



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Standing Strong in the Fight for Life and Liberty –Part 2

Guest(s): Pastor Rob McCoy

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of The James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and joining me in the studio today for a very special program is Gary Bauer. Gary is our senior vice President of public policy here at The Dobson Policy Center, and today's a very special day. It is March for Life Day, it's Sanctity of Life Day. And Gary, we're going to get into a presentation here that you and I both got to experience last fall at an event here in Colorado Springs that's one of the most powerful declarations for the need for family, ministry, the sanctity of human life all packed into a 13-minute presentation. I don't know how Rob McCoy did it, Gary, but it's really powerful.

Gary Bauer: You're right Roger, and it's always good to be on the air with you as we discuss these issues that are so important to men and women of faith, those of us that believe in faith, family, and freedom. And you're right, we had the honor of listening to this live. The audience was mesmerized when the pastor talked about his own experience with the sanctity of life issue in a way that it wasn't theoretical, it was real.

Roger Marsh: One of the beautiful things about what we're about to hear is it's a message from Pastor Rob McCoy who has spent more than two decades as senior pastor of Godspeed Calvary Chapel in Thousand Oaks, California, and he has recently just as of Christmastime announced that he's moving into more of an emeritus role with the church, kind of stepping away from the regular full-time responsibilities.

But he has such a passion for ministry. He has such a passion for community. If you were listening to yesterday's edition of Family Talk, you heard the first part of this presentation where Rob was talking about what motivated him to keep his church open during Covid and to run for city council and actually wound up becoming the mayor of Thousand Oaks simply because he felt this heart for community and that kind of community engagement.

But one of the things that he's going to speak to, as we are talking about the sanctity of human life, is the dignity of human life and something that he experienced potentially as a father who might have been participating in an

abortion. But also someone who has his own sanctity of life story too, Gary, and it really drives it home. You mentioned this isn't just a theoretical for Rob McCoy, this is his life's journey.

Gary Bauer:

Yeah. It's one thing to memorize all the pro-life talking points that we have, the development of the child in the womb. And very effective and very true, and it ought to inform our decisions. It's quite another thing if you're actually a woman with a pregnancy that wasn't planned and a point in your life when you weren't ready for this and you don't know how you're going to handle it. Or in the case of Pastor McCoy, when you may be the father of a child that you weren't anticipating and how you wrestled with that, then it becomes the way we all live our lives, right? It's not textbook, it's all the emotions and being torn and we know what's right, but we're tempted to do something that's wrong because it's a special situation and on and on it goes, as fallen human beings try to rationalize on an issue like this. But the bottom line is the Bible is very clear. God says, "I put before you life and death, so choose life so that you and your children may live." And Pastor McCoy's story is a great example of that very clear biblical injunction.

Roger Marsh:

Well, today as we celebrate the March for Life that'll be happening in Washington D.C., today and all throughout the country as we know that as believers, we worked hard and prayed for the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and it was overturned on June the 24th of 2022. So this becomes a day of real celebration for us here in the pro-life community.

But we also understand too, that for those of us in the body of Christ, there are resources that churches need to be able to kind of get off the sidelines. I mean, there's no bench now in the culture that we're living in right now. Everyone's called to participate. And Gary, your colleague and mine, Dr. Owen Strachan, the senior director of the Dobson Culture Center, has put together a brand new powerful pro-life curriculum for churches. There's written materials. There's some videos that were shot. You and I were talking before we came on the air today too, about the fact that Owen just shot these videos right in front of the largest abortion clinic in Louisville that was recently shut down. I mean, the number of abortion clinics that are operational here in the U.S. has dropped dramatically over the past couple of decades. That's a really good sign.

Gary Bauer:

It really is and Owen is doing a fantastic job. You know, I follow economic statistics and so forth and if I see that a manufacturing plant are shutting down, I think, "Oh what are we going to do? We need to be making things." Or we hear about different areas of economic life and they might be shrinking and we get all concerned. When it comes to the closing down of abortion clinics, that is the one shrinkage of an industry that makes me do a little jig in my office, Roger. It means another killing machine, a place where babies are taken to die before they breathe one breath of freedom in the United States. I hope eventually they all shut down for lack of business.

