



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Defeating Dementia – Part 2

Guest(s): Dr. Richard Furman

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- Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.
- Roger Marsh: What if the choices you make today could protect your mind for decades to come? On today's edition of Family Talk, we're bringing you part two of a conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and Dr. Richard Furman, a vascular surgeon with over 30 years of experience, and also the co-founder of World Medical Mission, the medical arm of Samaritan's Purse. I'm Roger Marsh and on our last edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, Dr. Richard Furman shared some eye-opening research showing that for many people, Alzheimer's is actually preventable. On today's Family Talk program, he will join Dr. Dobson once again to dig into the details, what to eat, what to avoid, and why the decisions you make at midlife could determine whether you end up in the right group or the wrong one. That conversation is coming up right now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.
- Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Furman, I find your new, your latest book, *Defeating Dementia: What You Can Do to Prevent Alzheimer's and Other Forms of Dementia* to be one of the most interesting books that's come along in a long time. If our listeners are interested at all in general health and especially avoiding the tragedy of dementia of any form, why would we not want to know how to do that? But the point you were making yesterday is this is a disease that you can affect dramatically and even gave percentages from recent research that proves that. Repeat that for those that didn't hear the program yesterday.
- Dr. Richard Furman: Well, there's a lot that we can be doing to defeat, slow, stop Alzheimer's. But the numbers that I like to think about is that if you're in the 55 to 60 year old range, a third of the time, a third of the people in that age group have that Alzheimer protein in their brain without any symptoms. If you are 65 years old, 10 to 20% of Americans are going to have the symptoms of Alzheimer's.
- Dr. James Dobson: Name it, that's beta.
- Dr. Richard Furman: Beta amyloid.
- Dr. James Dobson: Amyloid.

Dr. Richard Furman: Beta amyloid is in your brain. And that's the first stage is that first 20 years without symptoms. In that first stage, you don't know you have it, you don't know you're getting it. Used to, they had to do an autopsy to find out if you had Alzheimer's.

Dr. James Dobson: People are not willing to participate in that study, right?

Dr. Richard Furman: That's right. But then it got where, like when Mrs. Dale was diagnosed as probable Alzheimer's, they would just test. You'd do mental testing. But when the beta amyloid, there were two proteins that diagnose Alzheimer's. And you may ought to learn those two. One is beta amyloid and the one is tall protein. The beta amyloid kills the cell. The tall protein, it's like a starfish out that carries the message from the cell to the next cell. It gets entwined. It gets tangled up. So that's what happens in that first 20 years in stage one. That is happening and we don't even know that it's happening. But then you go to stage two and that's where, like with Mrs. Dale-

Dr. James Dobson: That is an assumed name.

Dr. Richard Furman: That's assumed name.

Dr. James Dobson: That is an assumed name. It was actually your mother-in-law.

Dr. Richard Furman: It's my mother-in-law. And that's what the book takes her progressing through Alzheimer's, but then it intertwines it with what's going on mentally. It talks about what we're talking about right now. Here, Mrs. Dale goes into stage two and she can carry on life fairly independently. She could travel, she'd go to the store. She sang in the church choir. She quit singing solos, but things were ... She's starting to forget things. I'd go down to visit them. And her husband would say ... I'm concerned. I heard her call somebody on the phone the other day and she had to ask who it was because she'd forgotten who she called until they answered. And said later, she called and told someone, "I'll call you back in a little bit. I forgot why I called you." Things like that. And that's stage two where all of that's going on.

And I got there one weekend, he said, "You got to take her driver's license away from her." She went out to a friend's house, drove all the way to Milledgeville, Georgia, and back two hours, and she wasn't sure how to get back home. So I talked to her. She was adamant. "I can drive. I'm not going to quit driving. I'm going to continue like I'm doing." So I called her doctor, said when she comes in for a checkup next week, write a prescription, no driving. We put it on the refrigerator. And at that moment, she went from stage two to stage three because she quit driving, she became dependent on someone. And if we'd done PET scans, if we'd done studies, brain studies, you've just seen more of this beta amyloid protein building up in her brain. The hippocampus of the brain is the area that dwells with memory. That is the difference between stage two and stage three.

Dr. James Dobson: It's a big jump, isn't it?

