



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Celebrating the Heritage of America and the Future of Our Youth – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Darrell Jones

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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 Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Gary Bauer, senior vice president for public policy and culture at the Dobson Policy and Culture Center. I'm also the host of the Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast. Well, I hope you know by now that 2026 is the 250th anniversary of the founding of what I think is the greatest nation in history, the United States of America. And yet today on this birthday year, in this birthday year, the number of Americans deeply concerned about the direction of our nation just keeps growing. The American experiment was founded on biblical principles. And in fact, the creed, the sentence in our founding documents that most summarizes the creed of America is in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, endowed by their creator, that's the God of the Bible, the only God there is, endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights among these, the right to life.

The founders, even before sonograms, knew that without the right to life, the other rights are sort of beside the point, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That's the American ideal. Our children aren't being taught it because the country is deeply divided over what the meaning of America is. All of these things have become a battleground. I think some of you will remember that quite a few years ago, Dr. James Dobson and I wrote a book called *Children at Risk: The Battle for the Hearts and Souls of America's Kids*. And in that book, Dr. Dobson eloquently explained that these two sets of values were clashing with each other. On one side, broadly speaking, there were people who believed God is. That's us, folks. Those of you listening and our guests today, we believe God is. And that leads us to have certain views about a whole host of issues.

We believe that America ought to embrace ordered liberty under that God. On the other side, there's a group. I think they're smaller than us, but they're in very powerful positions in our culture. And broadly speaking, they believe God isn't. And their view of America is it should be the country where you do whatever you want. Different strokes for different folks. If it feels good, do it. Well, my friends, somebody's going to win that Civil War. No country's built on

neutrality. Every country decides the things they're going to hold up to their children and urge their children to follow and other things they want their children to stay away from. And we said in *Children at Risk* that the winner of that war gets our children and the right to teach them what to believe about love and sex, freedom and slavery, life and death, all sorts of very important issues.

Now, Dr. Dobson waged that war all of his life. Right now, he's not with us. He's in Heaven looking down on us. But over the years, men and women, brave men and women have come into the public square to do this battle and are continuing to invest in this battle as America tries to get on the right track. And we're fortunate today to have one of those courageous men on the show. Our guest is the Reverend Dr. Darrell Jones. He joins me today on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Let me tell you a little bit about him. From 1986 to 2011, Dr. Jones served as youth pastor and then later as worship pastor and eventually senior pastor at the Grace Evangelical Church in St. Joseph, Missouri. Dr. Jones earned his BA in speech communication from Missouri Western State University. He went on to earn his master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri.

Darrell and his wife are the parents of three grown daughters, along with what I'm sure are three incredible son-in-laws. And the last that I heard, I believe he's up to 10 grandchildren, which beats what Carol and I have. We're stuck at eight right now.

Dr. Darell Jones: We have 10 beautiful and highly intelligent grandchildren. It's amazing the way that all works.

Gary Bauer: Of course they are. Yeah. Between the two of us, we must have 18 of the most brilliant grandchildren in America.

Dr. Darell Jones: What are the odds? What are the odds? Praise the Lord.

Gary Bauer: First of all, welcome back to Dr. Dobson's Family Talk. I think you know what Dr. Dobson thought about you and your work. If he were still here today, he would've pushed me out of the way. He'd be doing this interview and it would be one of his greatest shows. But as I said, he's probably watching and listening. So welcome to the show. It's really a pleasure to have you with us again.

Dr. Darell Jones: Gary, what a special honor to be with you and to be a part of the James Dobson Family Institute. I've been a fan for a long time. I told Dr. Dobson that just a few years ago, had opportunity to meet him. And it's a special treat to be on with you today.

Gary Bauer: Well, thank you, Darrell. And I'm calling you Darrell because we, and obviously You're going to call me Gary.

Dr, Darrell Jones: Please.

Gary Bauer: Our paths have crossed many times and you've developed a great reputation because of your work, but not everybody knows the history about the Herzog Foundation and who the Herzog Foundation is named after. So fill us in a little bit on what that foundation's dedicated to doing and your work there.

Dr. Darell Jones: Sure. Mr. Herzog passed away in 2019. He was a quiet influencer, certainly in conservative politics in America, but he was a very successful businessman. And when he passed away, it was very important to him to use the wealth that he had established in a very positive way. And so at his death, he left \$350 million for the purpose of advancing K-12 Christ-centered education across the United States.

