



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** America Reads the Bible

**Guest(s):** Bunni Pounds

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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.

Gary Bauer: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Gary Bauer, senior vice president of public policy here at JDFI and host of the Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast. Now, I'm sure you know that this year on July 4th, 2026, we're going to celebrate the 250th birthday of the founding of the United States of America. And I hope everybody realizes, although we live in crazy times, but this country was built on a actual biblical idea, a moral idea. It's smack in the middle of the Declaration of Independence. It's in the second paragraph, it says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men," it means all mankind, ladies, "that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator."

That's the God of the Bible. It doesn't say we're all created equal and endowed by our government. It says we're all created equal and endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights among these, right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But it wouldn't be a good 250th birthday if we didn't in our celebrations acknowledge the central idea of America and the importance of the Christian faith and the importance of the Bible and the kind of country that we have. Well, we have a guest today who is a woman that understands all these issues and she is putting on with some of the groups she's associated with just a fantastic event. And we wanted you to know about this event because in its own way, it may be one of the most important things that happens this year. Bunni Pounds is an author, speaker, and the founder and president of Christians Engaged, as well as senior vice president for the Family Policy Alliance and Family Policy Alliance Foundation, which were founded by our own Dr. James Dobson.

She's the visionary behind America Reads the Bible, where in partnership with Great American Media and over 400 leaders from different ministries and organizations, they are all going to gather here in Washington, D.C., appropriately at the Museum of the Bible to read the entire Bible out loud from Genesis to Revelation in one week. This starts this weekend and concludes on April 25th. So Bunni, welcome to Family Talk. I couldn't help but think how eager James Dobson, Dr. Dobson would have been to be doing this interview and encouraging you and being proud and happy at what you were doing. He

admired your work, but he's not here, although I'm sure he's watching and cheering us on. Can you share with our listeners how you came to know the Lord and then later on how you were inspired to go on and start Christians Engaged?

Bunni Pounds: Absolutely, Gary. And yeah, I had an honor of writing about Dr. Dobson in my upcoming book on the leadership of Nehemiah and using him as an example of that and just really appreciate him and this ministry so much. Yeah, I was 13 years old as a pastor's kid and I was in a darkened auditorium listening to a guy by the name of Carman sing about the death, burial, and resurrection in a song called *The Champion*. And I'll never forget, I grew up seventh day Adventist, fifth generation Adventist. My dad was an Adventist pastor, never been exposed to any other Christians outside of the Adventist Church at that point. And I remember just sitting in that dark and auditorium, seeing the entire body of Christ on display and realizing I was a sinner and needed Jesus. And Jesus captured my heart. I've never been the same since, became an avid evangelist in my Christian school and then went to public school and got to lead lots of people to Jesus during that season and went to Bible school after that at Christ for the Nations Institute. But God, yeah, I captured my heart with His Word. I love the Word of God. I love to teach people how to meditate on Scripture and also to pray and seek Jesus. And He really is the answer to everything in our country.

Gary Bauer: That was beautifully put. We all believe at the James Dobson Family Institute that America won't be great again unless it's godly again. What about this really unique event of reading the Bible over the course of one week? Was there something that particularly laid that on your heart and led you to sort of take the leadership and bringing this all together?

Bunni Pounds: I forgot to answer the other question, which is the beginning of Christians Engaged. I spent 20 years in political consulting and campaign management as a missionary to America and then launched Christians Engaged to engage Christians all over the country to pray for our country, to vote in every election, actively engage for the wellbeing of our country. And by the grace of God, I think we have one of the only get out the vote system from a non-partisan perspective in the country with now a million Christians that we're serving in that. But I didn't need one more thing to do, Gary. That's the point. We had a lot going on. We have a young adult program. We have curriculum that we built, Christians Engaged Academy. We have a church outreach program, but I was in the Museum of the Bible two years ago and got struck by the Lord about Ezra.

Ezra stood up and he reminded the Israelites who they were in a time where they had forgotten. They had been in captivity by the Babylonians, the Persian kingdom, and they had forgotten the miracles and promises of God. And it hit me. I'm trying to raise up a generation of Nehemiahs that will repair the walls of a nation. But frankly, most Christians in this country, binge-watch Netflix, are gaming, addicted to pornography. We can name all the vices and we're not reading our Bibles. And then we wonder why nobody will run for office or why

no one will share the gospel, frankly, even. And so it hit me. We need an Ezra moment in this country. We need our national leaders that love God, love the Word of God to say, "Hey, we're some of the high performing people in our country, but we have to go to God every day just to make it. And we're going to call the American people back to daily Bible reading and discipleship to be dependent on the Lord." Otherwise, we're not going to have the leaders that we need for our country for the next generation." And then I had this crazy thought that day as I'm weeping, walking around the museum of the Bible, man, wouldn't it be awesome to do that in the backdrop of the 250th birthday of the country? Maybe that would be a God moment. So I sat on this private memo I had to myself, Gary, for over a year. I tried to talk God out of me leading this, called so many leaders and said, "Is anybody doing a Bible reading thing for the 250th?" Nope, nope, nope. And last January, we just walked out by faith. And what I thought was a million dollar project, it's now a \$2 million project.

