**Broadcast:** Praying with the President

**Guest(s):** Gary Bauer

**Air Date:** March 31, 2025

Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James

Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, joined in studio by Gary Bauer. Gary is our senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Policy Center. He's the host of the Defending Faith Family and Freedom Podcast. If you're not subscribing to it, why not? Please go to drjamesdobson.org and you can sign up there. You can also find it wherever your favorite podcasts are available. Gary, welcome to the Family Talk program today.

Gary Bauer: Hey, thanks, Roger. It's great to be with you. And we got some great news out of Washington, D.C. for a change. Usually it's, you know, talking about some disaster, but there's some good things happening for men and women of faith in Washington.

Roger Marsh: It's so good to hear that, Gary, because I know that so many people resonated when we did a report a couple months ago here on The Family Talk broadcast about what you experienced at the inauguration and the number of people who were praying for the president, just the spirit of God that was there. What is so interesting to me now about what we're seeing coming from Capitol Hill is the fact that there's a faith advisory commission that has a bit more, you know, substance to it than it did maybe in the previous Trump administration. And about a week or so ago, you had the opportunity to be in the Oval Office with the President, not just on Capitol Hill. And I want to get into that as well. Gary, tell us about some of what transpired when you were on Capitol Hill.

Gary Bauer: You're absolutely right. We just had a couple of developments here in Washington, D.C. that I think are a tribute to Dr. Dobson's ongoing influence and the respect that people in Washington and then the Trump administration have for him. He and I both serve on a group called the Faith Advisory Board to President Trump, but that goes all the way back to 2016. It was related, however, to that that caused some special things to happen this week.

Roger Marsh: Well, let's talk about that for just a moment. The Faith Advisory Board is something, I've seen the pictures on social media every week or so. There's a gathering, it seems like every month. There, Paula White is part of this, Paula White-Cain and a number of other leaders. You mentioned Dr. Dobson, of course, and his involvement and you, that's right in your own backyard. Talk about what this group of advisors is doing. We see pictures of them praying with and for the president, but there's a lot more going on behind the scenes than that.

Gary Bauer: There really is. So, what happened is that when that advisory board was first created a number of years ago, it ultimately morphed into what became the White House Faith Office. So, the advisory group still exists, but Paula White and another lady over there, Jenny Korn, run a faith-based office right in the West Wing of the White House. Now, there's been such an office in previous, under previous presidents. They've been very different depending on what the worldview of the president is.

Roger Marsh: I’ll bet.

Gary Bauer: I must say that. But previously, with all other types of this office, they really haven't had much authority. They've been kind of bogged down in the bureaucracy and there have been five or six layers of bureaucracy. The director of that office would have to get through before they could get to whatever president they're serving. This time with Donald Trump, it is not the case. This office has direct access to President Trump, which is amazing.

Roger Marsh: Interesting. It's not just ceremonial then. It really isn't just for photo ops. I mean, there's actually one-to-one conversation with the president with regard to faith advisory issues.

Gary Bauer: Paula White and Jenny Korn have routine access to the president.

Roger Marsh: Interesting.

Gary Bauer: Now, in addition to that, the office holds meetings with many, many pastors from all over the country, I think, over the course of the next two years. There'll probably be thousands of pastors and other religious leaders that will have an opportunity to meet with the faith-based office. And we had that opportunity this week. The meeting was in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. And I got that notified about a week ago that we would have that meeting in the Eisenhower building. So right away, Roger, you could tell this was something a little bit different because when we gathered there, there were about fifteen of us. I've been in Washington longer than I care to acknowledge. I can tell the difference between show and tell meetings. You get called in and you're getting patted on the head and “oh we just love to see you, you know, what's on your mind” kind of thing. No, it was clear right at the very beginning that this was a real meeting. First of all, it was a small group, a dozen to fifteen of us. Most of us were people that were on the original board of that faith advisory group. And we were there to talk about ideas across the board, the sanctity of life, strengthening American families, protecting our children from LGBTQ extremism, coming up with ways to promote adoption and foster care in a Christian context. How do we stop the persecution of Christians around the world? All of those issues and more are actually in the executive order that President Trump issued in the first week he retook the Oval Office and set up this faith-based office. So it was a jam-packed meeting, and everything we put on the table, it was absolutely clear the faith-based office was eventually going to take all those ideas to the president, and we were assured that in the months ahead there were going to be some extraordinary announcements that would be made from the White House, from the administration, that I think people that believe in faith, family, and freedom are really gonna be excited about it.