Roger Marsh:

Amen. Love to hear that and the fact that every time we know as Gary mentioned, if a manufacturing plant goes down that harms families, it harms the community. It harms individuals because of the loss of work. But when an abortion facility goes down and a pregnancy resource center takes its place, then that means it's good for the community and it's the preservation of life.

And when you go to drjamesdobson.org, you can click on the tab for our brand new pro-life curricula. It is printed word, it is also video that, as I mentioned, was shot in front of the formerly largest abortion clinic in Louisville, which has now been shut down. And it's very, very powerful and compelling. It will motivate your parishioners into action.

Well, let's get into this presentation now. This is actually part two of Pastor Rob McCoy's presentation here on Family Talk. Yesterday on the broadcast, if you were with us, and if you didn't get a chance to hear it, you can always use the Family Talk app or go to drjamesdobson.org and listen to the first part of the program. But what you'll find is that Rob was talking about how important it was for him as a pastor to get involved in the community, which eventually led him to run for city council.

We're going to pick it up at that point here because this is when the topic of the conversation turned dramatically. Talking about Rob's own story of not only facing an unplanned pregnancy as a parent, but realizing that that unplanned pregnancy part was also part of his personal story as well. Let's get into it right now on this edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Pastor Rob McCoy:

I stood in defiance of the governor and of the county and I was scared. But I'd already been in a place where I was scared. I had been trained for this. I came to Christ, and I wasn't raised in a Christian home. My mom and dad were good. They were fiscal conservatives and socially liberal. My mom worked hard for the Republican Party. My dad had three tours of Vietnam. He was a tender man. My mom was a hardworking woman. Neither of them were Christians. I never grew up praying in my home or reading the Bible with my folks. And when I came to Christ in college, I didn't know what to do. I found the radio and I came across Focus on the Family with a familiar voice, and in the absence of my father not pouring into me Christian wisdom, Dr. Dobson became in loco parentis. He was the dad that would have that fireside chat as I'd drive in the car. When I graduated, I became...Amen.

When I graduated, I went into sales for Helene Curtis and then Chesebrough, Pond's, and Unilever rose in the ranks. And before I was a Christian, I'd met a really beautiful gal when I was a lifeguard down in San Diego in Coronado. And I'd met her and she would send me a birthday greeting every year. And she always had a boyfriend, I had a girlfriend, so we were never connected. But she's the only person I ever carried a picture of in my wallet. I couldn't get her laughter out of my mind. She's just contagious. Well, I end up becoming a Christian in college. I get disciplined by a cotton farmer. I was in Fresno State, it's the harbor to the San Joaquin Valley.

I majored in eligibility as an athlete. I'm kidding. I actually picked up Victor Davis Hansen in a plane and he was getting on the plane. I said, "I took a class from you," and he goes, "I remember you, you were an athlete." I said, "Yes, sir. Not a good student." But I was disciplined by a cotton farmer and he disciplined me and my roommate and we grew in leaps and bounds. I memorized Scripture, went through the entire navigator study. I started a Christian fraternity. It was a national fraternity, so I started a chapter at Fresno State. It's still there to this day. Started a bible study, grew to over 250 people. It was booming. And then I graduated and I was a moral pagan but an immoral Christian. Because as a pagan I was an athlete, so I didn't have time to get in trouble. Now, I had money in my pocket with a really good job and I got in trouble.

When I came back to the San Joaquin Valley, I attended that college and career group or young adults group. There was a girl there. We got involved. It was inappropriate to say the least. I was convicted by it as I was listening to Focus on the Family and learning about all these things, and I went and told her, "We got to stop." She agreed. We called off the relationship. She came to me thereafter and she said, "I'm pregnant." Well, that's where I wish I hadn't been listening to Focus on the Family because now I knew I had to do the right thing, that's tongue in cheek.

So I had to go tell my folks that my girlfriend was pregnant, we were going to get married. Now, it was a legalistic church and the pastor said, "You need to get married before she's showing." And so my parents weren't Christians. I drive and he was a vice president of a bank. I go and sit down with my folks. It was cocktail hour and I said, "My girlfriend's pregnant. We're going to get married." My mother screams. She was a little bit prejudiced and the girl was Hispanic and my brother had married a Guatemalan woman, and I was the last great white hope.