And God has been so faithful and we now have almost 500 of our national leaders that are going to read the Bible all the way through from Genesis to Revelation. And it's going to be an audio and video Bible on the backend commemorating the 250th birthday.

Gary Bauer:

The Christians Engaged idea is something that Dr. Dobson urged all of his life and we've been promoting this whole concept of Christian citizenship. There's still so many, not just people in the pews, but so many pastors that have bought into this fallacy that all we're supposed to do is sit there and hear the Word and pray, but ignore the country that God put us in. And we're in a country that God put us in and that was an incredible blessing. It was no surprise to God that we were born here where we would have the liberty to worship and seek God as we see fit. And so we'd be ingrates if we weren't with all this freedom doing anything to preserve it for our children and grandchildren. But your story of the fact that this idea came to you, you wanted to maybe see if God really, maybe you were getting the wrong message or maybe you could talk God out of it. Thank God that you didn't go down that road, but that you decided to do this. So describe this for me. When the sun comes up on the first day at the Museum of the Bible, what is somebody going to see? And will each speaker have a set amount of time or a specific portion of the Bible that they're supposed to read?

Bunni Pounds:

Yeah. Well, April 18, Saturday night, April 18, we're going to start with an opening celebration from Mark Batterson's church, National Community Church there in Washington. This will be a 90 minute program that we have universities, churches all over the country are live streaming this through Great American Pure Flix. But Leeland's going to sing. We've got prayer and worship. We have Patricia Heaton from *Everybody Loves Raymond*, Candace Cameron Bure from *Full House* is my national spokesperson with Cameron and BJ Arnett from the *Forge* movie. So they're going to kind of all start it out. And then we're going to go through spheres of influence: education, media folks, pastors, Pastor Allen Jackson. David Barton's going to do a seven minute history lesson of the importance of the Bible. But all these leaders from our cabinet secretary to members of Congress will be sharing their testimony of how the Bible's affected

their life and how it will affect every American in this country if we open the Bible.

And then I get to call the nation to repentance and preach the gospel at the end. It's going to be awesome. And then we go 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM Eastern Standard Time, Gary. Seven full days, 84 hours from the World Stage Theater of the Museum of the Bible. We've divided the Bible up into about 50 minute segments each hour, so we can schedule governors and cabinet members and members of Congress and 120 ministry leaders and all these celebrities and comedians and musicians to read the Bible. They've got about four to 10 minute sections, most of them. But then we have 16 national worship leaders and I give them a lot of props. They're flying themselves in. They're doing it on their own dime. Nobody's being paid anything for this, Gary. All of the money's going towards marketing and production on this, but the reality is they're going to fill in prayer and worship at the end of each hour.

So Danny Gokey's going to be there for six hours. He's going to come out of the green room and he's going to go, "Hey, I got five minutes. Let's pray and worship." Or he's got two minutes or he's got eight minutes. We don't know until we get there what this is going to look like, but people are going to be able to livestream this in churches across the country and pray while they read the Bible. Business people can have this playing in their businesses to their employees all week. Let's listen to the whole story of God and get the vision that God has a purpose for our lives in his story and that's what we're doing. And Franklin Graham's doing our welcome at the beginning and we'll be doing the gospel presentation at the end of the book of Revelation. So unprecedented unity, I'm very, very, very blessed for all these people that are doing this. It's just an amazing blessing to know them all.

Gary Bauer:

If only there was some way we could mandate every member of Congress to sit at the Museum of the Bible and hear it being read, right? A lot more good things would be happening among our lawmakers. The time for this is obviously now. At the beginning of the country, probably the book that most colonialists were familiar with was the Bible. So the founding fathers could quote or make what might seem like a vague reference to the Bible and everybody would know what they were talking about. Today, if you believe the studies, I mean, people that regularly read the Bible, I think it's like 4% or something like that. So it's not just a acute thing to be doing on the 250th birthday. It is essential that the whole country turn back to the Scriptures.

