



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Faith Before Politics

Guest(s): Bob Vander Plaats

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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 thank you for joining us for this edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. And today on the broadcast, we'd like to share a presentation that was recently delivered by a good friend of Dr. Dobson's named Bob Vander Plaats. Now Bob Vander Plaats is the president and CEO of The Family Leader, a Christian nonprofit organization that advocates for Christlike leadership in the home, church and government. Bob is an authoritative and highly regarded voice for the family and is often requested to be a guest on a vast array of national and international media outlets.

Bob is also an author and highly sought-after speaker. His passion to make a difference is contagious. Bob earned his masters and specialist degrees in educational leadership from Drake University. He is married to Darla and they are the parents of four sons. Bob Vander Plaats has some important things to say about faith and family on today's broadcast, so let's listen in right now.

Bob Vander Plaats: I was born into a loving family, Christian home that listened to Dr. Dobson all of the time. And from early on when it came to the sanctity of human life, they did not give me a choice that I would be pro-life, but it never sunk in until I was a teenager. I was 16 years old, I was laying on the living room floor in Sheldon, Iowa. And I was watching TV, one of the three stations that we could get with the rabbit ears positioned and the phone rang. My mom I think right after chewing me out for laying on the floor and watching TV and the phone rang. My mom, she turned in such a nice person and she answered the phone and the conversation started and I could tell something was wrong.

And my mom kept saying, "Sandra," who's my sister. She's living in Michigan. "Sandra, it'll be okay. Sandra, take a deep breath. Sandra, it's all right." And I could tell there's an emotional thing happening. And I didn't know at the time, but my sister was pregnant with her fourth child. It was an unexpected pregnancy and she didn't want to be pregnant with her fourth child, but what really hit me and what really cemented my pro-life credentials is when my mom

said on the phone to Sandra, "Sandra, it will be okay. We didn't want Bob either."

Ever since then, I've been pro-life, adamantly pro-life. And I'm so glad that my mom and dad delivered me because I had the chance to meet my girlfriend, my fiancé, my wife. Darla and I, we grew up together. A lot of people say, "How'd you and Darla meet?" And Darla's here. She's in the back. She's been here all weekend. You know we're Dutch so when people offer us free stays at the Broadmoor, we're in. The whole time we're in. "But how'd you meet?" And we believe we met in a church nursery school at age six weeks.

We grew up in the same small town, same small church. We graduated from kindergarten together, we were front row and center the two of us together, full cap, full gown, full tassel. We graduated from kindergarten together, 8th grade together, high school together, college together. And now we've been married for 38 years together. And God has blessed us with four wonderful boys. And I have a deep, deep, deep commitment to that woman. And that is if she ever, ever, ever leaves me, I am going with her. So what I want to do is tell you that Dr. Dobson and Shirley Dobson and their message has had an impact on me for the sanctity of human life and for the institution of marriage.

And it was such an honor when Darla and I met Dr. Dobson and Shirley back in 2004 for the very first time, just an honor. And then to think that we'd get to become friends with them. And that would take us out to lunch. And then in 2019 when he heard me speak at a conference that Tim Clinton referenced, he said, "Would you speak at The Gathering?" I said, "I don't know. What is it?" And then he told me. I said, "Yes, I'd love to speak at The Gathering," but Dr. Dobson has had a profound impact on this country and I'd argued the world.

But let me tell you what I'm going to explain to you today, I believe it's his vision of over 30 years ago that God has divinely anointed for such a time as this to bring revival to this country. So when you leave today, I want you to feel a sense of hope, a sense of inspiration, a sense that all is not lost. But before we get there, we need to understand a couple of things. Hebrews 2:1 says this, "Be careful that you do not drift from what you have heard."

Ladies and gentlemen, from speech after speech all the way through this weekend, you would have to be completely out of touch and out of tune to understand that we are drifting away from what we have learned, from what we have heard. And I would argue as a culture we're not only drifting away, but we are in a dead sprint away from the heart of God. And when you drift in anything, you drift in your marriage, your marriage will have a train wreck. You drift in your parenting, your parenting will have a train wreck. You drift in your business, your business will have a train wreck. Hebrews 2:1. "Be careful you don't drift."