Gary Bauer: What was that number again? I'm in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Darell Jones: It was a significant-

Gary Bauer: Money. That blows around here easily.

Dr. Darell Jones: That's right. Yeah. It was...

Gary Bauer: 350 million?

Dr. Darell Jones: Yeah, 350 million. Unprecedented for the amount of dollars for this specific mission. He had two children that had graduated from K-12 Christian schools and he loved the product. And really he believed that the reformat that the nation needed would be found through the message of the gospel instilled in youth and in children and a reformatting of America from a spiritual position. Stan's son had said that his dad believed that the heart of the problem was a problem of the heart.

Gary Bauer: Wow.

Dr. Darrell Jones: And so he really wanted his wealth to do something significant to really address it. And so the foundation that bears his name began operation. I was the first hire and God has really given us an amazing footprint to pour into the homeschool effort as well as Christian schools, K-12 schools across the country.

Gary Bauer: As you know, Darrell, over the years, we've made great progress in providing a way for parents to have that choice.

Dr. Darrell Jones: Right.

Gary Bauer: So many parents are shut out from any kind of private school, let alone a Christian school, but just because of finances. But thankfully, President Trump

has really pushed educational choice. And there have been a growing number of good federal programs that I think people are benefiting from.

Dr. Darell Jones: Yeah, it's really true. I mean, six years ago, there were zero states with any form of school choice, certainly a debatable topic. But I will tell you, as we record today, there are 35 states now with some version. And really for the first time, a single mom has an opportunity for her kids to get a quality Christ-centered education because of a lot of options that are now available. And certainly important for families to stay plugged in to the legislation, what the government giveth, the government taketh of the way. And so certainly to continue to monitor legislation at the federal and at the state level to make sure that Christians are at the table and speaking into that legislation.

Gary Bauer: Yeah. That's a great point. This has always been one of Dr. Dobson's frustrations that we have so many good followers of Jesus Christ and yet somehow over the years, the idea took root that we're not really supposed to be of this world, so we don't need to be in the public square. All that politics stuff is beside the point, but some of us may not be interested in politics, but man, politics and government is sure interested in us.

Dr. Darell Jones: It's true. You're exactly right.

Gary Bauer: Yes. What's this concept? I've heard a little bit about it of micro schools that I think you guys have really zeroed in on and are having tremendous results.

Dr. Darell Jones: Tremendous results. Micro schooling is really a resurgent model of education. It's not new by any stretch. It's quite literally a one-room schoolhouse. Ideally, eight to 12 students and one educator, one teacher. The students are a variety of ages, so curriculum becomes very important. But honestly, when families first in America began exporting education to someone in the community, it was this micro school. It was the one room schoolhouse with Laura Ingalls at one end of the room and a dozen students, a variety of ages on the other, and it worked. And it's a resurgent model. I mean, it's really an expanding model across the country. For one reason, it's very economical. It doesn't place the emphasis on buildings. A family can do this in their basement with neighboring kids in the cul-de-sac. It doesn't require a big infrastructure of buildings. It can literally happen in a church of any size. And it's good academic rigor from the standpoint of one teacher for up to 12 students. I mean, that's a really good ratio.

Gary Bauer: Oh man, that's fantastic.

Dr. Darell Jones: But to monitor whether students are reading, doing arithmetic, learning.

Gary Bauer: Yes. Well, one of the criticisms of homeschooling for people that hate it is that, "oh, the children aren't being socialized." Well, given some of the things that happen in our schools, thank you very much. I don't want my kids socialized in that way. But this seems what you're talking about seems to, in some sense,

address that because you're with other students with shared values during the learning experience. It sounds like a great idea.

Dr. Darell Jones: Yeah, absolutely. At one point in American history, when the farm just got too big and mom was no longer able to educate the kids, they said, "Well, look, Laura Ingalls, you're a part of our community. You share our values. You are one of us. We're going to send our kids to you at the church and you take on this responsibility." But the person, Laura Ingalls, was in fact a part of the community. She did share the values of the community. I think in 2026, every parent needs to ask the question, "Does my kid's teacher share my values?" And if the answer is no, then that should be cause for alarm to say, in Luke's gospel, Jesus said that when mature the students will become like the teacher, is that a good thing for your kids, I think is a fair question. And one that we as the Herzog Foundation have taken seriously.