Dr. Richard Furman: It's a huge jump. You become dependent. You go from there to where, okay, now you're not taking care of yourself. Finally, you get a walker and then a wheelchair and then you become bedridden. Nobody understands bedridden until they see someone that they love being put in bed and you realize, "Hey, life's over." You're not taking them out to a restaurant anymore. You have to put them in the living room because otherwise they're just going to be in the bedroom all the time. They're living in that bed for the rest of their lives. So that's stage three and it's just a terrible stage. And that's when you realize, what can I do to help my odds of never getting Alzheimer's?

Dr. James Dobson: Not a lot you can do to help the person who's in stage three.

Dr. Richard Furman: You can slow it down. They've got studies showing, doing the PET scans and the MRIs of the brain. If they do the exercise, if they eat properly, if they lose weight, usually by the time they're at that age, they've already lost the weight and all of that. But the studies show that they go back to midlife and see, were they overweight midlife? Were they obese in midlife? Did they exercise at midlife? What did they eat at midlife? And that shows on through there, that stage two is the big stage when you first start having symptoms. There are a lot of studies done on that, measuring the PET scans to see how much of this beta amyloid is clogging the brain, the hippocampus of the brain, that these are preventable steps that can be made to make that beta amyloid not to form. And the Alzheimer's Association says half of Alzheimer's is preventable.

And there was an article that Lancet, a medical journal that said 87% of everyone with Alzheimer's has at least one preventable factor that they can work on, whether it's the exercise, weight loss, or how they eat. So there are many things we can be doing that will, even in stage two, will slow that down. By these studies, these brain studies showing, okay, all of a sudden you realize that I need to exercise or I can't eat that way anymore. I'm going to lose weight. It shows that beta amyloid decrease in the deposit in that hippocampus.

Dr. James Dobson: You know there's a spiritual dimension to this too, because we are the temple of the Lord. He lives within us. 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20 says, "Do you not know your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? Who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies." That's rather dramatic. Right to the point.

Dr. Richard Furman: That's great. And that's what it's all about. That's the way we say thank you for what He's given us. Example, when I went to Nepal earthquake, after they had the earthquake over there, the church there looked brand new and the reason is they had made it earthquake proof and the pastor told them, "This is not your building. This is God's building. You're the caretaker." The same way with this. God's given us a great body. We're the caretakers of it and we need to do everything we can to thank Him for what He's given us.

Dr. James Dobson: What do people say to you when you talk like this? Do you have any idea what percentage of them say, "I get it. I will do it. "

Dr. Richard Furman: There are two types of people. One, they would desire it. Like I said earlier, they'll desire it, but they won't make the commitment because of the desire doesn't require action. But if they commit to it, I encourage them to make that a goal in their life. And if they need to write down, sit down and write down every meal you're going to eat, breakfast, lunch, dinner, write it down, just the basics of it and set that as your goal. It gets where something that used to be favorite will get where once you read and study what it's doing-

Dr. James Dobson: I never quite got that stage.

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, I blame it on IQ, but we won't go with that. But there are some people that will read something like this and realize, "Hey, I'm at that fork in the road. I better change my life right now." And that's what I'm wanting this book to become something other than your heart attack to make you change. And there are things that you can do paper after paper showing about things you can do to decrease your chances of that beta amyloid piling up in your brain.

Dr. James Dobson: You put the primary emphasis on saturated fat. There are other things obviously that you can do and nutrition is a complicated subject, but you listed 10 things you must not eat. And one of your books started with number one, two, and three. You wanted to kind of summarize that for folks?

Dr. Richard Furman: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Now what we're really doing is that we've done two programs where we've talked about nutrition as being one of the ways that you can help to reduce the danger of Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. Let's focus primarily then on food and tell me what that really means.

Dr. Richard Furman: All right. That's very good because like Mrs. Dale, she wouldn't have known what saturated fat even meant to her in her days. But let me give you a number to remember on the significance of what we're getting ready to discuss about where does that saturated fat lead you. There's a study that showed that the group, you won't be in the right group, the group that ate the least amount of saturated fat, which is your red meat, what we're getting ready to go over, versus the 10% that ate the least amount, the ones that ate the most had a, and this is what I like. They didn't say double your chances or whatever they said, 2.2 times more likely to get Alzheimer's. Now just remember that it's not twice as likely. It's 2.2 times. That's how exactly they were on measuring this saturated fat that we're getting ready to mention.

