



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Seeing God in Space: Serving Him on Capitol Hill – Part 1

Guest(s): Marc Johansen

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Gary Bauer: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Gary Bauer. I'm glad to have you with us on the show today. This is going to shock some of you. Now you might want to sit down. There are actually a lot of Christians in Washington, D.C. in all branches of government. Throughout American history, God has used these men and women to the benefit of our country and to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now look, being a Christian, and I'm one of them, being a Christian in Washington, D.C. can be a challenge. This is a city filled with people committed to the getting of power and keeping of power. That's not really consistent with the message of Jesus Christ, but nonetheless, it's possible to overcome all that, but you almost have to be a saint to do it. And we have one of those saints today as our guests on Family Talk.

His name is Marc Johansen. He's a third-generation military veteran whose desire to lead boldly has been greatly rewarded over the years. Wherever his journey took him, Marc has served our Lord, his family, and our country admirably going above and beyond the call of duty. Marc is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy. He earned a bachelor of science in biology. He served as Deputy Director and Intelligence Officer for the Defense Support Program in Denver. Marc eventually went on to earn his master's of science and atmospheric sciences from Creighton University in Omaha. This degree in physics centered on satellite remote sensing. Don't go to sleep out there. This is all important stuff, folks. In fact, Marc was doing these things long before they were talked about in a normal household in America. But if you're paying attention, these are all big deal issues right now as America goes into a very dangerous era where war may very well be war conducted in space.

His degree centered on satellite remote sensing. It led him on a journey, which eventually culminated with his appointment to the position of Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Space at the Pentagon. After completing his distinguished governmental career, Marc spent the final decade in the private sector, but with a company that we'll talk about a little bit because it's a household word and one that is intimately involved in our lives. So Marc has had an incredible career, but he didn't do it alone. He met the woman who would become his wife. Marc

and Sherry would go on to enjoy 45 years of marriage together. And we're going to talk about all of that. But Marc, let's get right into it.

Marc Johansen: Well, first of all, I have to kind of push back on this saint business. Augustine of Hippo said there is no saint without a past and there is no sinner without a future.

Gary Bauer: I remember that quite well.

Marc Johansen: I've got quite a past.

Gary Bauer: Well, we use that saint word loosely around here. At any rate. Marc, when we're personal friends, just for the sake of our audience knowing that.

Marc Johansen: What about 30 years now, at least?

Gary Bauer: Yeah. It's been a second, that's for sure. Just reminding myself as I was looking over some of your background and so forth, you come from a family background in the military. So why don't we begin a little talking about that a little bit, but also because of that background, was it expected that that's what you would do too?

Marc Johansen: Yeah, a very good question. Not exactly, but it certainly gave me ideas that I would like to serve in the military. Grandpa was an old tough cavalry officer, and it was pretty neat because he's working for Black Jack Pershing, the hero of World War I down in Fort Huachuca in Arizona. And he, along with this lieutenant by the name of Eisenhower, and this captain by the name of Douglas MacArthur, they're taking on Poncho Villa and the Raiders from Mexico as they come across the border. And they're chasing him back into Mexico and using their 45 calibers to make the point. And so I think the Arizona border was well protected at that point.

Gary Bauer: Yes. Yeah. And of course, that's one of the big issues even today, right?

Marc Johansen: Amen. Amen. Absolutely.

Gary Bauer: It's been amazing to...

Marc Johansen: But so grandpa is very important to my walk in faith as well. So I'll start with him and I'll get into dad. But well, maybe I'll jump to dad. Dad was a fighter pilot. He flew in three wars. World War II, P51 Mustangs in Europe, and got over there right after the Battle of the Bulge and flew. And then he was a lucky guy to go to Korea and fly the F-86s. And then he got a little bite of Vietnam. He got to go there as well. So three in a row, fighter pilot. And I remember he was kind of loose with his faith a bit. And his statement was, "God is my co-pilot." And then grandpa moved in with us, he had Parkinson's and it was the later part of his life, but he lived with us for three years. And every morning I'd get up and he

would be on his knees with the Bible open, reading passages, praying. And I mean, this tough cavalry officer walked with the Lord. I mean, he really had a close relationship with Him.

Gary Bauer: Wow. That must have had a real impact on you. Huge. Huge.

Marc Johansen: And I would ask him, mom would fix breakfast for both of us before I went to school and he would tell me what he'd been reading, what it meant. And so I came to the Lord at 12, 13 years old because of him.

Gary Bauer: Through your grandfather?

Marc Johansen: Yes, through my grandfather.

Gary Bauer: Yeah. So when I was growing up, there were some issues with mom and dad. My dad was an alcoholic and it was my grandmother who would come to the house early on Sunday morning and take me to church because neither my mother or father were in a position to do that. He would be sleeping off what happened the night before. She would be exhausted. And I think back on that, I'm sure you do too, that God used a grandparent to be so key in coming to faith.

