



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** The Eclipse of God – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Dr. Erwin Lutzer

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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.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh.

Let me ask you a question. Have you ever actually seen an eclipse? Remember back in April 8th of this year, that was the last one you might've been able to see. A lot of eclipse watchers noticed how dark things were when the sunlight was completely covered.

Well, the blocking of the sunlight with an eclipse can also be related to how a secular culture is trying to block out God. His light is still present, of course, but it's being masked with concepts and ideas from the enemy. And when we allow this to happen, we are taking away the good things God met for us to have. Without His light, if you will, we will not have all that we need from Him.

Well, today here on Family Talk, Gary Bauer will be sitting down with Dr. Erwin Lutzer to discuss this concept in further detail, as well as his brand new book, *The Eclipse of God*, which will be available for purchase starting tomorrow, September the 10th. So now let's join our Senior Vice President of Public Policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Policy Center, Gary Bauer, and his guest, Dr. Erwin Lutzer, right now on Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Hello everybody. I'm Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm also the host of *Defending Faith, Family and Freedom* podcast. And of course, I'm honored to serve alongside of my good friend, Dr. James Dobson.

It's not hard to see that we're living in dark times. Some might even argue that it's the end times. There's an attack on the family as God's institution, on what it means to be a man or a woman. An attack on children, and what they ought to be taught on our religious liberty, on God's truth. The list goes on, and on, and on.

We see a lot of things around us that would've been unthinkable not many years ago. It's amazing. Men using or violating women's safe spaces, including their bathrooms. Children being misled by adults, and mutilating, getting themselves mutilated, in order to change their gender, which of course, ultimately is not possible to do. We've seen normal Christian men and women getting persecuted. A Christian coach losing his job because he prayed quietly on a football field.

The Bible says, in Isaiah 5:20, "What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, and that dark is light, and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter." We're regularly seeing good and evil being confused all around us. God's being pushed out of the public square. He was pushed out of the schools years ago. If we can't see God's face, then where are we as a country and as His people? How do we bring back the light?

Well, to help us answer these questions, and many more today, our guest is Dr. Erwin Lutzer. He will be discussing his new book, *The Eclipse of God: Our Nation's Disastrous Search for a More Inclusive Deity (and What We Must Do about It)*. The book will be available tomorrow, September 10th. I've had an opportunity to read an advanced copy, and Doctor, this book is needed for exactly a time like this.

Dr. Lutzer is an international speaker, award-winning author, and Pastor Emeritus of the Moody Church. He and his wife, Rebecca, have three grown children and eight grandchildren. Welcome to the program. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley send you their best regards.

Dr. Erwin Lutzer:

Well, thank you so much, Gary. And of course, I want you to pass on my best regards for them. I've appreciated them through the years, and I'm so glad for this opportunity to speak. And I'm sure we're going to get into this, but I wrote the book, *The Eclipse of God*, because ultimately, what we have done as a nation is, we have come along and we have made our own view of God the kind of God that we can live with, and it's not the God of the Bible. And of course, when you begin to have the diminishing of God, now there are many Americans who don't mind saying that God exists as long as their consciousness is God. So these are the kinds of issues, and of course, we'll get into it, how the darkness took place in Europe, and how it has affected us and so forth. But you're absolutely right. What we need as Christians, and certainly as a nation, is a fresh vision of who God is, and not the God we just wish He were to be.

Gary Bauer:

Well, you just pretty well summed up the whole show, so I'm not sure we have to say very much. No, seriously, you've given a great description of I'm sure why you wrote the book. Right at the beginning, you've got a section that is entitled, "From My Heart to Yours," and I want to just quickly read this one paragraph.

You referred to the unraveling of our culture, and how all too often now, the loudest voices are the voices that win the debate. And then you say this, "We are, in effect, being asked to believe that two plus two equals five. That men can

have babies. That children in grade school should question their gender, and that drag shows be allowed in school libraries. Meanwhile, the censorship of dissenting voices continues to accelerate, and those who seek to learn from the past, and improve our culture rather than destroy it, are being shouted down.”

