



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Remembering Dr. James Dobson

Guest(s): Gary Bauer

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Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. On August 21st, 2025, our founder and beloved friend, Dr. James C. Dobson, went home to be with the Lord after a remarkable 89 years of faithful service to God and to families all around the world. On today's edition of Family Talk, we are revisiting a special memorial broadcast that originally aired shortly after Dr. Dobson's passing. You'll hear heartfelt reflections from Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the JDFI and myself as we remember the incredible legacy that Dr. Dobson left behind. From his humble beginnings in Louisiana to becoming one of America's most trusted voices on family issues, Dr. Dobson touched millions of lives through his 40 plus books, daily radio programs, and unwavering commitment to biblical truth that span nearly 50 years just in broadcast media ministry alone.

Now recently, a group of dear friends established a historic matching grant for the JDFI ministry. The Dr. James Dobson Memorial Matching Grant provides matching funds through December 31, 2025 for up to \$6 million dollars. Now this gift is an incredible memorial and a statement of confidence for the only organization entrusted by Dr. Dobson to carry out his legacy and expand his work to new generations and geographies. When you go online to drjamesdobson.org, you'll find complete details on how you can give a gift in support of our ministry and to take advantage of the Dr. James Dobson Memorial Matching Grant. That's drjamesdobson.org, or call us at 877-732-6825. And if you haven't already, be sure to visit the James Dobson memorial website. It's jamesdobsonmemorial.com, where you can leave a tribute, make that memorial gift, and reflect on a life well lived. Now, please join us once again in remembering Dr. James Dobson.

Shirley Dobson: Hello friends. This is Shirley Dobson. My precious husband, Jim is now with Jesus. Even though I know he is rejoicing, my heart is aching. Jim will always be the love of my life. I want to thank you and millions around the world for opening your hearts to Jim over the decades. He worked hard to promote righteousness and help you build a strong family filled with love, commitment, and trust. People are hurting like never before and in desperate need of biblical help. Jim prayed that you would experience the inviting love and forgiveness that comes with asking Jesus to be your Savior. But his desire was that his counsel should be shared long after he was gone. Dr. James Dobson Family Institute will continue to work hard to accomplish that. Thank you for your

friendship that has meant so much to us through the years. We hope to continue to be a blessing to you.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. My name is James Dobson and I sat down and wrote something 40 years ago that I've kept, and you might find it interesting. I want to share it with you today. It starts like this. "I have concluded that the accumulation of wealth, even if I could achieve it, is an insufficient reason for living. When I reach the end of my days, a moment or two from now, I must look backward on something more meaningful than the pursuit of houses and land and machines and stocks and bonds. Nor is fame of any lasting benefit. I will consider my earthly existence to have been wasted unless I can recall a loving family, a consistent investment in the lives of people, and an earnest attempt to serve the God who made me and nothing else makes much sense."

Roger Marsh: Those powerful words recorded by the founder and chairman of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, James C. Dobson, really ring true and a lot more poignant today in this moment as Dr. Dobson has gone on to his eternal reward to be home with the Lord. I'm Roger Marsh and you've tuned into a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk as we're remembering the life of our founder, my mentor, and the friend of many people, Dr. James C. Dobson. Gary Bauer is with us. Gary is the senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute and a long-time colleague and friend of Dr. Dobson. Gary, it's a kind of somber day to have this conversation, especially hearing those words that Doctor recorded shortly before his passing.

Gary Bauer: Well, you're right, Roger. As believers when something like this happens, we have these two emotions. One is the normal sadness and mourning of losing a friend, a fellow believer, but there's a certain joy in knowing that Dr. Dobson is now with the Lord. His faith has been turned into sight. He sees the face of Jesus, and that's powerful. You know, listening, it's so appropriate and apparent listening to that opening statement by Dr. Dobson that he would describe his life and his goals better than you and I would be able to do it.

Roger Marsh: Right, right.

Gary Bauer: Yeah. He always gets it exactly right. And of course what he said was exactly right. Look, Dr. Dobson was 89 years old, and if you're in your eighties, everybody knows you're wrestling with things. Your body is having a hard time holding your soul. So Dr. Dobson, there is absolutely no doubt about this, and I hope and believe everybody listening understands this. He's in a place where there are no more anxious bedside visits, no more waiting for the results of the cancer test. What did the EKG say? This chemical, this drug is going to take care of this. Will I make it through this surgery? When you get to a certain stage of life, and he wrestled with many of the things that happen with age that is a burden in itself, and all of that is gone now. He has looked into the face of our Lord and Savior and he has heard the words that every one of us want to hear dearly, "well done, good and faithful servant."