My dad says, "Rob, I'm sure you care about this woman. You don't need to get married. It's an inconvenient time. Just have her get an abortion and you guys can still date." I go, "Dad, I can't do that. It's against what I believe." And when I had become a Christian, told my dad, he said, "Get that Jesus crap out of my house." He'd had a bad experience, 'cause they used to laugh at my grandfather who was a town drunk when they'd be at Sunday school and all the kids on the bus would laugh at my grandfather. My dad grew up with a hatred of the church. My mother was orphaned at 17. She didn't think God cared. And now my dad says, "have her get an abortion." I said, "Dad, I can't. It's against what I believe." And this is what my dad said to me, "Son, look where your beliefs have gotten you so far."

And I had listened on how to defend life, and I went through the SLED acronym: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency. I'd learned all this by listening to Dr. Dobson and all his guests. I was on fire and my dad couldn't contend with me. And he was a gentle man, but he put his hand up and he said, "Stop." He says, "you marry that woman, give birth to that child, you will never step foot in this house again." And I go, "You're serious?" He says, "I

am and so is your father." I said, "Well, I love you guys. I'm going to miss you." And I got up and I walked out. That's the day I became a man. And they were true to their word. I was a penny looking for change. My siblings didn't talk to me. The church had had enough. I didn't want to live, but I kept listening to my dad online.

I'd find encouragement on the radio. I remember listening to the eulogy when Dr. Dobson put it up for E.V. Hill when his wife died, and I thought, "I'd love to love a woman like that." And I took my fiancé up to Hume Lake and we're coming down the mountain and she asked me to pull the car over and I do. And she takes off her engagement ring. She puts it on the dashboard. And I go, "What?" She goes, "I have to tell you something." "What?" She said, "I slept with Steve." Now Steve was the college pastor who disciplined me and led me to the Lord, was married with three kids. Salt of the earth, cotton farmer. I said, "Well, I would've liked to have known that before I went and told my parents. We're not getting married, but I'll take care of the baby."

And through a series of channels, the girl that would call me every year on my birthday, I got word that she had tried to reach me. And so I reached out to her and she was now at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, which was part of my territory in sales, and she'd become a Christian. And I was dreading calling her because I didn't want to tell her the whole story, but I called her. And the definition of a friend is when the whole world goes out, they come in. She stayed with me through that whole deal. And Dr. Dobson's wisdom, you have no idea what it meant to a young man.

Standing when no one else understood or cared. Even the church didn't grasp it. The fact that he'd stand for truth and engage in the political arena when no one else would, churches just, they'd nauseated me. Well, we couldn't find out the paternity of the child until after the baby was born because you'd endanger the baby in the '80s. So the baby's born nine months later, we take the blood test. It's his. He didn't believe it, his wife doesn't believe it. My ex-fiancé doesn't believe it. I don't believe it quite honestly. We take another blood test, conclusively his. And I call this girl up that's over at Cal Poly, and I said, "What are you doing this weekend? Can you come over to Fresno because it's the garden spot of California?"

I find the only place that seemed romantic. And I said, "Look, I don't know what you're doing for the next 60 or 70 years, but would you do it with me? Would you be my wife?" And she said, "Yes." And I called my mother and I said, "Hey..." And my mother answers the phone, "Why are you calling?" I said, "I'm getting married." "I thought you already were married." I go, "No, it's a long story." "Who are you marrying this time?" I said, "Her name is Medareese Coletti, but she goes by her middle name Michelle." But no one's ever heard the name Medareese. And my mother goes, "I know a Medareese." I go, "You do?" She goes, "Yes, I know Medareese Fowler." I go, "Well, that's Michelle's grandmother." "You're marrying Admiral Richard Fowler's granddaughter?" I could hear in the back doing the cabbage patch.