Roger Marsh: Gary, I'm encouraged by hearing you say this because we know that when President Trump was running for reelection in the 2024 campaign, there are a lot of people of faith who wrestled with the idea, well, do I vote for Donald Trump? I don't necessarily like his character, et cetera, et cetera. But it seems like he's gonna do right by the church. I mean, just to use a colloquialism there. You're getting the sense here, six weeks, two months into his second term in office, that not only is he delivering on this, but how does it line up with 2016? I mean, he wasn't, it didn't seem like there was the same urgency in 2016. I mean, there was a lot more of the photo op. But it seems like in 2024, Donald Trump's second term, he really is putting religious liberty at the top of the list.

Gary Bauer: There's absolutely no question about it, Roger. Look, I can spot a faker from a mile away. I've talked to so many politicians in my life and I was in the political arena myself in 2000. I know when smoke's being blown and when somebody's really serious about it. And I'll tell you something else. I mean, look, I confess, I've always admired and liked President Trump because I found that he was a genuine guy. Now, he sometimes expressed himself in ways that I don't normally express myself in. But I've noticed, from 2016 to now, that he spiritually has grown a great deal.

Roger Marsh: Interesting.

Gary Bauer: And he loves being around people of faith. That's very obvious.

Roger Marsh: It's good to hear. Now, there was an unexpected development. You talked about being invited to the White House or being invited to the Eisenhower building and to have that meeting with the faith advisory team. And that's nothing necessarily out of the ordinary, but what was out of the ordinary, it was something that involved, as you mentioned, there's direct access between the faith advisory board now and the White House, talk about that.

Gary Bauer: Yeah, so for those folks that have never been on the White House campus, there's the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, which is almost fills a block by itself, and there's hundreds of offices in there. And I worked for a time early in the Reagan administration in that building. So, we were sitting in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, and I have to admit, the thought crossed my mind, it would be great if we were having this meeting in the West Wing. Well, lo and behold, as we were sitting there, the door opened and somebody came in and leaned down and whispered into Paula White's ear and her face brightened and that individual left and she interrupted us and she said, "Wow, I just got some good news. The President wants us to come over and see him in the Oval Office."

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Gary Bauer: And as you can imagine, that was a wonderful moment. I was suddenly wondering, looking down to see what tie I wore.

Roger Marsh: Do your shoes match, yes, all those things.

Gary Bauer: Yes, all those good things. So, we were eventually walked over to the West Wing of the White House. We were then taken over into the hallway where the Oval Office is, but we were taken into the lobby first, which is the lobby of the West Wing. And while we were there, for a variety of reasons I don't need to get into, I was brought on back to the area right outside the Oval Office. We were waiting for the president to get done, but there were people there that knew me, and they said, "Gary, come with us." I'm suddenly now standing outside the Oval Office, our group of fifteen eventually joined me, but that was literally an hour later. So, for nearly an hour, Roger, I'm sitting outside the Oval Office. Cabinet members are walking in and out. And so, I had representing the James Dobson Family Institute opportunities for an hour to have these spontaneous conversations with people at the highest levels of our government.

Roger Marsh: Excellent.

Gary Bauer: And then after about an hour, we were informed that within five or ten minutes, we were gonna be shown into the Oval Office. And then the rest of the group that were in the lobby were brought back too. And then all of us walked into the actual Oval Office.

Roger Marsh: Wow, incredible, incredible. And I couldn't help but notice, Gary, as you were talking about the different cabinet members and the people that you were interacting with and the spontaneous conversations here, of course, you're waiting to get into the Oval Office and see President Trump. But what we've been discovering as a nation is that over the past four years, not only was there not that access necessarily to the president, but the president wasn't as actively engaged. I'm trying to be polite here.

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Roger Marsh: For the past four years as President Trump has been for the past eight weeks, you know, and it's really remarkable. You talked about that mess. Kind of give us, if you can, a 35,000 foot view of some of the things that are, you're starting to see some progress being made on simply because we have a president and a vice president who are actually engaged in these conversations.

Gary Bauer: We still don't know exactly what was happening in the Biden administration. I'm actually a little concerned that we're going to find out and it's going to be very unnerving. You know, there was this flap recently about whether President Biden actually signed anything or whether it was all signed by auto pen. Well, there's no law against signing it by auto pen, but there are people raising questions about whether the president knew his name was being signed.

