



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Firsthand Faith

**Guest(s):** Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

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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:** Numerous times on this radio program, Dr. James Dobson has emphasized the concept of a spiritual legacy. In addition to living out our own Christian walk, we as parents must instill godly disciplines in our own children's lives as well. You're listening to family talk. I'm Roger Marsh, filling in for your host psychologist and bestselling author Dr. James Dobson. Today, you're going to hear a powerful and challenging message on this topic of spiritual legacy from Dr. Bruce Wilkinson. He's a popular author and has written over 60 books. His most notable work was *The Prayer of Jabez*, which remains the fastest selling book ever. Dr. Wilkinson has a master's degree in theology and a doctorate in divinity. He founded the ministry, Teach Every Nation, which seeks to fulfill the call of the great commission.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson also helped to start Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, which encourages vigorous studying of God's word. Today, he unpacks the impact of Joshua as the spiritual leader of Israel. Dr. Wilkinson explains how Joshua's "God first" mentality was forgotten by the time of his grandchildren. Dr. Wilkinson identifies where that collapse occurred and how we can learn from the Israelite's mistakes. Let's listen now to this speech, he gave it a Promise Keeper's event some years ago, right here on Family Talk.

**Dr. Bruce Wilkinson:** Thank you. Thank you very much. Good morning. This sermon started 30 years ago at a conference, a secular conference, in the Northeast where a couple of my Christian friends and I had decided to go and I found out at that break time that a man sitting right off to the side was the son of a very famous Christian leader. I was much younger then and decided to go introduce myself to find out what it was like to grow up in his father's home. I walked my way over to him and I said, "I understand you're such and such, the son of ..." I named the man and I said, "What was it like growing up in your father and mother's home? What was it like being the son of such a great Christian leader?" That man turned at me and he swore at me, he swore at his father, he swore about the Bible. He said, "I hate God. I hate Jesus Christ," he turned on in back of his heels and walked out of that conference and never came back the rest of the day.

You could have picked me off of the ground. All I could think about at that moment was how could this possibly be? How could a child of such a godly leader be such a rebellious person? I remember decades ago saying to myself, "I can't think of anything worse than my son or my daughter at a conference, maybe something like this, where you walked over to them and said, "I understand you're the son of Bruce Wilkinson. What was it like growing up in his home?" and to have him swear about God and about Jesus Christ." I couldn't think of anything more gut-wrenching and terrible and I want to talk to you about your life this morning and about your parents, about your grandparents, about your children and eventually about your grandchildren.

Off to the right I have three chairs and before this session is over, you're going to know whether you sit in the first chair or in the second chair or in the third chair, and you're going to understand the implications of what it means if you sit in the second chair or the first chair. When I come back to the Scripture to find a place which pictures this slide from godliness to godlessness, from being committed, to being uncommitted, I find in the book of Joshua chapter 24. If you happen to have your Bible, why don't you turn to it as we begin? Joshua chapter 24, and we'll see a man who sits in the first chair. His name is Joshua. In the last chapter of Joshua, he says in verse number 15 of chapter 24, he says, "But as for me and for my house, we will serve the Lord."

That's a promise keeper. He said, "As far as I'm concerned and as far as my house is concerned," not we will try to serve the Lord, but "We will serve the Lord." I want to put Joshua in the first chair as a person who is committed. But what's it like with a generation who outlives Joshua, who had seen the great things that God had done? We'll skip down to verse number 31 of chapter 24 and you'll see about that generation who outlived Joshua. In verse number 31, it says, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua," that's generation one, "and all of the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord, which he had done." First generation is the generation of Joshua. The second generation is the generation who outlived Joshua, but they knew of the works that God had done for Israel.

Now skip a couple pages in your Bible and you'll move to the generation who grew up in their home. In Judges chapter two, verse number 10 it says, "When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord. They didn't know the Lord nor the work which God had done for Israel. That means the first chair knows the Lord. The second chair knows the Lord, but the third chair does not know the Lord. Do you realize this is the parent, this is the grandparent, this is the parent, this is the grandchild, the grandchild of Joshua, their generation didn't know the Lord. They were not born again. It says, "They knew the Lord. They knew the Lord. They knew not the Lord. They were saved. They were saved. They were not saved."

I was fortunate enough to grow up in a Christian home whose parents were born again. My parents were sold out and as long as I can remember, I could

remember always believing in Jesus Christ. I saw my parents' faith and I was attracted to it. It was winsome. It was wonderful. It was life changing. It was powerful. As my father led our house, I couldn't find myself but following my father who followed the Lord. But you know, unless something happens, you're not going to be as committed as your parents. Something's got to take place inside of your heart or else you're going to be a person who's not as committed as your parents are to the Lord. When you grow up in a home that's kind of half-hearted, half sold out to God, half sold out to yourself, you're going to move into another chair and it's a tragic chair.