In the bad picture, I'm going to give you a little good picture in a minute where this is leading us, but I want to talk about the good fat, the fish. You should eat, most reports they ate three to five fish a week if you can, which would help

defeating Alzheimer's. But the study that stands out in my mind was a study that showed compared someone who ate one helping a fish a week versus a group that did not eat fish. And the ones that ate the one fish a week had a 60% less likelihood of developing Alzheimer's.

Dr. James Dobson: That's phenomenal.

Dr. Richard Furman: There's two pictures that I hope you walk away with. That saturated fat picture, the 2.2 picture, picture of a steak, on top of that steak is an egg with an egg yolk humped up. On top of that, they put a piece of cheese and it breaks the yolk and the yolk runs down over the steak. You got that picture. Up in the right hand corner is a glass of milk, which stands for cream. That's ice cream, cream based soup, any kind of cream that's 4% butterfat in that milk that's equivalent to five strips of bacon if you're looking at the fat.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Furman, after I had my heart attack all those years ago, 28 years ago, I thought that I had to eliminate all fat. And that's what I was told at the hospital because they didn't know then.

Dr. Richard Furman: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: And they said, "Get all fat out of your diet." And I tried to do it. And I was eating about anywhere from two grams to five or six grams per day. And yeah, that's hard to do. I would go to the grocery store and I'd spend two hours reading labels and I would walk up and down, trying to cut all that fat out. My cardiologist sent me to a lipid expert, a physician, Dr. Eckle, Robert Eckle is his name. And I described to him what my diet was. He said, "Well, I'm going to make some changes. I'm going to put a lot of fat back into your life and I'm going to put 80 grams of fat into your diet, but it is not going to be saturated fat. I want you to eliminate every bit of that. "

Dr. Richard Furman: Right. That's great.

Dr. James Dobson: And then we'll put polyunsaturated and mono unsaturated fat in and that freed me. To eat a lot of things that I had not been eating.

Dr. Richard Furman: Yeah. And most people will put all fats together, but there are bad fats and they're good fats. The other bad was the butter and anything fried. Most things are fried in animal fat, so just get grilled, not fried. But anyway, that's the bad picture. But what you were just saying, what your doctor put you on was the good fats. You don't eliminate the bad fats and then substitute sugar. You eliminate the bad fats and then substitute the good fats. Eliminate the steak. Start eating the fish. Just a quick little picture of the good fats. Think of a fish. Salmon is the best. If you think of fish, you look in the fish eye, it's right eye. It's not an eyeball in there. It's a nut. Okay. The nut. Nuts have the good fats in it. You look in the other eye, that's not an eyeball either.

Look at that. It's an olive. So you use olive oil for your cooking. You open the mouth and there's avocados sitting there. Okay. But anyway, won't get into that detail, but that's the good fats versus the bad fats. You want to eliminate. For Alzheimer's, don't eat any of the bad picture. Just go with the good picture.

Dr. James Dobson: And research shows that that makes a difference.

Dr. Richard Furman: It sure does. Just those two examples that we did about saturated fat 2.2 and then 60% less just with the fish. But the same way with the cholesterol. The higher the LDL cholesterol in your blood.

Dr. James Dobson: That's the bad stuff.

Dr. Richard Furman: That's the bad. That's the lethal cholesterol. The higher that is when you get your cholesterol numbers back, the higher that lethal LDL cholesterol is. They've done the studies that show there's more of the beta amyloid protein in your hippocampus, in your brain.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. There's controversy over this. It's frustrating to me to hear-

Dr. Richard Furman: I like controversies.

Dr. James Dobson: A lot of physicians saying, "Well, that was yesterday. We don't believe that anymore." And they're actually recommending that people eat more saturated fat. Where are they getting that?

Dr. Richard Furman: A friend of mine argued that butter was the best thing he could eat. But what you have to do is, I like the reality. Okay. If the saturated fat you eat, medically speaking, anatomically speaking, increases the LDL level of the cholesterol in your blood. Saturated fat, the more, the more LDL cholesterol. It's fact. Another fact is the more LDL cholesterol, the worse your arteries are going to be. More heart attacks and more strokes. That's medically proven. What I point is, look at the one medicine, the biggest cell medicine in the U.S., it's a cholesterol lowering drug that lowers your LDL. So from a medical standpoint, why in the world would that be the number one selling drug? I mean-

Dr. James Dobson: If it didn't do anything.