Roger Marsh: Exactly.

Gary Bauer: And that is a problem if he didn't know, but that's a whole 'nother story. President Trump is taking initiatives. We would go for months during the Biden administration and nothing new was being announced. There was a lot of stuff happening behind closed doors and a lot of it was anti-life, anti-family. I don't know if people remember, I hope they still do. President Biden declared a state of emergency over the abortion issue.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Gary Bauer: He said that when the Supreme Court ended the fiction that there was an abortion right in the Constitution, that caused an emergency. And he set up a special working group that would work to make sure the number of abortions would stay as high as possible. President Trum’s doing the exact opposite. In addition, the Biden cabinet seldom met. I mean, at one point there was, I think, a period of 10 months where the cabinet never was brought together.

Roger Marsh: Oh, my heavens.

Gary Bauer. I know. Isn't that astonishing? When I was sitting there this week outside the Oval Office, it wasn't a cabinet meeting, but I saw four or five cabinet members individually going in and out and speaking with the president and then coming out and speaking with me and some others. And we had an opportunity during that time to bring up the things that people of faith care about and those informal meetings I was having in the hallway outside of the Oval Office.

Roger Marsh: Incredible, and Gary as you're sharing with us the success that you had this week at the White House. I mean, in terms of the faith values coalition that's now actually there's a separate department, right? I mean, that's significant in and of itself that this is not just a ceremonial commission that gets together every quarter, poses for pictures in the Oval Office and then moves on and everyone feels good about the fact that the president met with pastors and other religious leaders. This is something that's going on and you this week actually had that opportunity to go into the Oval Office and sit with the president.

Gary Bauer: That's right, and of course, once you do that, everything that is said in the Oval Office is not supposed to be quoted, particularly anything the president said. One can have a meeting in the Oval Office and say, well, I said to the president such and such, but you're not supposed to say what the president said back. So let me just say that this, too, was a real meeting. We spent about 20 minutes in the Oval Office on a day when the president was dealing with a number of very challenging situations. He was also meeting with the leaders of the major energy companies in the United States because he's got this goal of making us the world's powerhouse and energy. So, the President is in the Oval Office, a lot of people don't realize this, literally at the break of dawn. And all during the day, he's having these kinds of meetings. And so, for those of us representing issues like faith, family, and freedom, and speaking, trying to speak for the church in America, to be brought into the Oval Office and have 20 minutes with the president, immediately, I can say for on behalf of everybody that was in this group, he immediately makes you feel right at home. And as each of us came in, he was calling us out by name and saying, "Oh, so good to see you, Pastor, so -and so." And what we did was encourage the president because he's under a lot of pressure, as we all know.

Roger Marsh: Sure.

Gary Bauer: You don't have to agree with him on everything, but there's some really inappropriate things going on, trying to block his agenda. But the other thing that happened, Roger, and it isn't just a photo opportunity, it was very clear to us that the president wanted us to pray for him. And we did that. Several members of the group put their hands on his shoulders. A photo of that went viral right away. I mean, I barely got back to my office in Shirlington, Virginia, just a few miles outside of the White House. And I was getting calls from people saying, "I just saw you on social media."

Roger Marsh: Love it.

Gary Bauer: Somebody posted that picture, which was great to hear. Fox News had it on their website right away and it filled the screen this morning. And the great thing, Roger was, they didn't tell us that, look, keep these photos private. We don't want that photo out. They definitely did want the photo out. Something else happened that is very rare. After photographs were taken of us praying with the president, he said, "You know, if you all have time," I thought to myself, "What if we have time?"

Roger Marsh: If we have time for the president, sure.

Gary Bauer: Right. He said, "I'd love to get an individual picture with each of you."

Roger Marsh: Oh, my.

Gary Bauer: And we did that. And in each case, as we came up alongside of him, he had a personal conversation that his tone of voice was something that only he and the individual standing there would hear. So, he even personalized that conversation. There's something else I want to mention, Roger. There are three original copies of the Declaration of Independence. President Trump, when he came back into office, requested of the archives that one of those three original copies be brought into the Oval Office. And it's there. It's got a little curtain in front of it to protect it from light. So, he got up and he went over and he pulled a little control on the curtain. And the curtain came back and there was the Declaration of Independence with those incredible words in the second paragraph where it says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator." That's the God of the Bible. And it really struck me that that second paragraph's been under brutal attack. There's a lot of progressives that don't believe our liberty comes from any creator. They will in fact often leave that phrase out when they quote the second paragraph. Donald Trump always cites that phrase endowed by their creator. And I really do believe that he is standing between some very almost Marxist forces that are trying to erase that paragraph. He's standing between them and that founding paragraph of the American Republic.