Bunni Pounds:

It's critical, Gary, and that's why we're doing it. People are like, why is a civic engagement ministry leading a national Bible reading thing? Because this is the root of the problem. This is the root to everything. And what you just said, yeah, George Barna's report, 4%, actually have a biblical worldview. It is critically important that we all understand that we can't exist on our own gifts and talents any longer. We can't survive on a 20 minute message at our local church on a Sunday morning and go all week without food. As the deer pants for the water, so my soul pants for the Lord, right?

I mean, we know the word is the light. If we don't have the light in our life, what do we have? And so to see national leaders, some of them, I'll just use Candace Cameron Bure as a perfect example. Here's this woman who's an actress. She's like so busy. I've gotten to know her the last six months. I'm so thrilled that she did the forward to my book even. She didn't have time to do that, but she's saying, "No, no, no. I have to find my life in the Bible every day or I'm not going to make it." And you, the American people, need to find your life in the Bible. What a powerful statement. Not only are we believing that complacency and apathy are going to be broken off the hearts of church people, we need that. We need to understand we got to go to God every day.

But also the media reports of this, the social media clips, all of these readers are going to be independent social media clips in the future. We're going to have some that we're releasing that week that we are believing will hopefully go viral, right? As the White House Chief of Staff and members of Congress and Hollywood folks read the Bible. But what this could do and awaken in people's hearts in Southside Chicago or L.A. or Baltimore or Dallas, Texas. "Maybe my family needs the Bible. Maybe I should go stop by Half Christ Books or Barnes and Noble and buy a Bible. Maybe there's some wisdom or something in there that could break through my anxiety and my fear and depression right now." That's what we're praying for. That's what we're believing for, Gary. So please, every Christian that's listening to me right now, join the livestream, come to D.C., sit in the Bible reading. It will be phenomenal, but pray. Pray for spiritual renewal and awakening in this moment because it is a national moment that we frankly probably will never have again.

Gary Bauer:

There's a lot of polling data that shows that people are worried about the future. We're headed in the wrong direction and it's all very understandable, but there's not one major problem facing America, whether it's racial reconciliation or rebuilding the family, dealing with corruption, whether it's in government or on Wall Street, wherever it is, none of those problems can be solved without the active involvement of Christians and without returning to God's Word. All the solutions are in His word and all the citizens best equipped to deal with this and do that reform are going to be men and women who follow Jesus Christ and are familiar with His inspired word. It seems so obvious to me, and I know it does to you, but wouldn't it be wonderful if this is what set off the revival that we're all yearning for?

Bunni Pounds:

And Gary, we're doing this. It's a huge logistical nightmare, as you can imagine. I think we should get the Guinness World Records for largest event with 500 speakers that we have to deal with, right? But we're not doing it just to have an event. We're doing it unto discipleship and raising up leaders. And we're going to have an Ezra moment and then we're going to pray, "God, raise up Nehemiah's in our country that will lean on the cross, that will lean on the word and will be actively going into culture to transform it." And I wrote a book that's coming out May 19, Candace Cameron Bure did the forward and I featured Dr. James Dobson in that book along with 16 other national American heroes that have impacted my life personally. But we need to see Christians and it's called

*Stepping Up to Lead: Rebuilding a Nation in the Footsteps of Nehemiah.* We need a generation of Nehemiahs and leaders in all spheres of influence that will go for God.

Gary Bauer: Now, I know you have a real heart for Gen Z and younger Americans. Can you tell us a little bit about the 1630 initiative and how that fits into all the other many things you're doing to such good ends? You sound like one busy lady, let me tell you.

Bunni Pounds: Yeah. We launched Christians Engaged in Spanish this year while we were doing all this too, but 1630 is such an amazing program. We started it two years ago, really with the idea that we wanted to take our pledge to pray, vote, and engage, market it towards young adults, and then also give them free classes. We have over nine different classes that we've created for Christians to teach them about civics, biblical economics, biblical justice, the leadership of Nehemiah, full campaign school. So any 16 to 30-year-old can apply to get a free class, which is about a \$30 value. They also, we take them on leadership retreats. We've taken about almost a hundred young people on full \$2,500 scholarships to D.C., teaching them for three and a half days on prayer, voting, and engagement. They get to meet members of Congress, go to the Capitol, go to the Museum of the Bible, go to the monuments.

So having funders that will fund us investing in those young people. And then we've seen some run for office, Gary. We've seen some start podcasts. We've seen some join their chamber of commerce. We've got one that's the president of a chamber of commerce now, and Alyssa Brown in Arkansas was one of our young adults that decided to run for state representative. She became the youngest woman ever elected in Arkansas state history at the age of 27. So God is on the move. Gen Z is hungry for relationships. They want real people in their life and they want to go on mission. And so we get to empower them and we're just beginning that program. I'm excited about the days ahead for 1630.

