example is the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court opens every session with God save this court and the United States of America. Every session. The Supreme Court has on the building, including when you first walk in, Moses holding the 10 Commandments. It appears three times in the Supreme Court building. How can a Supreme Court Justice vote that it is unconstitutional for Texas or Kentucky or Alabama to display the 10 Commandments when the very building they're meeting in, a building by the way built in the 1930s, this is not some throwback to 1800. The very building they're meeting in has the 10 Commandments. And so, I think it's that level of willful rejection of American history and the base of American civilization that is such an enormous threat to us.

Dr. James Dobson: Why do you think the liberals hate our religious heritage so much and those of us who identify with it, and what would they replace it with if they're successful?

Newt Gingrich: Well, look, I apologize if I sound slightly exasperated just because you and I have both been engaged in this struggle for so long.

Dr. James Dobson: That's true.

Newt Gingrich: What I'm about to say is so politically incorrect. The modern American left, the tenured faculty, many of the newsrooms, many of the judges, the elites, the Hollywood elite, they want a world in which there are no rules. There are no principles. In which people can reshape whatever they want and which political correctness allows you to avoid hard edges. That's a world which, frankly, I believe is incompatible with human freedom and incompatible with human happiness.

But it's at the very heart of it, the whole notion that there shouldn't be boundaries, that there shouldn't be any sense of you having an outside set of rules that you look to. Part of our cultural struggle, the reason some of our politics is now so bitter and so hostile is that you have these two cultures, the dominant culture of the vast majority of Americans, the 91% who believe we should say one nation under God as part of the pledge, and a very small but extraordinarily powerful minority on the campuses, in the law courts and the newsrooms and in Hollywood who desperately want to have a different world.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you mentioned the Ninth Circuit a minute ago, which is the court that struck down or tried to strike down that phrase one nation under God in the Pledge of Allegiance. 91% of the people support it yet they arrogantly tried to get rid of it. You've said, I heard you the last time we were together about two or three weeks ago, that you thought the Ninth Circuit should be abolished.

Newt Gingrich: Well, I learned this by studying Thomas Jefferson, and it's quite ironic because secular leftists will tell you that Jefferson wrote the phrase, a wall of separation between church and state, and they've used it to drive prayer out of public school, to drive the 10 Commandments out of public buildings. They would use it to over and over again. I suspect, in the end, they would use it to stop the president from taking an Oath of Allegiance on a Bible. That is a total misreading of Jefferson.

First of all, when Jefferson wrote the letter to the Danbury Baptists, what he meant was we should not have a state sponsored tax paid religion. Well, I think you and I would both agree with that.

Dr. James Dobson: Absolutely.

Newt Gingrich: We don't want to see the church of the United States. But Jefferson, two days after that particular letter, got in his carriage at the White House, rode up one mile to Capitol Hill and went to church in the US House of Representatives' chamber, which was used as a church until the 1860s. Jefferson loaned the treasury building to be used as a church. Jefferson paid tax money for missionaries to the Indians. I'm giving you this background because many people will be very startled by what I'm about to tell them.

The Jeffersonians were in a deep argument with the Federalists and the last time, prior to the McCain-Feingold Bill, that there was an effort to censor American citizens and block them from talking openly about politics was the Alien and Sedition Acts. When the Jeffersonians won a huge election in 1800, elected a big majority in the House and Senate, the last thing the Federalists did is they tried to pack the courts by appointing lots and lots of Federalists to the court just before turning power over to the newly victorious, what was called the Republican Democratic Party back then.

The Jeffersonians passed the Reform Act, the Judicial Reform Act of 1802. They abolished 18 out of 35 federal judgeships. I want our listeners to really understand this. The Jeffersonians, people who had helped write the Constitution, Jefferson who had written the Declaration of Independence, people who thoroughly understood the rules of the three branches of government, believed that the Congress and the president could quite simply abolish a court. You don't have to impeach the judge as an individual. You simply say this court no longer meets, and that's what they said.

My position would be that the Ninth Circuit Court is so consistently wrong, it is so consistently radical, it is such a violation of the spirit of American history that we are better off to simply abolish it. Now, I'm not being as radical as Thomas Jefferson. He wiped out over 50% of all sitting federal judges. I just want to take one circuit court, the Ninth, eliminate it, create a new Ninth Circuit and have the appointment of new judges to that new Ninth Circuit.