Roger Marsh: Gary, it sounds like it was a very inspiring meeting. And even people who would be part of the body of Christ would say, "Yeah, he wasn't necessarily my guy." I would think that they would still be encouraged by what you're sharing with us because this transcends his personality. It speaks a lot more to his character than anything else, and the fact that he's willing to put himself on the line like this for religious liberty, that I know internationally it really guided his foreign policy during his first term. Now he's bringing it a lot closer to home in terms of giving the faith-based community some real muscle in terms of the impact that we can potentially have through his administration. Is that accurate?

Gary Bauer: That is completely accurate, Roger. And I, again, while I can't get into the details, I can tell you that things were said in these meetings related to strengthening the family, religious persecution. How do we deal with rehabilitation in our prisons? Because we have research that shows if somebody accepts Christ, they're much less likely after being released to fall back into a life of crime. So, the upcoming 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, that was discussed. How do we use that anniversary as a way to teach America's school children that there was never any separation of church and state as it's defined now.

Roger Marsh: Right, right.

Gary Bauer: So, there's going to be some exciting announcements that I think will please 99% of self-described Christians in America.

Roger Marsh: Well, Gary, this has been a very thrilling update because of the fact that you had a chance to walk in some pretty rarefied air this week and it just speaks volumes of the impact that you, and of course, Dr. Dobson, and the James Dobson Family Institute and the Dobson Policy Center are having when it comes to decisions that are being made on Capitol Hill and the Oval Office, and the impact that our prayers and our supporting of this ministry continue to have. Gary, you were a direct recipient of that earlier this week, and I'm so grateful that you shared this great report with us today.

Gary Bauer: Hey, thank you, Roger, I'm really pleased that you were able to have a conversation when it's kind of breaking news. And I do wanna say, when you invest in Dr. Dobson's Institute and ministry, you are helping us have a great deal of influence on all the things that the body of Christ cares about in America. I'm really humbled to be part of that whole effort that we're all making.

Roger Marsh: Well, this has been a powerful conversation and it's so encouraging, Gary Bauer, to hear the good report from our nation's capital and literally from the Oval Office. I'm so grateful that you and Dr. Dobson, of course, are still part of this faith coalition that is advising the president and that you literally had an opportunity to spend some quality time with President Trump not too long ago. Gary, thank you for sharing that report with us and thank you for being with us today here on the Family Talk broadcast.

Gary Bauer: Well, Roger, it's great to be with you. You know, I think Dr. Dobson says, we all believe that if America's gonna be great again, it's gotta be godly again, and it's great when we can report from Washington that some things are happening that will help us be godly again.

Roger Marsh: Amen to that one. Please check out Gary's podcast that comes out every couple of weeks. The Defending Faith Family and Freedom podcast is available at drjamesdobson.org and wherever you subscribe to your podcasts. Also, please understand that when you go to drjamesdobson.org, you'll find a variety of different resources available to you in our Dobson Culture Center. You can go back and listen to previous programs. You'll find all of that at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. You can also find that information on the Family Talk app as well.

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

Dr. James Dobson: This is James Dobson again. As we close today’s program, I just want to thank so many of you out there who make this broadcast possible with your contributions. And I want to tell you that how much your generosity is appreciated.

Dr. James Dobson: How do you get your grown child to establish his own home when the time has come?

Roger Marsh: Here's today's Dr. Dobson Minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Sometimes, independence eludes young adults not because parents have withheld it, but because sons and daughters refuse to accept it. They have no intention of growing up, and why should they? The nest is just too comfortable at home. There's no incentive to face the cold world of reality, and they are determined not to budge. Some even refuse to work. There comes the time when you must gently but forthrightly hand the reins over to your child and force him to stand on his own. Still the day may come when you have to sit down for a heart-to-heart talk and pointedly ask him to leave. Helping a 24 -year-old pack up and move may seem cruel at the time but the years to come will verify that the parental gravy train needed to go around the bend.

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