Marc Johansen: So both you and I have something to learn about that, being grandparents now, right?

Gary Bauer: Yes. Well, and all the people out there that are grandparents today, you can play a tremendous role in the lives of your grandsons and granddaughters.

Marc Johansen: Amen. And then that's clear in Scripture, isn't it?

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Marc Johansen: Talking about grandparents and feeding into their kids and then the next generation.

Gary Bauer: Yes. There was also some question about what kind of reputation you ended up having in school when you came to Christ. Well, you tell us what it was.

Marc Johansen: Well, I had a lot of growing to do, but I had this feeling I needed to do what was right and follow what the Lord taught us in Scripture. So I became a bit of a goody two shoes in high school.

Gary Bauer: No, Marc. Really? You?

Marc Johansen: No. In fact, they call me the introvert, but by the time I got to college, I became a little hedonistic. I understand how so often in our church, and I know you've heard this too from younger people, they say, "Oh, well, we left home. We left

the family. We left the support systems that we were kind of used to. We go to college and then you run into different challenges.” And of course you're growing. You're maturing, your body is growing, your mind is going off into, especially if you're a man, right, going off into different things.

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Marc Johansen: And then it was very interesting because I went to the Air Force Academy and I'm trying to decide what I wanted to do. But as you asked me early on, I thought, okay, I'll do what the old man did. I'll fly and fight. I'll become a pilot and go to the Air Force Academy. And I'm glad I did. It was a great experience. I learned a lot, but I kind of turned my back on the Lord. What happened was the Supreme Court came and did their decision on ... There would no longer be a mandatory chaplain in the academies or a chapel. I'm sorry, chapel.

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Marc Johansen: And so they shut that down. And I was in the choir and I was in the chapel and I was working with the chaplains and I really loved it. And I have to admit that I became lazy. I said, "Oh, well, okay. The Supreme Court said we don't have to go. Well, I'll do other stuff."

Gary Bauer: You know, Marc, people may not be old enough to remember this, but in 1962, they took school prayer. The Supreme Court took school prayer out of the schools. The next year they took Bible reading out of the schools. Over the years, it got worse and worse where even a teacher bringing a Bible to school and putting it on her desk and reading it during her lunch hour became a threat that some child might see it and be ideally..

Marc Johansen: Yeah, it's incredible.

Gary Bauer: And then you get into the 70s and you experience in the military academy with that Supreme Court ruling.

Marc Johansen: But I'm ashamed to say that it affected me and it should not have. It should not have. But the Lord took care of that. I think I have a theme of the providence of God because I'm trying to mature and I'm trying to figure out where I'm going. And the Lord always reaches in. He allows me to fall a bit and then He kind of pulls me out of that and I mature. I learn from my mistakes. And then I slowly but surely mature more as a Christian in my faith and walk after Him. And then I get a challenge. I always get a big challenge. It's as if the Lord's saying, "Okay, now it's time for the challenge. Let's see how you do."

Gary Bauer: Well, an unchallenged faith ends up not being very strong, right?

Marc Johansen: Well, that's true.

Gary Bauer: I mean, God brings these things to us because He wants to see if it's a serious faith.

Marc Johansen: But He sent me on probably the most on fire cadet that I have ever met in my life. Stu, it was a Stuart Parton. And so all of a sudden he shows up, he's my roommate. The first thing he does when I walk in, he says, "Hey, I'm Stu Parton. Do you know my Jesus?"

Gary Bauer: Wow.

Marc Johansen: And I'm thinking, "What?"

Gary Bauer: That's almost a joke, right? That's a Bible thumper or whatever is what the society said.

Marc Johansen: Oh, and he was. And praise God, he was. He came over, he stuck his finger in my chest and he said, "So do you know Jesus?" I said, "Oh, sure. Oh, sure." But he didn't let me off. I mean, he kept after me and it really brought me back.

Gary Bauer: Have you stayed in touch with him?

Marc Johansen: Oh yeah. Unfortunately, he passed about three years ago.

Gary Bauer: Okay. Isn't that amazing though that you could have been ... Any number of people you could have met might have led you in a different direction.

Marc Johansen: Absolutely.

Gary Bauer: But God brought that particular cadet to be...

Marc Johansen: But since we brought him up in the church that you and I both attended for many years, his dad was a retired brigadier general and attended that church. And then he passed. So Stu came with his family and I had the opportunity at the memorial service to sit down with his kids. He had two daughters and a son and I said, "I want to tell you something about your father. He led me to Christ or he at least made sure that I didn't fall off the edge of the cliff and forget the Lord. He brought him back into my life."

Gary Bauer: I bet they loved hearing that.

Marc Johansen: I'd love to have that opportunity. It was great.