Dr. James Dobson: If that sounds like an overstatement to our listeners who haven't been following the rulings of the Ninth Circuit, let me give one example of it. One of the most egregious decisions that it's handed down, the Ninth Circuit ruled... Just look this up. In November the 2nd, 2005, that public school officials have the authority to operate completely independently of parents and that the curriculum and everything else related to the school, not just the curriculum, is the school's business exclusively and moms and dads can do nothing to change it or to influence it. That's the decision of the Ninth Circuit. They completely cut the parents out of the education of their children. That's the kind of stuff this crazy court does, isn't it?

Newt Gingrich: It is. This would be a perfectly reasonable court in France. It makes no sense as a court in the United States.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, let's take your book and go on a walking tour of Washington DC, because your position is that those buildings that are there and what's inscribed on them really does tell a story of about our religious history. One of the best chapters in your book, I think, is entitled "Laus Deo," which appears, I think, on the top of the Washington Monument.

Newt Gingrich: It's really a very romantic story in a way. The tallest point in Washington by law is the Washington Monument. It's higher than the Capitol. No office building in Washington can be as high. If you think about it, the first thing the rays of the sun hit every morning, the very first thing that is lit up in Washington, is the east side of the Washington monument. On the very top of the east side, it says Laus Deo, glory to God. The fact is that the Washington Monument is a monument to God and to Washington's belief.

As Washington said, in a letter and something he'd said in other occasions publicly, he believed at the depths of his being that when the American army was trapped in Brooklyn and the British army was going to crush it and the Royal Navy was between the American army and Manhattan and was blocking the East River that, at that moment, the war was at the edge of just being ended. A magic moment, we found out that a fog rolls in. We're suddenly not in a position for the British to intercede and the Americans quietly escape through the fog. The Marblehead fishermen, who later will play such a key role in the surprise of Christmas Day, row them across the river. They escape the British and Washington said, literally, as that fog rolled in magically blocking the British fleet from being able to see what was going on, he felt as though God had decided that the American Revolution should not be defeated.

Now, the Washington Monument is a reflection of that depth of personal commitment. By the way, I must say that any of our listeners who get a chance, there is a new education center at Mount Vernon, magic center, which will teach you more in an afternoon about George Washington and about the magic of America than any place I have ever seen.

I just give this as background because the Washington Monument has a Bible in the foundation stone. It has, actually, prayers and Bible verses put in by a Chinese church in Baltimore. It has reference after reference to the Scripture. It's really quite different than the secular folks would try to tell you. You can't understand this. I would say to all of our listeners, also, if you do get a chance to bring your family to Washington, you can download the audio version of *Rediscovering God* and you can, literally, take your family around and go monument by monument and public building by public building and learn of all of the various relationships between God and American leaders up through, by the way, the modern era.

This is not just something back in the Revolutionary period. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, when the American forces landed at Normandy, went on radio, which was their version of television in that period, and led the nation for nine minutes in a prayer. The president didn't just say God bless America. He prayed for nine minutes because he thought it was his job as the spiritual leader of America, as the father of America, as the person picked to lead the American community, that it was his job to bring all of us together at this historic moment when so many young Americans were risking their lives.

Dr. James Dobson: For those listeners who joined us late, we're talking to former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, about his book, *Rediscovering God in America*. It's a very inspirational book containing the kind of information we just heard about. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, what a shame, what an outrage it is that America's school children are not taught history in any meaningful way. They're so busy teaching a lot of the junk, and this is the source of our liberty. Even if it is taught, then the concepts are often distorted and emphasize our faults and our failures and our fiascos, and certainly nothing about our religious history.

Newt Gingrich: Well, the fascinating thing is that our religious history is our political history. For example, as I'm sure you know, the Liberty Bell is called the Liberty Bell because long before it was used to ring out liberty on July 4th, 1776, it was called the Liberty Bell because it has, around the top of it, a quote from Leviticus about letting liberty ring across the land. You cannot explain America. And then, this is my core argument with our secular friends. You can't explain America without understanding this.

I have a good friend who, to give you a parallel example, a senior leader in the Reagan administration, a man who ended up having deep trouble with alcohol, finally went to Alcoholics anonymous, changed his life, dramatically gave him a meaning, gave him support, allowed him to recover. Several years later, was

explaining this to a senior federal official, who said, "That is a terrific program," and it's a 12 step program. The first step says you have to subordinate yourself and acknowledge that there is one greater than you and that, in the end, you are dependent on that one. You're not an individual who's on your own. The federal official said, "If you could skip that first step, we could fund the other 11." He looked at the guy and said, "I don't think you understand what it is that makes this work."