Doctor, how did this happen? I saw some studies, a number of them actually, that Americans are telling the interviewer they don't recognize the country they're living in anymore. Many of those Americans may not be able to give a spiritual context to that feeling. But, when did you first come to the conclusion, or see clearly ahead, that we were going down a road that was going to lead into the kind of problems we have now?

Dr. Erwin Lutzer:

Gary, when I stop to think of it, I became the pastor of Moody Church in January of 1980. I could not have predicted the world that we have today. Because you're absolutely right, there has been an unraveling, if we could put it that way. Everything that has been nailed down is being torn up. And one of the points that I make, even in the section that you just read, is this, that this is a battle that cannot just be fought with intellectual ideas. It's not a matter of superior ideas. Because back behind this irrationality, there is a satanic force. I mean, how else can you do it, when you have students, for example, who are being taught that if you believe there's only one answer to a mathematical question, you are really racist? I mean, this is insanity, but we're accepting it.

Now, if you begin to ask the other question, which I think you were hinting at, how did we get here? There are several streams in our culture which have affected what we believe today. And one of the chapters that I emphasize in the book is the relationship of Europe, and the philosophers of Europe who led us down a very dangerous path.

By the way, I do want to say this about *The Eclipse of God*. It says in Isaiah 59, God says, "I've turned my face from you, and because of your sins I will not hear." So how did we get here? In that particular chapter, I talk about gravediggers. You remember, it was Nietzsche who said that we have buried God and we can hear the noise of the gravediggers. Now, he doesn't tell us who the gravediggers are, but if you think about when he lived, there were certainly three that stand out, number one is Karl Marx, who now believe that as a result of oppression, this oppression needs to be overcome. And the way you do it is to have the proletariat overthrow the bourgeoisie. And when the state owns everything at last, we will have equity. At last we will have equality, the kind of equality that today we call equity.

Well, that didn't go well. He had to destroy the created order. He was against the family. I know your program for years. I mean, the hallmark of all that you have been doing, and James Dobson has been doing, is indeed trying to save the family. Because Marx thought that the family was a unit of oppression. Men oppressed their wives, parents oppressed their children. They took them to church, and God was the ultimate oppressor. So what you have is, you have that

seeping into our society, and all the implications which we could go into, but I need to hurry.

Another one. And Gary, I didn't understand this until I was doing research on this book. A second gravedigger that Nietzsche would've been acquainted with was Darwin. Now, Darwin said this. He said that the baboon is our grandfather. I want everyone who is listening to understand the implications. If we came up through the animal world, if we are just animals that are more highly developed but not unique in kind, we have absolutely no argument against abortion, no argument against infanticide, no argument against euthanasia. We do that with our pets when they're sick. We, of course, take them and they are laid down, they are put to death. Why? Because they're animals, and we want to take them out of our misery.

And Gary, what we believe about humanity, whether or not we're uniquely created in the image of God, has huge implications. And I discuss that later in the book. And then very quickly, one other, and that is Freud. Freud believed in the pleasure principle, that the highest pleasure was sex and sexuality, and any restrictions hampered people's happiness. Now, just think of these cultural streams coming into America, and all that you have to do is to look around and you can see how effective they were. Let's remember this, that ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have victims. And where was the church? Well, Gary, I hope you ask me about that.

Gary Bauer:

I intend to do that, Doctor. You just described a secular trinity there, Marx, and Freud, and Darwin. What a juxtaposition of the actual Trinity. And we see where that secular trinity leads us. You know, Doctor, we're all obsessing over what's happening to our children, suicide rates, drug addiction, it's terrible. But if you teach them that they're the descendants of baboons, that their country is evil, that life is over now, the amazing thing is that any of our children get through life, able to live in any meaningful way, a successful and a life that accomplishes something. So you outline all of these so well in the book.

One of the things that seems to me that's happening when Christians are experiencing all this, is we don't know what to do. And you just alluded to it, what is the church supposed to do? What are we as believers supposed to do? I look at all the problems in America, drug addiction, racial tension, the lack of racial reconciliation, violence, crime, all of those things. I can't imagine a solution to any of them without God. And I can't imagine a solution to any of them without the involvement of the church, and the involvement of Christian citizens. So I know you deal with this a lot in the book. What should the church be doing? What is the spirit we ought to bring to this? And so, talk about that a little.