Roger Marsh: What a glorious day for Doctor. I mean, of course it is bittersweet for us here who remain, but I think about the fact that from his simple, humble beginnings; James Clayton Dobson Jr. April 21st, 1936, Shreveport, Louisiana, and how he loved his parents, James and Myrtle, and how they lived in Texas, in Oklahoma while he was a child, he was Jimmy, that's for sure. And then over the course of time, Jimmy, Jim, dad, everyone here called him Doctor, even those of us who have earned doctor's degrees, I mean, you got your doctorate, but you're with Dr. Dobson. There's only one doctor in the room and we know who that is. But I know that one of the things that he really truly appreciated also was his role as Jimpa. I mean the fact that he, Ryan and Laura have their two wonderful children, and of course Danae is such a vital part of the ministry here, and it all begins with a young boy who will tell you, and this is one of my favorite stories, Gary, of Doctor sharing how he came to faith that one of his dad's revivals when he was four years old. I mean, I think the part of the reason why child psychology and child evangelism was so important to Dr. Dobson was the fact that it happened to him and he never lost. You always saw 4-year-old Jimmy Dobson talking about the Lord with people, even though he was in his sixties, seventies, eighties.

Gary Bauer: Yes. Yep. That's a great point to remember. I crossed paths with Dr. Dobson at an unlikely time. I was serving in the Reagan administration, and so I'm in Washington, D.C. and as everybody knows, this is a city filled with controversy and I got into a couple of really big fights in Washington over things related to faith, family, and freedom, the things that define Jim's life, and it felt a little lonely at the time when I was going through that. And I got a phone call and it was Dr. Dobson, and he said, "I've been watching how you've been fighting back against these folks that want to rip faith out of our country and want to redefine the family and want to indoctrinate our children, and I'd love to have you on the radio show." And I ended up going on the show, and that ended up being the first of literally hundreds of interviews, which really did without any shadow of doubt result in me having a following through him that enabled me to be more effective in Washington fighting for those things, and that began a lifelong relationship that is a big part of my life.

Roger Marsh: Gary, it's interesting you mentioned the fact that Dr. Dobson reached out to you because I wonder how many people realize there are so many different organizations, so many different ministries, if you will, that have been launched because Dr. James Dobson saw something in what was happening there and took the first step. Oftentimes people will say, boy, if I can touch the hem of his garment, if you will just get a little bit kind of be around him, then that might be of benefit to me in my ministry. But Doctor was very proactive and I think that that's what a lot of people either loved or hated him was the fact that he saw something and said, okay, well this is an area where we should be doing more and there's a way I can help. He was very thoughtful and very careful in the way he approached that, and I think that's a huge part of his legacy is the fact that he was very intentional in reaching out to people and recognizing what was good in the culture.

Gary Bauer: We would need hours to summarize all the organizations that exist now because he either reached out or somebody crossed paths with him and he said, well, that's a wonderful idea. Let me see what I can do to help get people that have the means to support new organizations. So the Family Research Council started that way, and of course his own ministry that he was so well known for, Focus on the Family, the impact of that is just incredible. Roger, you and I have talked a couple of times about this. We all know that the last 40, 50 years in America, a lot of not good things have happened: the abortion culture and attack on the normal meaning of marriage and all the rest of it. But we both have talked about imagine what the country would be like if Dr. Dobson had not during that 40 years, been speaking for what I still believe is the great majority of the country.

Roger Marsh: I mean, let's face it, JDFI we're in our 15th year here. I'm sure a lot of people have said, "Well, Dr. Dobson must be retired by now." Well, I am here to tell you that as recently as just a couple weeks before his passing, he and I were meeting about the broadcast schedule. I mean, he was still very actively involved right up to the very end.

Gary Bauer: Well, he was Roger and at JDFI, we've got a great team, and one of the things Dr. Dobson felt very strongly about was that when the Lord called him home, he wanted his legacy to continue. He wanted the things that he has done over the years to help husbands and wives keep strong marriages, to help children be raised with the right values to make sure that the country still had religious liberty. He wanted all of that to go on, and there's a rich reservoir of material that he produced that at JDFI. We are committed to making sure that next year in 10 years and 50 years from that or until the Lord returns, his voice will still be heard in the challenging times that we live in.