- Newt Gingrich: Well, I would say that about America. If you take away the Declaration of Independence and we grow up two or three generations in a row that do not understand that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, not the achievement.
- Dr. James Dobson: Our time is getting away from us. Let me ask you for some very quick numbers, okay?
- Newt Gingrich: Okay.
- Dr. James Dobson: How many times is God mentioned in one form or another in the Declaration of Independence?
- Newt Gingrich: I think it appears five or six times, both as creator, as supreme being, as the law of nature and nature's God.
- Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. How many times is God referred to in the Jefferson Memorial?
- Newt Gingrich: There are four different quotes, all of which cite God, of which I think the most powerful is I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against all forms of tyranny over the minds of man. I think, I always tell my secular friends, tell me why you think Jefferson meant altar of God?
- Dr. James Dobson: We get a very different interpretation from Barry Lynn and the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. How about Lincoln's two inaugural speeches as they show up in the monument?
- Newt Gingrich: In the Lincoln Memorial, you get, first of all, the Gettysburg Address, which is where the term one nation under God appears. We know that Lincoln personally hand wrote that into his speech while sitting, looking out over the cemetery, during the ceremonies to inaugurate and consecrate the very first national cemetery at Gettysburg. It had said one nation, and then he hand wrote under God, as he thought about and reflected on what he was experiencing there, looking out over these graves of those who had died to preserve the union.
- Dr. James Dobson: Didn't Lincoln also say in his second inaugural with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right?

Newt Gingrich: That's exactly right.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. I think-

Newt Gingrich: The other, and the most touching and I think most profound of all the inaugural addresses, in the second inaugural by Lincoln in 1865, in 703 words, he references God 14 times and he quotes the Bible twice. Now, how are you going to explain Lincoln and how are you going to explain the preservation of the union if you refuse... If you were to go into a typical classroom of almost any public school in America and say, "Let me read you this perfectly secular speech." This is an inaugural address by a president of the United States, not a theological document. Now, explain to me what you think these 14 references to God mean? What do you think these two quotes from the Bible mean? That's why it is impossible to describe and explain America if you insist on doing it in purely secular terms.

Dr. James Dobson: You said that it is impossible to walk through the National Archive building in Washington without finding God.

Newt Gingrich: That is exactly right. It's impossible to walk through the Supreme Court, and it's impossible to walk through the US Capitol. That's why we did *Rediscovering God in America* the way we did. This is a tour book. Take your most radical secular friend, get him to go to Washington with you, walk through the city and, at the end of that tour, look him in the eye and say, "What country do you think this is in?"

Dr. James Dobson: Mr. Speaker, we're out of time. I just want to thank you for being our guest. I appreciate this book. I appreciate your setting the record straight on something that's extremely important to us and to millions of people with a very strong Christian faith across this country. I do look forward to talking to you again. For the benefit of those, again, who joined us late, we've been talking to former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, about his book, *Rediscovering God in America*.

Roger Marsh: Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain." Here at Family Talk, we believe that the Lord has blessed the United States in many ways because of its Christian heritage. Over the past several decades, though, we have seen God's blessing being lifted from our nation as a direct result of America rejecting biblical values and turning its back on God.

Now, we are not so arrogant as to say that the US is God's chosen nation. In fact, we know that this is not the case as that title belongs to the nation of Israel. However, the Lord has used America to bless countless nations all over the world and it's important for us to remember our Christian heritage so that we can defend those values that made America great in the first place.

Well, Newt Gingrich's book, *Rediscovering God in America*, which was the focus of today's broadcast is still available for purchase. We have a link to that resource as well as the audiobook version at drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. That's drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. While you're there, you can learn more about Newt Gingrich and his other books as well.

Now, if you enjoyed today's broadcast or if you have a prayer need, won't you give us a call and let us know about it. Our ministry team is available around the clock to answer your calls, to pray with you and to recommend helpful resources as well. Our number is (877)732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. Thanks again for joining us for today's edition of Family Talk. Catch us again next time as we provide encouragement and advice for the fruitful Christian life.

Announcer:

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