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe this country hungers and thirsts for a spiritual revival and nothing else will do. But here's some of my concern. We as a people,

we as believers, we're so focused on Washington, D.C. Like that is our hope. Like if D.C. goes wrong, there's no more hope. Well, ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you something. D.C. is a mess and it's been a mess for a long time. And our hope was never intended to be in Washington, D.C. The founders of this country would say, "Wake up."

Your hope is not in Washington, D.C. We gave the power to the states, the individual states, not to Washington, D.C. So let me challenge you. If you want to turn this country around, you turn your state around. And when we turn states around, you're going to hear one by one by one, we will turn Washington, D.C. around, but it begins in the states. But two is, Jesus would say, "Upon this rock, I built my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Ladies and gentlemen, that is an offensive statement. And the question I have for us, do we believe what we believe to be really real? Do we take Jesus at His word?

So, in our ministry, we say this. We say look higher. Look higher being Psalm 121. Where does my help come from? My help comes from Washington, D.C. My help comes from the Republican Party. My help comes from the Lord. We also say this, not just look higher. We say think bigger, think bigger. This is Jesus and Peter. Remember what Jesus told about predicting His death? What was going to happen? He was going to be captured. He was going to be beaten. He was going to be crucified. And Peter said, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's not going to happen. Why? We have a good gig going on? And we're part of the inside circle. We have a seat at the table and we're going to overtake Rome."

And what Jesus say to Peter? "Get behind me, Satan." What Jesus was saying to Peter and I believe what Jesus is saying to us today at The Gathering, "Think way bigger than this. My kingdom is not of this world. Put our focus on eternal focus." So those of us who believe that Jesus Christ our Lord and our Savior, it should never be viewed by our neighbors that we are downcast and full of despair because an election didn't turn out the way we wanted it to. They should see a smile on our face. They should see a bounce in our step. They should see joy in our heart because we think way bigger than this. And the other thing we say is, expect more. Look higher, think bigger, expect more. Why do we say expect more? John 10:10. When Jesus said, "I came to give life and to give it abundantly." Abundantly.

Dr. Dobson got this like 30 years ago and Dr. Dobson casts this vision about if we can turn the country, we turn the states. So he started this thing called the Family Policy Councils all across the country. And right now there's 42 states with Family Policy Councils. And our initial focus was just on policy. If it was for the family, we were for it. If it was against the family, we were against it. That makes sense, right? If it was for justice, we were for it. If it was against justice, we were against it. Pretty easy.

If it was for righteousness, we were for it. If it was against righteousness, we were against it. Everybody got that? Are you glad that's going on in 42 states

across the country? But then we picked up a clue phone when the clue phone was ringing, just to get a clue. But we figured out while we're there advocating for righteous policy and just policy, who we elected determined the policy that we would get. Who we would elected...We wanted to elect ministers so we got heavily involved in elections. We wanted to get the right people elected because if they were pro-life like Dr. Lile talked about, they would lead on the sanctity of human life.

But guess what? Sometimes even the people we wanted to get elected when we got them elected, they let us down. Have you ever been there? They're pro-life at the chicken dinner, they're pro-marriage at every county event there is, but then you get them elected and they're in the halls of government they're kind of like, "I don't know and their key is 'I have to win reelection to lead. So don't put me in a tough position.'" And we thought, "Are you kidding me?" And then 2012 happened. 2012 changed the focus of our ministry because you'll remember 2012, I guarantee you'll remember 2012. What it was, it was the most important election of our lifetime.

Have you ever heard that before? This is the most important election of our lifetime. It was Barack Obama versus Mitt Romney. And our base was not excited about Mitt Romney. And so we looked at each other, we said, "What are we going to do to help get at Mitt Romney elected to defeat Barack Obama? Because this is the most important election of our lifetime." So we said, "Let's hold a leadership summit, and let's bring in people that our base wants to hear from." But what we didn't plan on, speaker after speaker threaded a needle of spiritual revival for this country, Rick Santorum, Rick Perry got turned back to God.