Gary Bauer: So this is, as we said, the 250th anniversary. And a lot of people are just focused on this one year and then we're done. But really, what you're doing and what I think all of us need to think about and pray about is how do we guarantee that there's going to be a 300th birthday of the American Republic? Because if we don't get back to the Bible and get back to understanding that that's the source of wisdom and that politicians can't take away our fundamental rights, that God gave us those rights, there won't be a 300th birthday. We have a lot of forces within the country that are constantly undermining what the founding fathers did instead of holding it up and seeing it as the great blessing that it is.

Bunni Pounds: Amen, Gary. And that's why pastors go, "Well, why do we need a civic engagement ministry?" I'm like, "Because we've got to protect our freedoms for the purpose of you having the right to preach the gospel, for all of us to preach the gospel because we don't want to live in North Korea, Venezuela, or Cuba." And I got into this space 30 years ago as a homeschooling mom. I was 24 years old and caught the political bug and started out as a volunteer and then went

back to Dallas Baptist University while I homeschooled my kids to get my political science degree and then started working for members of Congress at that point. But I did it with this in mind, Gary. I'm going to be 85 or 90 on my East Texas ranch somewhere someday bass fishing. And I'm going to have my Bible on my lap and I'm going to be crying still because Jesus is still real and He still loves me.

And I'm going to be telling my kids and my grandkids and my great-grandkids, sorry, I'm going to get emotional, that I was in the fight that I was there. I was there fighting for the unborn, fighting for religious liberty, fighting for our children and families. And that's why we do this work every day and that's why we need more reinforcements. We're calling every Christian to pray, vote, and engage for the wellbeing of our country. It's important that we do it now.

Gary Bauer: It's beautifully said. And the fact that you were getting emotional helps those that don't know you personally see or hear your heart. As we're running out of time here, on the beginning of that week, what is the best thing that somebody in Frankfurt, Kentucky or St. Louis, Missouri, what's the best thing they can do in their own community on that same day?

Bunni Pounds: Yeah. Well, everybody go to [americareadsthebible.com](http://americareadsthebible.com) and sign up for the live stream so that you have the instructions to go to [pureflix.com](http://pureflix.com) and get on that. Plan on gathering your family and your church around April 18 for this opening celebration. It's going to be epic. It's going to be an amazing moment and something that we all need. And then just plan out times. You can donate. We definitely want this audio and video Bible and these social media clips to go viral. And it takes money to do that as we know through Big Tech. So if you want to donate to amplify this and America reads the Bible, we need help there, but just use this moment. Take this moment and share the gospel and share the love of Christ with your family and friends. That's what we're asking.

Gary Bauer: Wonderfully said. You're real inspiration. It is an honor and a pleasure to have spent some time with you today. I'll be going by the museum of the Bible to see a little bit myself, but God bless you for rising to the occasion. Folks, let's all be inspired by what Bunni has done. We have a country to say. We've got wonderful people that don't know the Word yet. There's so much we can do to make sure that our children and grandchildren live in a free nation as we've been honored and blessed to live in a free nation. And all of it will help us do what we want to ultimately do, which is to stand before the throne and hear the words, well done, good and faithful servant. So God bless you, Bunni. God bless all of you listening and let's go out and fight the good fight for faith, family, and freedom.

Roger Marsh: It's one thing to talk about the Bible's influence on our nation, but it's another to actually open it up and read it together. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a conversation featuring Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the Dobson Policy and Culture Center and Bunni Pounds. They've been discussing the America Reads the Bible movement.

If you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you want to share it with a friend, visit [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net). As America approaches our 250th anniversary, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute is calling on the next generation to step up. We're hosting a national essay contest for middle and high school students, inviting them to reflect on how faith shaped the founding of our nation and how God is calling them to help shape what comes next the next 250 years, if you will. Students can compete for cash prizes. The grand prize for the middle school award is \$1,000 and the grand prize winner for the high school category will win \$2,500. Now, the submission deadline is coming up in a couple of weeks. It's April the 30th, so don't wait. Get all the details at [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net).

The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute exists to preserve and promote the institution of the family and the biblical principles upon which it is based, to introduce people to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to defend the sanctity of human life and religious freedom in our culture. Now, that mission moves forward every single day because of generous friends just like you. If you believe families in our nation need a trusted voice now more than ever, we invite you to partner with us in this ministry. Your gift of any amount helps keep these programs on the air and these resources in the hands of people who need them. To make a secure donation, visit [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net). Or if you'd like to speak with a member of our constituent care team, you can call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. And keep in mind, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thank you 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.

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