Roger Marsh: It's interesting, Gary, you mentioned the fact that you and Dr. Dobson met when you were working for the Reagan White House, and eventually he wound up on the council to fighting pornography and he did a lot of work in the White House there. A lot of people don't realize, they think, okay, well of course Ronald Reagan was a Republican, a conservative, this, that and the other thing. But people don't often hear about the fact that at the White House conference on families during the Carter administration, he received a special commendation from Jimmy Carter who was politically perhaps opposite of where Dr. Dobson was. But when it came to faith and values, there was that recognition, and I think it's a good benchmark for us as Christians to say, hey, here we were in the late seventies, you have a Democratic governor who is probably now would be considerably opposite of where we are faith and values wise.

But even President Carter recognized what Dr. Dobson was all about and vice versa, and the fact that what does the Scripture say when your ways are pleasing to the Lord, even your enemies are at peace with you. And I think that was something that Dr. Dobson experienced a lot more of than perhaps people would understand. Gary, let's talk about the fact that what Dr. Dobson was

sharing was talking about what's really important in life. I mean, there are people who would look and say, okay, this guy wrote over 70 books. He's got 18 honorary doctorates including his earned doctorate. I mean, he's had this really rich and powerful life, but for perpetuity, we're all going to remember him, I mean just from now until the end of time as a man who put his faith first and that drove everything. Talk about how for Dr. Dobson faith, family, and freedom really were intertwined. They were all part of the same puzzle.

Gary Bauer:

No question about it. And of course, this drives the other side, for lack of a better word, crazy because this idea has grown up that if you take a position on an issue in America and you're taking that position because your faith teaches it, that somehow that is a violation of our constitution or

Just the most insane thing I've ever heard of. And Dr. Dobson just went right into the teeth of that. He loved America. He loved God, of course first, and he loved his family, but he loved America and he was deeply concerned that if America was ripped out of the rich soil of Judeo-Christian civilization, that the country would be lost. That was something that almost every American believed up until about the 1960s. Then it became a very controversial thing to say, but not Dr. Dobson. It defined everything that he did. I was with him many times at events when a complete stranger, a woman would come up to him and say, Dr. Dobson, because of you, my 9-year-old here, my 4-year-old, my 12-year-old would not be alive. I was on my way to an abortion clinic and I was on the turning the radio dial looking for some music to get my mind off of it, and I heard your voice and I stopped and I pulled off the road and went back home, and now Mary here is alive.

Roger Marsh:

And he also wade into some unfamiliar territory, some waters that were not necessarily navigated at the time. And I'm thinking of course of the Strege family, Gary, you know John and Marlene Strege and their daughter, Hannah, and of course Dr. Dobson got to know the Strege's when they reached out, and I thought, how many thousands of these kids can thank James Dobson for going on the radio, for going to Congress for testifying and saying, this is human life too. These children deserve to have a chance to be born. But Dr. Dobson knew it was the right thing to do.

Gary Bauer:

Yes, it was the right thing to do, but even now it's controversial among some believers. Some people think that's justifying the frozen embryos and all the rest of that. But I think the point here is that even in the very controversial issues, Dr. Dobson would not shy away from them. The typical thing with politicians or unfortunately even some church leaders is they stay away from anything controversial, which means they stay away from anything that matters. Dr. Dobson would look at the issue. He would seek the counsel and advice of Shirley and his family and his team, and he would go on his knees in prayer to God for guidance, and once he felt that he had his marching orders, then it was full speed ahead. The other thing that I was thinking about just in the last 24 hours, things in America have become a lot more difficult for women and children.

There's all kinds of reasons for that. If you listen to Family Talk, you hear a lot of those reasons being talked about. But what Dr. Dobson warned about 30 years ago is quit doing this, quit doing that. You're putting women and children at risk, and that was a lonely voice. Even the feminists would disagree that somehow certain things were putting women at risk, but we see it with our own eyes. He was always a champion of women and children. He got very little credit for that from his opponents, but it was something that was important to him to defend those that are often defenseless.

Roger Marsh:

Gary Bauer is with me today here on this special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Dr. Dobson has gone on to glory and received his final healing and eternal reward, and we are remembering him in these moments here that are just pretty raw for both of us. As you could tell, Gary and I are both at home. We're remembering Gary would say his friend and I would easily say mentor from my relationship with Dr. Dobson. Gary, in the final moments we have together, I want you to do two things for us if you would. First of all, how are you remembering the legacy of Jim Dobson personally because you guys were friends, but then also what do you think Dr. Dobson's legacy will be? I mean, is it possible to even describe it in a half hour radio broadcast on the impact on the culture and the impact on the church too, especially where the church kind of stands right now here in 2025?