Matter of fact, Dr. Lawrence White...When Dr. Lawrence White, this Lutheran pastor, he asked this question. He said, "My question to you is the church transforming the culture or is the culture transforming the church?" And you could have heard a pin drop because everybody knew the answer. Mike Huckabee said this. He said, "Guys, if we don't turn our hearts back to God, His principles, His precepts, it doesn't matter who you elect. This country will be game over." And then Joel Rosenberg said, "Can we survive the current fiscal insanity and moral corruptness in our nation?" His answer was, "I don't know." But then he says, "But I believe our only hope is if believers, the body of Christ would come together and embrace 2 Chronicles 7:14. 'If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from our wicked ways, then I'll hear from heaven, then I'll forgive their sin and then I'll heal their land.'"

While you guys may know how the election of 2012 turned out, we got defeated in everything. Romney got beat. We had marijuana passed in state referendums legalizing marijuana. We had same-sex marriage condoned and ... We got beat at every level. And what we did is we went back to Iowa and we start throwing everything at the whiteboard. Have you ever been in one of those sessions? And we decided this. Unless we authentically engage the bride of Christ because the

spiritual revival begins in the house of a Lord. Unless we authentically engage the bride of Christ in its mission, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

So, cry out to the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers. This is about advancing the kingdom. This is about leading with the gospel. This is about anchoring in prayer. This is about the comprehensive nature of the gospel. And we needed to get to the pastors. And we needed to have the senior pastors be able to grab onto this and hold onto this because they lead the flocks. They're the shepherds of the church. And we needed to tell them, "We don't need you to be political, but we need you to be biblical and culturally relevant."

And what has happened is that our model became first things first cultural transformation. We lead with the gospel. We anchor in prayer. We authentically engage the bride of Christ with the senior pastors, the shepherds. And we take the senior pastors, the shepherds of God's church and connect them with the shepherds of God's government, all the elected officials in our state. So if they can bring the timeless truth, the prophetic voice to a culture. Think Nathan to David, they build a relationship first. They first feed into them as a person, but then they feed into them as a fellow shepherd because they have an important role to do, and God's Word speaks to every issue in our culture.

And then we say, "How can we be a community partner? How can we do this together, the church and the government coming together to meet the community needs to break bondage to set the captive free? And you know what? The pastors in Iowa. Get this. We're a small state, 2,700 pastors who believe in the Word of God and believe that Jesus is the way are engaged in our ministry, and they're turning the state upside down. And what has happened when they see your heart, they trust your voice. When they see your heart, they trust the voice. When they see your hearts about the gospel, not just about another election, they'll trust your voice when it comes to an election.

Because we are very intent on electing ministers of God so we try to impact elections. Do you understand the high calling it is to serve in public, the public arena? We should never lower the bar for any office holder of being a minister of God. Because Paul would say, "Do not let your testimony be disqualified to your children and to your grandchildren." You can't put up a behavior that you wouldn't tolerate with your kids. Let me be very transparent. Donald Trump's been a friend of mine for over a dozen years. After he became the nominee and wanted my endorsement, I said, "I tell you what, you don't need my endorsement. I'm not going to give it to you, but I will be a friend to you."

And he says, "What's that?" I said, "I will pray for you. I will cheer you on when you do what is right and I'll be a voice of accountability when you go outside the bounds because that's what friends do. We don't lower the bar. And because of that, I believe he trusts me today." Guys, when we're looking to our children and our grandchildren, don't lower the bar on what we expect out of elected officials, but let's get the right people elected. Then let's advance righteous

policy, but then let's model leadership and partnership of the church and government together in breaking bondage and setting people free.

If it was only about spending money, we would've cured everything. It's not about spending money. It's about breaking bondage. And guys, what happened? People that you would know came to me and they said, "Bob, you have proven to move numbers because Governor Reynolds was supposed to be beat by three. Your network came to play. She won by three. She's the most pro-life governor in my opinion in the entire country right now."