Dr. Erwin Lutzer:

I'm glad to talk about it. First of all, let's go back to Europe for just a minute and ask, where was the church when Europe was being secularized? You have two very important things. First of all, you have a man by the name of

Schleiermacher. Now Gary, with a name like that, he has to be a German, doesn't he?

Gary Bauer:

Yes.

Dr. Erwin Lutzer:

Now, Schleiermacher was born in the 1700s, lived until the 1800s, but he defined religion as a feeling of absolute dependence. Now just hang on to that for a moment. What that means is, truth is now being removed from objectivity. So it's not the doctrines that you believe that are important, but rather what is important is how you feel. Well, think about that in our culture. In fact, in my book, *The Eclipse of God* that we're talking about, I have an entire chapter just on the issue of truth, and how truth has moved from objectivity to feelings. And this has huge implications.

But let me give you an illustration of the way in which I believe false teachers come into the church. Hitler had a program called Operation Greif. In German, it's pronounced a little differently. This was brilliant. Now it didn't work, but the idea itself was brilliant.

What he did is, when they had dead soldiers from the Allies, dead British soldiers, American soldiers, what Hitler did is, he asked his men to take off their uniforms and put them on German soldiers. So German soldiers were able to go behind the lines, and they of course, distorted things. They gave false orders, they turned around road signs. They did all the havoc they could. Now, the reason it didn't work too well, is that even though these Germans knew English, still they had an accent. But here's the point, Gary. That's exactly what false teachers do. They wear the uniform of Christianity, but they are actually subversive. And when you read the book of Jude, the book of 2 Peter, you have an awesome description there, of how it is that false teachers come into the church.

Now, all of that is background, and now I'll get more specifically to the question that you asked, "What do we do?" Well, first of all, what we have to do, of course to begin, and I hardly have to say this on your program, is to begin with our own families. Now, here's my heartbreak. Parents aren't raising their children anymore, not even Christian parents. The culture is raising them. And the culture raises them through cell phones, through their addiction to cell phones, through what they are hearing in the classroom.

And here in the state of Illinois, there's a textbook that is used in many schools that is just absolutely horrible. What it has is, cartoons of various sexual acts covering every single perversity you can think of. So if they're going to be educated in that way, and the cell phone, Hitler... And just recently I returned from leading a tour to the sites of the Reformation and also Hitler's sites. So it's on my mind. But Hitler said, in effect to the parents, "You raise the child, you feed the child, you clothe the child, but the heart of the child is going to belong to the Reich.", to the German Empire. That's what our culture is saying, so even Christian kids are being misled. Now, I'm not saying that every public school has

these evil influences, but you and I know that many of them certainly do. So what do we do? We begin with our own families.

Secondly, let's talk about the church. As a pastor, I have never endorsed a political party or a political politician. But here's the thing. There are so many biblical issues that the church should be speaking to, which are thoroughly biblical, but which are deemed to be political today. And let's begin with the responsibility of the parents to have input into their children's education. You know what happens when parents want to have input. Immediately, you have pushback from the progressives, from the liberals. So is that a biblical issue? Absolutely. Should the church be helping parents know how to navigate this to stand against the culture, to find alternate ways, if necessary, as to how to make sure that their children are properly taught? Absolutely.

Let's take race, because you actually mentioned it a moment ago. The Bible has a lot to say about the racial issues. For example, in Colossians chapter 4, the Apostle Paul says this. And I want everyone to think through the implications. "In Christ, there's neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, Scythian, barbarian, but Christ is all and in all." Now, Paul didn't say that the Jews become Greeks or the Greeks become Jews. What he said, is they retain their identity, but there is a transcendent unity that is brought about when they become members of the body of Jesus Christ. So Gary, critical race theory comes along and destroys that. Critical race theory wants to destroy everything that Jesus died to bring together. Because critical race theory says we have to always see ourselves in oppositional terms.