Gary Bauer: Yeah. Since you're talking about him and you've mentioned similar things, were you surprised by the number of men and women in the military that were followers of Jesus?

Marc Johansen: Oh, absolutely. Let me tell you one story, and that has to do with the superintendent at the Air Force Academy. This is really cool. Lieutenant General Albert Clark. So I got to know him because for some reason I kept being grabbed for either ... I was semi-fluent in Spanish because dad was over in Madrid and I went to kindergarten, first and second grade, and they were a Spanish school. So I had to learn the lingo pretty quick, quickly. And so I kept being grabbed whenever they had visitors like the chief of staff of the Brazilian Air Force, and then he brought a bunch of cadets. And admittedly, they speak Portuguese, but they understood the Spanish just fine.

Gary Bauer: Interesting.

Marc Johansen: And they brought in the Spanish chief of staff from Madrid and they visited. Anyway, I got to know the three star because he'd have a reception and then I would go in and he recognized me. He got to know me and he was very kind. And he was kind of a Clint Eastwood type. In other words, he didn't say a lot, but when he said something, you better listen. He was that kind of great leader. Anyway, to get to the point, he was the senior officer in Stalag, which is featured in the great movie, *The Great Escape*. He went through that in World War II. He was shot down as a pilot, and then he's in that Stalag, and he's the senior officer from the U.S. side. And he was in charge of purloining and grabbing things to set up the escape. That was his job. So he was kind of the logistics thief in the Stalag. So he had this background.

Gary Bauer: This relationship of, maybe it seems ironic to people, this relationship between Christ and the American military, there's a theme here. There's incredible...

Marc Johansen: There is. There is.

Gary Bauer: Most incredible inspirational stories I've told over the years and speeches and so forth are stories about followers of Jesus Christ in various positions in leadership or maybe just an average guy in the military who do incredible things for the Lord.

Marc Johansen: So let me bring back General Clark. I went too long on some of this, but quickly, I found out that he had written a book. So I got ahold of that book. And in it, he says, up until the moment I was a POW, I was a careerist. I was looking at every possibility of promotion. I was focused on my career. I ended up as a POW and I realized I wasn't in charge of my life.

And they had quite a few folks that were killed or shot in that camp, especially after the escape. They went through the camp and shot anybody that they could find that they thought was involved with the ... Fortunately, he escaped, or he was not shot. But in that pamphlet, he says, when I became a POW, I said, "I'm not in charge. I've never been in charge." And he turned his whole life over to God. He said, "God, my hands are off. I mean, there's no way I can do this." And

the Lord blessed him and I was so happy that he was our superintendent. He was a man of God too.

Gary Bauer: I know you're familiar with the old saying that there are no atheists in foxholes, right? I mean, and what it means is, I mean, they're obviously atheists that served in the military, but when you're in a foxhole and suddenly you realize you may not leave that foxhole alive...

Marc Johansen: Absolutely.

Gary Bauer: ... there's a way that that concentrates the mind and often people will accept God or accept Jesus at that last moment that they're on planet earth.

Marc Johansen: Let me add to what you just said. I think it's very interesting C.S. Lewis and J.R. Tolkien in World War I. I mean, that's when they really faced the Lord. I mean, they have people dying all around them and their best friends and everything. And in their history, you read about that and it says that they really changed their perspective and they really solidified their search for the Lord.

Gary Bauer: At my house, I've got a little tiny pocket Bible that has a metal cover. And these Bibles were given by the United States government to everybody in the American military on the way to Europe to liberate the continent.

Marc Johansen: Wow. Yeah.

Gary Bauer: And nobody said anything about the separation of church and state. And there are an incredible number of stories of men whose lives were saved not only by reading the Bible and so their eternal lives were saved, but there were men that were saved because the bullet hit the Bible with the metal cover.

Marc Johansen: With the metal cover.

Gary Bauer: And that saved their lives.

Marc Johansen: My gosh. My gosh. You bringing that up, I'm sure you've been to Gettysburg.

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Marc Johansen: But it's interesting because in a display there, they have the standard uniform of a union soldier, and then they have a standard uniform of the Confederate soldier, and both of them have copy of the New Testament. And it just made me weep. I'm thinking brother against brother and Christian against Christian in that war.

Gary Bauer: Lincoln actually brought it up in some speeches that both sides pray to the same God for victory, and only one's prayers are going to be answered. And the other side will have to deal with that fact.

Marc Johansen: That's true. That's like football games, right?

Gary Bauer: It is. Not that I pray over football games. So Marc, your faith is through everything you're doing, but I couldn't help but obviously notice, and I knew anyway, that this theme of space, I mean, you're guided by your desire to be in the Heaven with God someday. And maybe coincidentally, the part of the military that you spent your time in has a lot to do with space and defending our country in space. What led you in that direction for that to be the particular thing you were interested in?

