



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Luis Palau Tribute: A Biblical Look at the Family - Part 1

Guest(s): Luis Palau

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Dr. James Dobson: Well hello everyone I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, I'm Roger Marsh and on today's program, we are going back in the archives. We are going all the way back to 1984, for a powerful conversation Dr. Dobson had with a dear friend of his, the late Dr. Luis Palau. Now Dr. Palau went home to be with the Lord on March 11, 2021 at the tender age of 86. He went to Heaven after a three-year battle with lung cancer. Dr. Luis Palau was an amazing man. Actually born in Argentina, he emigrated to the United States where at the age of nineteen, he hosted his own Christian radio program. And then served as a Spanish language translator for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He held crusades much like Billy Graham did and he was much loved by all of us and by millions of other people the world over. As a matter of fact, Dr. Luis Palau and Rev. Billy Graham were very, very close friends. And they were friends right up until Mr. Graham's death and now he and Luis Palau are joined together again in eternity.

What we're going to hear today on Family Talk is a broadcast that actually is the first introduction and interview Dr. James Dobson had with Dr. Luis Palau. As I mentioned, this was recorded back in 1984. He was invited in by Dr. Dobson to do a radio program with him, and boy they did. They talked for a couple of minutes and they walked into the studio and they recorded so much material that it wound up becoming a two-part conversation that aired and really resonated with people all over the world about Dr. Palau's life, his ministry and evangelism, so we will hear the first half of that conversation on today's edition of Family Talk and then we'll hear part two of this discussion on the next edition of our broadcast. So here right now is Dr. James Dobson introducing his good friend, Dr. Luis Palau as they begin with a conversation about the biblical concept of the family on this special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: You're often called the Billy Graham of Latin America. Is that a fair assessment? How do you feel about that?

Luis Palau: Well, it's sort of embarrassing in a way because Billy Graham is such a great man of God. I suppose people use it just to quickly say what it is we do, mass

crusades on television and radio, and it's a quick way to describe it. But Billy is such a tremendous preacher and so superior in the Lord that it's sort of embarrassing, really.

Dr. James Dobson: The largest crowd I've ever spoken to, I believe is 19,000 people, and I was keenly aware of how difficult it is to hold the attention of that many people.

Luis Palau: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: How in the world do you speak to 700,000? I know that's not typical, but how do you reach that many people?

Luis Palau: Well, it's the same as 19,000, I think. What they did in Guatemala is that each one brought their transistor radio. We didn't have a good enough PA system, they did not at that point. So they had five radio stations transmitting simultaneously, and thousands of people had their transistor radio up and you could hear the echo all over this massive military field, everybody just listening. And really, like you do, you have to be anointed by the Spirit, you have to have something to say, you've got to say it quickly, and with a touch of humor like you do. I think that's what keeps people with you.

Dr. James Dobson: Well you and I have developed a friendship in recent years and let me tell you why I felt so strongly about your being here today. I know that you know how I feel about this. If our country is to survive, it will not be because we have more gifted psychologists and more books and more counseling and more knowledge about the family. But if it's going to be successful, if it's going to survive the stresses that are on it now, it will be because of a return to those values and that commitment, that relationship with Jesus Christ, which is your ministry, and God has blessed it. Not only in Latin America, but you're also preaching in the United States and in Europe as well at this time, aren't you?

Luis Palau: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: You identify with what I just said, that is the answer. That is the future, isn't it?

Luis Palau: You're right. You're so right. And I tell you, Dr. Dobson, I feel that unless we have a revival, the United States of America will go the way of all flesh. England is a model of that, a sad model. England has gone, as Dr. Bill Lawrence says, from a missionary sending organization to a mission field in one and a half generations.

Dr. James Dobson: That's unbelievable.

Luis Palau: England used to send all the missionaries of the world. Now, the Archbishop of Canterbury, before the present one, said, "Send us missionaries. England is a mission field." And it absolutely is. Now America's going in that direction.

Dr. James Dobson: You were telling me before we went on the air that only 4% of the people in London attend church at all, ever.

Luis Palau: That's absolutely right.

Dr. James Dobson: And 50% of them have never read the Bible one time.

Luis Palau: Exactly. Now in England, across the board, 55 million people, 35% have never read the Bible. In London, the estimate is 50% have never once opened the Bible to read it, once. This is a serious study by the Bible Societies, by the way.

Dr. James Dobson: And this was a nation, one generation ago, which considered itself a Christian nation.

Luis Palau: Exactly. And two generations ago, you had Queen Victoria, you had Spurgeon and Campbell Morgan and F.B. Meyer, all the great preachers that made England a solid nation. Once a BBC interviewer said to me, "Why are you in England? Aren't you flogging a dead horse?" Which is a very British phrase. And I said, "Yes. But of course, God has power to raise dead horses." But London is in a moral crisis and so is all of England. Moral standards have gone down and the nation recognizes it. That's why they're asking Billy Graham to come back. They've asked us to come back because they feel the young generation does not know the Ten Commandments. The Bible Societies, in their study, said to Billy and to me, they said, "Look, take nothing for granted. Don't say King David. They never heard of King David. Don't say the Prodigal Son. They've never heard of the Prodigal Son. Even when you say Jesus, you better say Jesus Christ, the son of God, the founder of Christianity." That's how far they are and Americans don't realize that.