So do churches understand that? Are they preaching the Bible when it comes to racial issues? I know it's a very controversial issue, very easy for us to bypass it. So I could go on and actually list other things. And while I'm on a roll, and you're being so kind to let me be the one speaking here, while I'm on a roll, let's talk about immigration. There is a huge problem, because Christians don't understand the biblical distinction between government and the church. The role of government is to use the sword. It is to protect the innocent and to punish the guilty. The symbol is the sword. And you can't run a government on the basis of compassion. Now, compassion, we should all have it, and that is really something that the church should exercise. So I personally am opposed to our open borders, but at the same time, when migrants are here, I've supported those who minister to them. Because we, as a church, want to minister to everyone who needs help.

Now, here's the question. Do Christians understand that? Are they able to articulate what the issues are? I'm not saying that we are going to be able to push back the culture. I've written several books. One of the most important is the one that we're talking about right now, namely, *The Eclipse of God*. And I wrote the book not to reclaim the culture, but to reclaim the church. To help the church see that we have to stand against this lovingly, always driven by the gospel, gospel driven. But at the same time, making sure that we just don't accept the culture into the church because we want to be nice. We want to be

nice, we want to be compassionate, but let's not confuse compassion with the need for lovingly delivered truth.

Gary Bauer: Well, Doctor, this has been a fantastic conversation about your new book, *The Eclipse of God*. I'm going to predict this has going to be a Christian best-seller. I hope that it is. But I got a lot more that I want to ask you. Can we impose on you to come back and be with us tomorrow?

Dr. Erwin Lutzer: I'd be glad to, Gary. Thank you for the opportunity.

Gary Bauer: It's our pleasure.

Roger Marsh: While there is much more coming your way tomorrow here on Family Talk, featuring Gary Bauer's conversation with his guest, Dr. Erwin Lutzer. And if you'd like to learn more about Dr. Lutzer's book called *The Eclipse of God: Our Nation's Disastrous Search for a More Inclusive Deity (and What We Must Do about It)*, then visit our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk), and click the link at the bottom of today's broadcast page.

Whether you plan to vote early or on election day, make sure to cast your ballot this election season. Far too many registered Christian voters are not making their voices heard, and this is such a crucial time that we all want to exercise our right to vote. Remember the election between George W. Bush and Al Gore, back in 2000? Al Gore won the popular vote, but Bush picked up five more electoral votes than Al Gore. Votes were called into question, and counted and recounted.

Well, the race was very, very close in several states. Al Gore, for example, won in New Mexico by only 366 votes. And George Bush took Florida by a total of only 537. So believe me when I tell you, your vote really does matter. You want to check out the voting resources and our special voter guide available to you at [drjamesdobson.org/countdowntodecision2024](http://drjamesdobson.org/countdowntodecision2024). You can sign up to receive your free voter guide and also watch the Countdown to Decision 2024 podcast each week, on all the hot button election issues, hosted by Alison Centofante and Joseph Backholm. Their guest list is phenomenal. Now again, that website to check out is [drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024](http://drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024).

Another great resource to share with you is the new Dobson Culture Center. The DCC, as we like to call it, was created to help families and individuals engage culture with a biblical worldview. And also, to encourage you, as a Christian, to live boldly as a believer in a secular culture. Visit the Dobson Culture Center today simply by clicking the Culture Center link on our home page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

And while you're there, be sure to sign up for the brand new "Lighting Up Culture" Weekly Report," published each week by our own Dr. Owen Strachan,

the senior director of the new Dobson Culture Center. Together we can lift high the grace and truth of our Lord.

Finally, I want to remind you that Family Talk is a listener-supported broadcast ministry. It is so important that we hear from you with any of your comments, your questions, and especially your prayer requests. We want to help encourage and guide you on your faith journey as you grow closer in your relationship with the Lord. Please keep in mind though, without your faithful financial support, we would not be able to bring you the daily programs that you enjoy here on The Family Talk broadcast.

Now, summer was a particularly thin time of year for us financially, so it's more crucial now than ever before for us to hear from you with your faithful financial support. You can give a gift online through our secure website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). You can also give a gift over the phone, when you call 877-732-6825. And to send your contribution through the US Postal Service, remember, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado. The zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for part two of Gary Bauer's fascinating conversation with Dr. Erwin Lutzer, talking about *The Eclipse of God*, right here on Family Talk.

Announcer:

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