We created SchoolBox, an online free platform to help families and churches launch Christian schools and we walk them through the process. We pair them up with a mentor who's actually leading a Christian school. So whether it's a micro school or a homeschool co-op or a five day a week K-12 classical Christian school, SchoolBox will help you create it at no charge to anyone for the purpose of let's expand Christ-centered education across the country. To date, after two and a half years of that initiative, we've launched over 500 Christian schools in 48 states across the country, and we praise the Lord for that.

Gary Bauer: That's incredible, Darrell. I'm sure you've run into this. We've had so many cases of these left-wing teachers thinking or acting as if the children belongs to the government and they are representing the government. And I know parents who haven't been able to access Christian schools, and so they're trying to do the best they can in the public schools, and they say to their kids, "Look, we want you to tell us what's going on and we particularly want you to tell us what's going on in your classroom." If your teacher says to you in the class, "I want to tell you something that's just between us. This is not something you should share with your parents." That's the one thing, Johnny or Mary, we want you to come home and tell us.

Dr. Darell Jones: Yeah. Yeah, it's true. And it's happening all over the country coming to a school district near you. It's not just in the big cities anymore. I mean, it's coming from all over. And so many secular universities with education departments are cranking out teachers that are finding their way into every rural and urban and suburban school across the country, and therein lies the issue. It's not even a matter of whether a school board can be the gatekeeper for the school. It's so much bigger tidal wave than that.

Gary Bauer: You've got a great publication, The Lion?

Dr. Darell Jones: The Lion. Read Lion.

Gary Bauer: So is your audience for that parents?

Dr. Darell Jones: Exactly. As I traveled the country the first six months of operation and asked Christian school heads and homeschool agency or organizational leaders, "If you could do anything to advance K-12 Christian education, what would you do?" And the reoccurring answer was, "I would convince every Christian family, every Christian parent that the public school system that they grew up in doesn't exist anymore." And so we took that seriously and created a news site, readlion.com. The lion was created to be a bold voice for K-12 Christian education, and frankly, topics that American families care about. And why does it matter to Christian families? We're targeting conservatives and Christian families specifically and talking about what's going on across the country. So we write a lot of stories about the homeschool movement, basically saying if it's been 30 years since you've looked into home education, you should take another look because it's not what you think.

If it's been 30 years since you looked into Christian school, you should take another look. It's not what it used to be. And if it's been 30 years since you've looked at the public education system in America, you should take another look because it's not what you remember. And so The Lion takes a lot of heat, but we write a lot of stories between 15 and 20 articles every day and-

Gary Bauer: Seriously. That's incredible.

Dr. Darell Jones: It's a huge lift for us. But we're really trying to get the word out. Why does this matter? Why should families care about so many topics that America's talking about? And we're getting great reach there and great traction. Again, we praise the Lord for that and the connections that we've been able to make, but it's an exciting time. I think we could focus on how dark it is, but I'm an old Boy Scout, Gary.

I'm an old Eagle Scout who used to ...

Gary Bauer: The old Boy Scouts.

Dr. Darrell Jones: The old Boy Scouts, back when they were Boy Scouts. That's how far I go back. But I still love to camp out under the stars and stare at the stars and look at the brilliance of multiple layers of stars. I never focus on the darkness. And there's a lot more darkness than there is stars. And I think in our culture, if we're not careful, we'll be distracted by the darkness from the very real, the opportunities that are before us as followers of Jesus to be that light and that we're not alone and that there are a thousand points of light. And so it's exciting to be a part of a mission that's really trying to do something proactive to light a candle in American culture.

Gary Bauer: When we began our conversation, I mentioned what I think is the American Creed, the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. And I can't

remember exactly what year in school I was when I knew that sentence, but it was pretty darn early when I was doing some campaigning around the country. And even before that, at the Department of Education, I would go into public schools and I would ask high school juniors and seniors, of course you know I would say, what the central idea of America is in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence and everybody's looking at each other. And the first time it happened, I don't know why I said this. I told a class in all places, Minneapolis, I'll give the first student that can finish the sentence, "we hold these truths to be self-evident" if you can finish that sentence, I'll give you \$20. And nobody in that class could in a nice suburban high school.

Dr. Darrell Jones: Wow.

Gary Bauer: So during that year, I gave away two \$20 bills and about 70 high school visits.

Dr. Darrell Jones: Wow.