So many of our churches have families who sit in the second chair. They know what they ought to be. They wish they could be, but they say, "If you really wanted to know, this is the chair that I sit in, I'm kind of sold out, but I'm not really sold out." You have compromise on the back of this chair. Sometimes you talk about God, sometimes you walk with God, but most of the time, God's kind of in second place in your life. When a child grows up in a home that is a Christian home, but that's not a committed home, they begin to back away from God and they oftentimes rebel against everything their parents stood for. The tragic thing about the third chair, the grandchildren of Joshua's chair, the Bible says they knew not the Lord, they weren't even saved, and more shocking than that, they didn't even know about the works that God had done for Joshua's generation.

That means to me, they didn't know about the miracle at Jericho. They didn't know about the sun standing still. They didn't know about the man and the quail. They didn't know about the Jordan open. Why not? Because this generation, this generation who had seen the works, because they didn't have works in their own life, they just knew about the works that their parents had. They didn't want to talk about the miracles of their parents. Because then if I sat here, I would want to know, "Why is it, Dad, that we don't have any miracles like that in our home? Why isn't God real here? Where are the great stories of God's power in my life, in my generation?" You see, that's it. They know the Lord. They know the Lord. They know not the Lord. They had the works. They saw the works. They didn't even know about the works.

This is the generation I'd put the word commitment on. As for me and my house, I don't care what anybody else does or the price tag it takes, we are going to serve the Lord. Second chair is a chair of compromise. One foot in God's side, one foot directly in the world. When you grow up in a compromising home, you're going to have conflict all of your life. Sometime you're going to try and live it this way. Sometime you're going to try and do it this way. But you're going to be a divided mind and you're going to say throughout your life, "I just can't seem to find myself." You don't find a second chair saying that, and a first chair, they forgot about themselves. All they think about is the Lord. They don't even wrestle about finding myself. They know they're supposed to die to self.

Roger Marsh:

We've reached the midpoint of Dr. Bruce Wilkinson's presentation here on Family Talk. As a reminder, this radio broadcast is a presentation of the James

Dobson Family Institute. Okay, let's return now to the second part of Dr. Bruce Wilkinson's message here on Family Talk. As we begin, he continues to unpack how to avoid a spiritual fallout from generation to generation.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Some of you are going to move out of the second chair, you're going to wonder, "Can I ever get to the first chair? What's it going to take, God?" It's going to take you right now this morning, before this session over, not take up your bed and walk, but close the chair and move over. That's what's going to take place right now because you can find out, my friends, that every family is here. Every denomination is here. Where's Abraham in this? Where does he fit? Abraham's right here. Sold out. What about his child, Isaac? Compromising. If you ever find a man who fits in the third share, it would be Jacob. Jacob who tried to cheat everyone, tried get ahead, tried to even fight and manipulate God. He couldn't find roots to stand on. You see, the first chair is a chair that's God first. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Then I'm down here, God, then me and the problem occurs when you grow up in a God and me home, you're going to come to know God. You can't help it. It's wonderful. It's the blessing of God on this home and the blessing of God is going to ooze over to your life and you're going to start out your life living on the faith of your parents. You're going to soak in their confidence in the Lord, their strength, their commitments, their values. They're going to be your parents' values and as you grow, my friends, there's going to come a time in which you're going to have to make a choice. Are you going to stay in the second chair? Are you going to move? Because what begins to happen as you're younger, the God and me of your parent, it starts to you like God and me. But then as time goes on, me starts rising up.

Me, me, me and God, me and God, God and me. No, me and God. No, I want to do it my way. No, it's me and God. No, it's me and God, sometimes it's me. I'm going to do what I want. Come on, God. You come with me and please bless me. That's what a second chair looks like. My friends, when you grow up in a chair that is me and God, you're going to have such trouble in your life. Go back 10 years, men, go back 10 years. You're in a second chair. You're in Sunday school class and somebody says, "Hey, I went to see a great movie last night." "You did?" "Yeah. Now, there was some bad parts in it, but just kind of watch that stuff. It's all right. The movie's really good." You go to that thing 10 years ago and you start blushing.

You look around and say, "I hope nobody sees me in here." Why? Because the convictions of your parents and of the Word of God's there and the spirit of God saying, "Whoa, don't do this. Don't watch that. Get out of here. God doesn't want you in here. Get out of here," and it bothers you. But you know what? Because your other friends went, pretty soon you feel good that, "Well, if they're doing it, I can do it." What happens, my friend, is the values of the church become your authority. In the second chair, you start moving further and further away until one day you get in conversation with that man of God and you start telling them about what's going on and he asks you questions and you

say, "I saw this and he turns a little bit pale on you," and he says, "You saw what? You watched what?"

Something rises up in this chair and the man says, "You're just too old fashioned. You haven't moved with the times. You bet they haven't moved with the times because this is the rock and the rock hadn't moved with the times. It's still wrong. Don't do it."

Now, men, is this something new? This isn't something new. This has been going on since the beginning. Apostle Paul calls it this way. There's some among you who are spiritual in 1 Corinthians. That's the first chair. There's some among you who are natural. You don't even know the spirit of God. You're not born again. 7,000 of you moved from natural to spiritual last night. But then he said, "There's a bunch of you in the middle who are carnal. You are a believer, but you got one foot right in the world and one foot kind of where God is." You see, the first chair man has a relationship with God that doesn't take place on Sundays. It's real. It's honest. It's real. God and me.