And I said, "Yes." She goes, "Rob, did you know that Michelle's grandmother," they called her Med, short for Medareese, "did you know that Med was at your baby shower before you were born?" I said, "No." "She was best friends with your godmother, Lois Early." Who was married to my godfather Rear Admiral Robert Early, I'm named after him. Robert McCoy, Robert Early. Rear Admiral Robert Early and Michelle's grandfather Rear Admiral Richard Fowler were classmates in the academy in '37. Her grandfather sunk the Nagato, which was the command ship on the attack of Pearl Harbor, and he was given the Navy cross second only to the Medal of Honor. He's buried at Arlington. My godfather's buried at Naval Academy and he was decorated Silver Star. He was at Pearl Harbor, December 7th, 1941. My mother shared that with me. My mother didn't like any of my sibling spouses, but she adored Michelle.

My mom since passed, but she came to Christ and it changed her profoundly. My siblings are nine, eight, and seven years older than me, and I'm a moon that revolves around their planet. When I walked out of the house that day, my mother went and found a Catholic priest who was evangelical, Father Michael Murphy, confessed to having had two abortions between my youngest sister and me when she was in Japan. She came to Christ. She became a wonderful Christian woman. So did my dad, he came to the Lord.

And then I conclude with this, the wisdom to stand, as I listened to my father online, my Christian dad that I adopted, in loco parentis, Dr. Dobson. I'd always longed to meet him. His warm voice, his wisdom formulated and centered me. My mother got lung cancer and she had surgery and they botched it. My dad was in a home with Alzheimer's. I remember I went in to visit my mother in the hospital and she was looking out the window with her back to me. She was contemplative. She looked over her shoulder. She saw me and she kept looking out the window, and I remember I came in not as her son, but as her minister, and I sat in her peripheral vision. And she said, Rob, "Have I made a mistake?" And I said, "What do you mean, Mom?" She says, "Having had the surgery so late in life." I said, "Mom, it's the economy of God's grace. If the surgery takes, you get longer with us, and if it doesn't, you get to see the finish line and finish well." And she just, that settled her heart, and it was one of the most profound passings I've ever witnessed.

And I'll never forget, she says, "Rob, I have to tell you something." I said, "What mom?" And this was one of five things she shared. She said, "Do you remember when I told you that Lois, your godmother was at your baby shower with Med?" I go, "Yeah Mom, they were best friends. They played bridge together." She said, "Well, that's not the whole story." I said, "What mom? She said, "In late-'63 when I was pregnant with you and we didn't think we could have any more children, your father didn't want any more. I confided in the commanding officer's wife, because she was childless, and I assumed to further her husband's career. And that was your godmother, Lois. And I asked Lois where one would get an abortion in San Diego late '63, early '64." And she said, "Louise," that's my mother's name. "Louise, let me get back to you. I'll inquire." And my mother said, "Without my permission, Lois got together with her best friend Med and

they put on a baby shower, the two admirals wives, and they saved your life. Med bought your crib."

I wanted to take my life when I'd walked out of my house and I didn't have any friends. I didn't want to live anymore 'cause I didn't think anyone would stand for the things that were right. I felt like, Lord, I was doing the right thing. I screwed up, but I'm trying to make right and it's getting worse. And had it not been for the fatherly voice of that man on the radio to carry me through the darkest season of my life, I would never be able to stand before you, having stood before the Governor and the county. I've already been in front of the devil. He's a liar. And I know that life is worth preserving and so is truth worth standing for. And he's never forsaken me.

And that's the power of the voice that Dr. Dobson had all those years for me. And to think that I'd be invited to come and speak with all of you who've supported this man and his wife and this ministry, the biggest honor of my life. I've gone over time, but that's all right, because I've been waiting all my life for this. God bless you guys.

Roger Marsh:

Well, what a powerful, tender and touching tribute from Pastor Rob McCoy of Godspeak, Calvary Chapel in Thousand Oaks, California. Today here on Family Talk, we've been listening to Pastor Rob's powerful testimony that he shared at an event that Gary and I were both at in Colorado Springs.