Dr. Richard Furman: If it is not doing anything. The FDA is going to, if it's not doing it, they're going to change things. So I'd have to go by the FDA and the medical literature showing that yes, the higher your LDL and the lower your HDL, the more of the beta amyloids in your brain. And they've got a study on that. So any discussion, any argument, whatever, let's go to that study that they show that the higher your LDL cholesterol is in your blood, the more beta amyloid you have in your brain, but your test on your test scores are lower.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, my cardiologist and I had a conversation about this the other day and he said, "We really do not lose very many people to heart attacks today." It used to be just very common, and I told you about my family, and what they ate is disgusting to me. My grandmother used to fry bacon first and then put the bacon grease in the gravy and in the biscuits. Bacon grease, mind you, and all of them died. They died early from coronary artery disease. So there must be something to it. We made changes and those medications now have also had an effect and fewer people are dying of heart attacks. Can you validate that?

Dr. Richard Furman: Okay. What I'll validate is there's still over half of Americans will die from a heart attack or a stroke from disease of their arteries.

Dr. James Dobson: Eventually.

Dr. Richard Furman: But the one point you said just a minute ago, they died earlier back then when they reading like that. Now we're living a little longer, but that's still the highest death rate even over cancer or whatever.

Dr. James Dobson: There's a lot of work to be done yet.

Dr. Richard Furman: It's still the same work that we got to work on, but if we're talking about Alzheimer's, remember that those cholesterol numbers directly affect the amount of beta amyloid that's in the brain.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we're almost out of time. I want to kind of summarize what we've talked about. The name of the book is *Defeating Dementia: What You Can Do To Prevent Alzheimer's and Other Forms of Dementia* by Dr. Richard Furman, who is a cardiologist, a physician, a surgeon. And this book is a must read because most people know, I don't know they live by it, but they know that saturated fat is dangerous for the heart and so on. And they know that heart attacks are still related to nutrition. They don't know for the most part that nutrition is related to Alzheimer's. This is new territory. And the exciting thing is that you can lower, dramatically lower the incidence or the danger from Alzheimer's by avoiding the things that help to cause it.

Dr. Richard Furman: Exactly. These are just studies that show what you can do to get in the right group of people that has less Alzheimer's than the group that has more. So we want to get in the right group for reading and by doing.

Dr. James Dobson: Before we go, we really ought to talk about how people can get this book because I want to make sure it's available. And of course you can get it from Amazon and many other places. So this is not something you studied in medical school.

Dr. Richard Furman: Oh no.

Dr. James Dobson: This is something that's come along recently.

Dr. Richard Furman: Yeah. All of this is going to be known, I think, by everybody several years down the road, but I think this is just the-

Dr. James Dobson: A lot of people will be too late.

Dr. Richard Furman: Sort of the wake-up call. In closing, I just want to remind you that it's never too late to start on the road to better health and defeating dementia.

Dr. James Dobson: You've done a great service to many, many people by what you've written here. I hope this book winds up number one on the best-seller list. It ought to be there because it can change lives. And I appreciate you, Dr. Furman. Appreciate your friendship. And you've been here to Family Talk three or four times, maybe four or five now. And as long as you're writing, there's a place for you at that chair.

Dr. Richard Furman: Well, thanks for having me. Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, the science is clear. What you put on your plate today is quietly shaping the health of your brain tomorrow. As one noted speaker put it, when we're born, we look like our parents. When we die, we look like our decisions. You've been listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, featuring part two of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Dr. Richard Furman, discussing what you can do to lower your risk of developing Alzheimer's. Dr. Furman has written an outstanding book on this topic. It's called *Defeating Dementia*. And if you missed any portion of today's broadcast, want to share this important information with someone you love or learn more about the book, visit jdfi.net. That's jdfi.net. Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we are dedicated to bringing you trusted voices on the topics that matter most to you and your family. For more than 15 years, the JDFI has stood for family, biblical truth, and the sanctity of human life, as well as introducing as many people as possible to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh and from all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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