Joni Ernst called me right before her Senate election in 2020, she goes, "All the polls have got me getting beat." She goes, "We need your network." She won by six. You see what it does? It authentically engages the bride of Christ to be the prophetic voice to a culture. So these people contact me and said, "We need this model in other places." So right now we're in 12 states. This model's being implemented. I'm going to go through the states. So if you're in it, you know where to go. Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin. Now we leave the Big Ten.

New Hampshire, Maine, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Florida, Arizona, Kansas. And during COVID because of the generosity of a donor, we are now in the great state of Texas. Guys, we can turn this country around, but we have to build a beachhead first. And that's what we're doing by putting the model in the right way. Our goal is to get to 24 by 24 and one day all 50. And I ask myself as a leader, "What would happen if this biblical model of leading with the gospel, anchoring in prayer, authentically engaging the bride of Christ to impact elections, to influence policy, to be a model of partnership, what would happen if all 50 states embraced this?" You would have spiritual revival in this country. You would turn a country. If you turned this country, you will turn the world. And this was all because of the vision of Dr. James Dobson.

So, we have a choice right now and that choice is we can either turn up the volume, go to our media information of source and just turn up the volume, and hate our neighbor more because they got the wrong sign up, or we can get in the game. We can go all in by looking higher, thinking bigger, expecting more. We can be a model that draws others to the gospel for revival in this country. On Memorial Day 2004, my dad was the emcee at the Sheldon Memorial Day service. And I was in attendance and I'll never forget there's hundreds of people there and there's a high school band.

And he looked at the high school band and he said, "You know what they call us? They call us the greatest generation, the World War II generation." But then he looked at the high school band and he said, "Don't ever let it be said that the greatest generation lived but they died and they are buried." He said, "You have a responsibility to choose to be a great generation. And you choose to be a great generation by standing in the gap when your country needs you by putting the cause above yourself."

I would hope and pray that we would choose to be a great generation by embracing the if call of our day. And this isn't pointing at the darkness and blaming the darkness for being dark. But it says if my people who are called by my name, my name above each and every other name. Don't ever put somebody else's name above the cross, not even for six weeks before an election. If my people who are called by my name. Guys, if I was a coach, Bobby Knight was my mentor. And if this was my locker room, I would say, "This is for us." If we'll humble ourselves. If we will pray and here's an interesting pray, it comes right after humility. Because pray is an act of humility.

If we'll pray and if we will seek His face, be in His word, be His prayer. What can I do? Be the hands and feet. Seek His face. This is a timeout where you call the guys here and say, "Look me in the eyes. Why? Because what I'm going to tell you is very important. Seek my face and then turn from your wicked ways." Turn from whatever separates you from God. Turn from that. Why? That's authenticity.

My boys all played basketball, but if my boys said, "Dad, I want to win the state championship, but I'm going to be in the basement eating Doritos and playing video games." I would say you don't mean it. Turn from your wicked ways as the authenticity measure of this verse. Are we real about this? When we go home to self-examine it because if, if my people who are called by His name will humble ourselves and if we'll pray and if we'll seek His face and turn from our wicked ways, then claim that prayer that He's going to hear from heaven. He's going to forgive our sins and He's going to heal our land. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you leave Colorado Springs on fire by choosing to be a great generation.

Roger Marsh:

Wow. An encouraging, convicting speech from author and speaker, Bob Vander Plaats on today's edition of Family Talk. It's true that the state of our nation is bleak to say the least. And there are many in leadership positions in our country who call evil good, good evil. But ultimately, God's plan for restoration is through His Son, Jesus Christ and not through any political party or campaign. We would do well to remember that truth the next time we turn on the news and see a world that is seemingly out of control. Because friend, nothing is out of God's control.

Now, if you missed any part of today's program or you'd like to learn more about Bob Vander Plaats and his ministry, the Family Leader, visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. While you're there, you can also request a CD copy of today's program as well to keep or to share.

If you have any questions about Family Talk, the JDFI or if you'd like some prayer, please give us a call. Our number is (877)732-6825 and our ministry team is available 24/7 to take your call. Well, that's all for today's edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh hoping you'll join us again next time.

Announcer:

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