And Gary, if I remember correctly, you had to go on a couple speakers after that. And this was not an easy talk to come up after because there was so much ground that Pastor Rob covered. I mean, just to summarize. The fact that this is a guy who became a Christian, he thought he had fathered a child out of wedlock. So when he told his parents, they basically disowned him. He was wrestling with what he was going to do. Then he found out that one of the pastors at the church actually turned out to be that guy. Now, he got married, he was a born again Christian. He winds up leading his mom and dad to the Lord. And then his mom says, "Oh, by the way honey, did you know," and shares with him the fact that he was literally scheduled for an abortion, and the woman who now is turning out to be his wife's grandmother was the one who turned things around. Hollywood can't script a story any better than that.

Gary Bauer:

Well, the other point there, Roger, is that Hollywood wouldn't script a story like that because it's-

Roger Marsh:

That's true, that's very true.

Gary Bauer:

...just too filled with both the sanctity of life and also how a God that a lot of unfortunate, a lot of Hollywood doesn't believe in how God can work His will in our lives. Yes. I was speaking a couple of hours after that, and I found myself as I was listening to Pastor McCoy, throwing away my note cards and trying to come up with a completely... Another thing jumped out at me during his presentation,

Roger, that we heard a lot during this event that was sponsored by the James Dobson Family Institute, and that was how many of the speakers and the attendees had stories to tell like Pastor McCoy's on how Dr. Dobson's voice on the radio had informed and directed their lives. He was alienated from his own parents. And in his presentation, as we just heard, he referred to Dr. Dobson as being his sort of radio father during those years, to help him think more clearly about issues that he was wrestling with.

Roger Marsh: It's so important to have that paternal influence. And of course, Dr. has, we've heard from thousands of people. I would venture to guess there may be millions of people who would make that same claim, if we had a chance to go around all of America and all around the world and ask him those questions.

Another thing that Dr. Dobson has done over the years, Gary, and I'd love for you to comment on this because you were both in the White House together during the Reagan years, and he was special advisor. You were undersecretary of the Department of Education. And the idea that we in the body of Christ can move the needle when it comes to something on the political side of the equation. I mean, one of the things we experienced, we mentioned this at the top of the program, a couple of years ago, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned at the Supreme Court level and you know the impetus for death, the *Dobbs v. Jackson* case in Mississippi.

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Roger Marsh: But there were millions of Christians working, praying, volunteering, knocking on doors, doing the prayer walks, if you will, to make that happen. And it seems like in the two years-ish since, two and a half years since *Roe* was overturned, where are we? I mean, has it gotten better? I mean, was it worth the effort? I mean, how would you assess the America post-*Roe*?

Gary Bauer: It's a great question, Roger, and yes, it has gotten better. Now, we all would like to see the number of abortions in America plummeting down to near zero. We haven't seen that because there's a bunch of states that are very liberal in their outlook, and they've passed laws that go even further than *Roe* did. And so abortions are up in those states.

But Roger, here's a key thing that the average person's not going to think about, I don't believe. Up until the overturn of *Roe*, generation after generation of young American women were being told that the ability to take the life of their innocent unborn child was in our constitution, that it was a sacred right that our founders wanted them to have, along with the freedom of speech, the freedom of assembly, the freedom of religion, et cetera. And just think of that. I can't think of something more evil than to teach our daughters and granddaughters that our founding fathers and our sacred constitution not only anticipated, but wants them to exercise this terrible event, this terrible act of taking the life of an innocent, unborn child. That's gone now, that cannot be taught because it's not true.

There's a second thing here that's hard to imagine, but I believe it's where we're headed. I believe we had to have this step that basically said abortion's not in the Constitution. It's up to our elected officials to settle the issue. That is, I think, the first step to a future Supreme Court that will say, "Right, abortion isn't in the Constitution, but the right to life is in the Constitution." And that will be the day when all of our children will be welcomed into the world, be part of the American family, have a seat at the table.

Roger Marsh: Amen, Gary. So very eloquently stated and fitting footnote for today's edition of the broadcast. Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Gary, thanks for being with us on the program today.

Gary Bauer: Thank you, Roger. God bless everybody.

Roger Marsh: And friend, thank you so much for your prayers and your support of the JDFI. On behalf of Dr. James Dobson and the entire team here at Family Talk, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening. Join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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