Gary Bauer:

I was searching after I got the news for a verse that came to mind, and let me just read it. I just think it describes so well what's happened. It's Hebrews 12 verses 22 and 23, but you and I am thinking of Dr. Dobson, but Dr. Dobson has come to Mount Zion to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Dr. Dobson has come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in Heaven. You have come to God to judge you all to the spirits of the righteous made perfect. I think that verse really describes his legacy. I mean, that verse reflects what he devoted his life to. When I look at my own life and I'm getting up in years, it's hard for me to imagine my life without Dr. Dobson in it beginning again back when I was in the White House, but then the book we wrote together. A couple of years ago, I came back alongside of him as he was promoting the idea of Christian citizenship, which is so important and it's important to the James Dobson Family Institute. And so I've been helping in that role. But I believe when a fair history is written, the legacy will be that Dr. Dobson basically in his own way started the pro-family movement. He made it a force in America, and I believe America, God's first as the only hope for the world, but America is a close second in doing what we've done as a country and spreading the gospel, of showing people that liberty is possible only if you're a virtuous people. He was the voice for that. I think that without him, there's a lot of other groups that would've never been formed. I think maybe the country would already be gone. So that to me, that's the legacy he has, and it's what I'll always remember, that of all the people I could choose to be in a foxhole with, I can't come up with a better person to be looking at in that foxhole than James Dobson.

Roger Marsh:

Well, that certainly is a beautiful thought from Scripture and of course on a very solemn day where we were remembering our good friend and mentor, Dr. James Dobson and celebrating his eternal healing from the illnesses and the many physical struggles that he battled in his life here on earth. I'm Roger Marsh, along with Dr. Dobson's good friend and a colleague, Gary Bauer, remembering the life of James C. Dobson today on the special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Now this being the 15th anniversary of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, for the past several weeks, we've been encouraging you as a listener and supporter of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk to go to drjamesdobson.org and leave your fondest memories of how the ministry has impacted you over the past 15 years or so. Well, now that Dr. Dobson has received his eternal reward, this is a perfect opportunity for you to let us know how this ministry has impacted your life.

We encourage you to go to drjamesdobson.org. When you're online with us, you'll find a couple of different ways that you can memorialize Dr. Dobson's legacy. Share how your marriage has been impacted for the better. We know hundreds of thousands of people have benefited from one of the more than 70 books that Dr. Dobson has written about marriage, about parenting. I think of the *Night Light* series that help parents and married couples really draw closer to each other by drawing closer to God. So you can leave your recollection, your memory, if you will, at drjamesdobson.org, and you can do so either by writing out a memory there on the page or you can also leave an audio version or even if you'd like to record a video and upload it there. We would love to receive all of those.

And also keep in mind too that this is a dynamic legacy we're talking about here. As Gary mentioned, Dr. James Dobson wrote extensively. He did lots of video and audio presentations, and all of them are preserved here in the archives here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and this is a dynamic legacy that he's left. We are continuing on in the work because this is what God called Dr. Dobson to do, is to do the work of the evangelist here and then to have that work continue on. So we appreciate hearing from you and how you're praying for us, and also supporting our ministry as well in those efforts as we move into the next phase of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. By the way, you can give a gift, a memorial gift, in honor of Dr. Dobson at drjamesdobson.org. You can also call a member of our constituent care team at 877-732-6825. Or if you'd like to write your memories and put it on a nice card and send it to us, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949.

Shortly before he entered into eternity, Dr. Dobson came into the studio one afternoon and shared with us some thoughts that we shared at the beginning of the program, and as we conclude today's special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we return to those words from Dr. Dobson once again.

Dr. James Dobson:

Well, hello everyone. My name is James Dobson and I sat down and wrote something 40 years ago that I've kept, and you might find it interesting. I want

to share it with you today. It starts like this. "I have concluded that the accumulation of wealth, even if I could achieve it, is an insufficient reason for living. When I reach the end of my days, a moment or two from now, I must look backward on something more meaningful than the pursuit of houses and land and machines and stocks and bonds, nor is fame of any lasting benefit. I will consider my earthly existence to have been wasted unless I can recall a loving family, a consistent investment in the lives of people, and an earnest attempt to serve the God who made me and nothing else makes much sense."

Gary Bauer: Only Dr. Dobson could perfectly describe what he modeled his life on, and I saw time and time again where he kept focused on what was important: faith, family, and freedom. He can't be replaced, but his legacy is going to live on. We hope and pray you'll continue to support his legacy and work going forward.

Roger Marsh: Well, thank you Gary and thank you Dr. James Dobson for a life well lived. I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thank you so much for your prayers and your continued support of our ministry, and be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

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