Marc Johansen: Well, I had always been interested in the space operations. That was a love of mine. And then when I lost my visual acuity on my senior year at the academy, I called dad, and I have to admit that's one of his finest moments because I thought the old fighter pilot's going to say, "What? You're not going to go fly. What are you wasting your time there for?" And he immediately said, "Well, sometimes God does things and takes us in a direction that we don't expect." And we look back on it and I'm thinking, "Is this my dad? I'm amazed." It was like his finest hour. And he said, "You really like space. Why don't you look into that?" So these are the early years. I mean, the Air Force was just kind of scratching the surface with a global positioning system and a few things like that. So I grabbed on and I am so grateful. Once again, the Lord provided a door that I had not thought about and opened it.

Gary Bauer: Not to go too far afield, but it's really depressing, I think, or disappointing that presidents that have had an understanding of how important space is going to be to our future security. Ronald Reagan, who started Star Wars, and he became the brunt of late night comedian jokes. And a lot of people, "What is he talking about? This is a pipe dream." And then Trump started the Space Force. I almost felt like I was living through the Reagan years again because he was mocked for the same thing. Isn't that ridiculous?

Marc Johansen: Being mocked to try to defend life in our country and they laugh at that? I mean, why shouldn't we try to protect our country?

Gary Bauer: There was a poorly done movie on Netflix a few weeks ago. I think it was called "Dynamite House" or "House of Dynamite" or whatever, but it was about one missile being launched somewhere and headed to the United States and they couldn't figure out why it was launched, where it was going. But the one thing in the movie that really reflected reality is most Americans think we already have a system that will knock those things in. We don't.

Marc Johansen: Amen. No, we do not. We have a very limited capability. We can knock some out. In other words, if there's a couple launched, we could probably get them down. But if there's a salvo, there's no way. No way.

Gary Bauer: Marc, the time is just flying by and there's so much more about your life and your story and your lovely wife that we want to make sure people hear about. Is there any way you could come back and join us again tomorrow?

Marc Johansen: Oh, absolutely. I'd love to do that, Gary. Thank you.

Gary Bauer: Fantastic.

Roger Marsh: Well, you're listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and we've been enjoying a fascinating conversation featuring Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute Policy and Culture Center, and Gary's guest, Marc Johansen. They've been discussing faith, military service, and God's guiding hand through unexpected turns. Now, if you missed any part of today's broadcast or if you want to share it with a friend, just go to jdfi.net, and be sure to join us again next time when Marc will return to continue his story, including sharing how he met his lovely wife, Sherry, and what God taught them through 45 years of marriage together. Again, you'll find part one of this program at jdfi.net.

Now, if you're married or planning to be someday, I want to share with you about a free resource that might just spark some meaningful conversations in your home. The title is "The Undeniable Differences Between Men and Women," and it explains how God designed men and women uniquely, not to frustrate each other, though sometimes it might feel that way, but actually to complement one another in beautiful and purposeful ways. Drawing from Dr. Dobson's decades of research and counseling experience, this resource helps couples understand why they think and approach life so differently. And when you begin to grasp these God-given distinctives, well, you can stop fighting against them and start appreciating how they actually strengthen your marriage relationship. You can download your free copy of the resource called "The Undeniable Differences Between Husbands and Wives" when you go to jdfi.net. And speaking of strong relationships, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute exists because of the faithful partnership between this ministry and listeners just like you. For 15 years now, we've been standing firm on biblical principles, defending the sanctity of human life, championing religious freedom and equipping families to thrive in an increasingly challenging culture.

These daily broadcasts reach millions through radio, podcasts, and digital platforms, but they depend entirely on the generosity of friends who believe families need a trusted voice, rooted in Scripture and timeless truth. And your gift of any amount makes a real difference. To donate securely, visit jdfi.net. You can also call a member of our constituent care team at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Or write to us. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, or you can just address with the initials JDFI for short. P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh inviting you back again next time for part two of Gary Bauer's conversation with Marc Johansen, discussing seeing God in space and

serving Him on Capitol Hill. That's coming up right here on the next 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.

Dr. James Dobson: There's a fancy word for kids who don't do well in school, the ones who turn in sloppy work and goof off whenever possible.

Roger Marsh: With today's Dr. Dobson Minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: We call these kids underachievers when they have the brains to do schoolwork, but they just don't choose to use them. So what's a parent to do? Help him establish a system for studying. Turn off the television set and make sure the proper investment in homework is made. Number two, stay in close contact with his teachers, and number three, seek tutorial assistance to provide the one-on-one help that may make the difference. Having offered that advice, however, let me now speak out of the other side of my mouth. There are some hardcore underachievers who seem determined to fail in school. For them, no amount of pushing and shoving will get them motivated. In those cases, I recommend that you go with the flow and accept the child just as he is.

Roger Marsh: For more information on this topic, visit drdobsonminute.org.