Gary Bauer: So I bring it all up because here we are in the 250th anniversary and you've got a great project that you've put together called the Freedom Tour 250. I just think this is fantastic. So share with our audience what you are doing with that.

Dr. Darell Jones: We've had a thousand different thoughts. That's a lot of the fun of the foundation is we just kind of set back and brainstorm. What could we do? What could we do? And so it's morphed a thousand different times in the last year and a half, but at this point we're looking at doing some trainings for educators in Christian schools in some of the key places in American history. Some of those places that among the original colonies were important places and gathering educators, Christian school teachers, Christian administrators, certainly inviting other families as well to come and to be a part and to recognize why this place was so important then and why it is so important now. And the American 250 tour is going to be an exciting time where we're able to bring a contextualized training to people leading Christian schools and Christian classrooms from across the country in specific places that really helped to define what is the DNA of America.

Gary Bauer: You're concentrating in the 13 original colonies, correct?

Dr. Darell Jones: Yeah, right. Right.

Gary Bauer: What a wonderful thing. Just so people understand how heated and how deep this battle goes, those places, whether ... I don't know exactly where you're going, but let's just say Independence Hall and Bunker Hill or Plymouth Rock. Many of those places were places that families took their children through most of our history because they would read and see their things that would reinforce what those parents were teaching at the kitchen table. But over the last 30 years, at a lot of those places, the anti-American narrative has even been woven into those historic sites.

So you can go up until recently to the President's House in Philadelphia where the first two presidents spent most of their time as presidents. And what you got there was this huge group of essays and treatments, not extolling George Washington, for example, but basically saying what a terrible man he was.

Dr. Darell Jones: Right, right. Yeah. I have been to several of those tours and several of those sites and just been in shock. And that's one of the reasons why we're excited on this tour, to be able to go to those places and we'll bring in the content. Thank you very much.

Roger Marsh: While you're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and on today's broadcast, we featured a timely conversation with Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the Dobson Policy and Culture Center, and Gary's guest, the Reverend Dr. Darrell Jones from the Herzog Foundation. They've been discussing the battle for America's children through Christ-centered education. If you missed any portion of today's program or if you want to share it with a parent or pastor in your life, visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And of course, Dr. Jones will be back with us next time as we continue this conversation. So please make plans to join us again then.

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute in conjunction with the Herzog Foundation is inviting students all across the country to reflect on a powerful question. And the question is, how has faith shaped our nation and how is God calling you to help shape what comes next? We're hosting a special essay contest with an opportunity for students to express their convictions with clarity and courage while competing for some valuable cash prizes. We are calling on the next generation of Christian leaders to thoughtfully consider America's past and prayerfully engage its future. Young voices matter, especially at this historic moment. High school students, as well as middle school students, are encouraged to reflect on how faith has influenced the founding and development of our nation and how they believe God is calling them to live with purpose, responsibility, and hope in the years ahead. Through this initiative here at the JDFI, we are aiming to engage and equip young people to understand and appreciate the role of biblical truth, prayer, and faith in America's founding and to carry these principles forward into the future. Now, this essay contest is open to high school and middle school students.

An essay submission deadline is April 30th, 2026. For more information about the contest, go to drjamesdobson.org/USA250. That's drjamesdobson.org/USA and the numbers 250. And with Easter right around the corner, please know we've been preparing some meaningful content to help you and your family approach this holy season with intention here during Holy Week. I'd encourage you to visit our website. You can go to jdfi.net and take some time to engage with the resources we've prepared for you there.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the JDFI. Thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time right here for Gary Bauer's conversation with Dr. Darrell Jones, continuing their discussion on celebrating the heritage of America and the future of our youth that's coming up right here on the next 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.

Here's today's Dr. Dobson Minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Giving your children monetary rewards for good grades can be effective at times, but in many instances, it may not be necessary. Ongoing research by the Center for the Study of Family Children and Youth at Stanford University is finding that what does help students achieve in school is not necessarily rewards or prizes, it's parents. When mom or dad offer regular encouragement and praise for a job well done and meaningful assistance, grades tend to go up. It's that simple. What about when you're having a hard time finding anything to praise? When your child brings home a report card full of Cs or maybe a few Ds, can you find something positive about it? Well, let her know that you're confident that she has the ability to do well and that it's up to her to ask you for assistance in doing better. Then give her the resources and encouragement to succeed.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit drdobsonminute.org.