But the second person, they start out with their relationship that's real, but pretty ... It's so sad. Pretty soon they have a responsibility to go to church. I have a responsibility and before long it becomes dry and empty. It's things I have to do. I know I should read the Bible. I know I should, but I just don't have time. You realize this? I'm trying to get to know God from guilt. You don't get to know God from guilt. God doesn't want your guilt. God wants you. That's all he wants. When you find God in that chair, everything you're looking for in every place else but God, He's going to come down and meet you and you're going to find your heart singing on the way to work. As a man said in the first session, you're going to find yourself on a plane and take a blanket over your head and praise God and say, "I don't care what anybody else thinks." That's the way it is in the first chair.

Where are you, men? Where are you? I'm going to close. In Revelation chapter three, verse 15 it says this. Jesus Christ is speaking about these three chairs and he says, "I know your works, that you are neither ..." Now watch this. "You are neither cold," that's third chair, "Nor hot." That's the first chair. "I wish that you were either cold or hot." So then because you are lukewarm, you got some hot in you and you got some cold in you. What's Jesus feel about this? Come on, man. Don't do this. He says, "It makes me so frustrated. I feel like I'd spit it out." That's what he says. Now look at verse 17. What's the problem in the middle chair? Because you say ... what's it say? I am what? Rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing and don't know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold, the real stuff, not the fake stuff.

Now look at verse number 19. You might not know this, but here's how God feels about a man in a second chair this morning. He says, I love this, "As many as I love." God loves a man wherever he sits, but He has a word for the man in the second chair. "As many as I love," he says, "I rebuke. Get out of the chair."

Then He says, "Be zealous." I mean, with all the passion, all the commitment, all the drive in your heart. God says, "Get out of the chair. Be zealous. Be a man and get out of the chair." That's what He says. He doesn't say, "Think about it." He says, "Do it."

Now, verse number 20 is for a second chair person. We use it when we talk to people who do not know Jesus Christ, and it's okay to apply it that way. But you must understand this passage is not talking to the believer who's in the first chair or to non-believers in the second chair. But men, He's talking to you this morning if you find yourself with your name on this second chair. He has a word for you. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He's knocking at a believer's heart. He's already in this man's heart. They know the Lord. They know about the works. They just don't live with God. He says, "Behold, I stand the door and knock." He's knocking from the inside out and He's knocking and saying, "If anyone, any man hears my voice," what does He say He'll do? And opens a door.

It doesn't say I will come in and save him. Why not? This man's already saved. If you're in the second chair, you don't need to know Christ. You need to let Christ rule your life. That's the second chair. "If any man hears my voice and opens a door," watch this, "I will come into him and dine with him and he with me." You know what this person has given up believing? They can ever really walk with God. My friends, Promise Keepers is brought to you and God's brought you right here for this minute to say, "Hey, I'm in. You already let me in. I've already saved you, but now will you let me rule your life? Will you take up your chair? I just put it over here." Come on, men. Move out of this second chair.

I used to be in the second chair. I know more about it than you know about it and it's not a fun chair. I sense there are thousands and tens of thousands of men who say, "You know what? If I had to be honest with you right now, I sit in the second chair." Well, men, God has a word for you. And He wants you to do whatever it's going to take right now. He says, "As many as I love." He loves you. He rebukes you. It's wrong. It's wrong. Stop, stop, stop. Don't stay in that chair. It's over. Get it off of your life. Never again go back, men. You got to stop sometime. This is the time to stop.

As many as I love, I rebuke. What are you supposed to do? Repent. Be zealous. Repent. "God, I am sorry for the second chair in my life. Forgive me. I don't want to be here anymore. I don't want to do that to my kids anymore. I don't want the emptiness anymore. As for me and my house, I'm going to have the Word of God right with me and me and my house are going to sit on my lap. We are going to serve the Lord."

Roger Marsh:

Well, we hope you can hear the incredible passion and conviction in Dr. Bruce Wilkinson's voice. We cannot take this subject lightly. We must walk with God and instruct the next generation to follow in our footsteps. If you were empowered by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson today, visit our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Simply tap onto the broadcast tab at the top of the page.

This concept of prioritizing God in our kids' lives, it's very close to Dr. Dobson's heart. Our ministry is ready and able to equip you to grow spiritually and to parent well. Take advantage of our helpful and insightful resources when you go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Through these materials, you can access Dr. Dobson's wealth of knowledge on parenting, marriage, faith, and culture. simply visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Thanks for joining us today. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for listening.

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

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi, everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton here for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. The news comes in all kinds of shapes, sizes and formats these days, but how do you cut through the noise and get to the heart of the matters that affect your family? Come to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and sign up for Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter. You'll find clarity on tough issues, encouragement for your everyday life and trusted principles to help you build strong, healthy, connected families. Go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org), sign up today. That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

Roger Marsh: Hey, everyone. Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) for helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself, and remember, your legacy matters.