Dr. James Dobson: I was there in 1969 and in 1972, and I was impressed by these gorgeous, beautiful church buildings and nobody in them. I mean, six, eight, 10 people huddled in the middle of these huge churches. Luis, let's bounce across the water to America now. Is there a direct parallel? Are we going in that same direction? Do you see the same moral decline that you saw there?

Luis Palau: Well, I see two things. I see the USA on the one hand, a great vigorous Christianity. We've got the praise the Lord for the good things going on in America. We mustn't allow ourselves to be alarmed to the point where we don't see the hand of God. Good things happening among college students, among home Bible studies, your own ministry with the family. Take all the Bible studies on the radio, take Chuck Swindoll, take all the other great men. There's a great movement of God. On the other hand, you are as alarmed as we are about the divorce rate, about the moral standards, about the low ethical standards. That's what's alarming. You see, in Britain, World War I and World War II really demoralized the nation, in the sense of D-moralizing it. There has been a decay. Now America is going in the same direction.

The frightening thing is this, the way the family is going in America, unless a revival turns it around, we'll end up just like Latin America. Now I'm not insulting Latin America, you know I come from there.

Dr. James Dobson: You were born in Argentina.

Luis Palau: I was born in Argentina, which is way down in South America. So I'm a real Latin, although I become an American now. But 72% of the population of Latin America is illegitimate. Now, if the USA continues in this trend, you're going to have the same situation in America. Latin America has all the resources to be a successful continent and actually enjoy a successful standard of living. Why don't we have it? Because of immorality. I am convinced. I have said it in press conferences, I've said it at universities. Nobody's ever challenge me.

Dr. James Dobson: There's a direct relationship between the moral values and behavior and the way the country goes, prosperity included.

Luis Palau: Absolutely. And we Christians believe that. Your sins will find you out, the Scripture says. And according to your holiness, therefore shall come your success. If we don't follow holiness, we therefore cannot expect the blessing of God. Now it isn't that God necessarily sends fire from Heaven, it's that we set in motion such actions that destroy the nation. In Latin America, you take a man converted to Christ in between 35 and 40 years of age has usually had three women in his life and children by those three women.

Dr. James Dobson: Not just relationships. You're talking about he has lived with or had sex with three women outside of his own home and family.

Luis Palau: Oh yes. I'm not talking about casual sex as they say nowadays, I'm talking about living with a woman for a period of time as though they were husband and wife. Maybe the first time when he's 18, maybe 18 to 23, one woman, three children. 24 to 30, second woman, two or three children. 30 to 40, another woman, another two or three children. You see, Latin America is absolutely populated by this situation. Now that kind of looseness, it's not that the Latins are worse than anybody else. We are nice people.

The thing is this, when you don't have a biblical standard or if the standard is there, but you don't have the power of God that work in you, therefore the way you live affects your attitude towards a family. Who are you loyal to? Who do you appeal to? And when you have a low view of the family, therefore either previously you had a low view of God and following you have a lower view of God, because a young man, as we all know, who sees hypocrisy and duplicity in the father and mother, or who finds them unreliable, how can you speak about God, our father, when in the little person's mind, the father is that man that just walked out, or the father is the man that he saw sleeping with another woman.

Therefore, their image of God goes down. And it's a downward cycle that only a revival, that's why we come back to your statement, Jim, that only a revival will bring things back to God because a revival is a breakthrough into the society. It's breaking up the molds. A revival is our confrontation. That's what it really amounts to, between the way our culture's going and the demands of God.

Dr. James Dobson: How does it start? I feel a little bit like the mice that agreed there ought to be a bell on the neck of the cat, but nobody knew how to get it there. How do we turn our hearts toward God? Where does a revival begin?

Luis Palau: That's a deep question.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Luis Palau: I think of Latin America and some places where I have touches of revival. And I think it starts with a few concerned people and America has them, like you, like so many others, like Bill Bright and so many others that have a burden for revival. You have to have the burden. But then has to come a breaking and a cleansing. I think the burden has got to go beyond us talking about it.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Luis Palau: I think we have to get on our knees and pray. The old timers used to talk about praying through.

Dr. James Dobson: And a word called repentance that I don't hear much anymore. Tell us what repentance is.

Luis Palau: I think repentance comes, it's part of when a group of men or women or altogether, come and they say, "Oh God, this cannot go on." And then you begin to search the mind of God and you will not let up until you feel that there has been a breakthrough, until you sense that the hand of God has touched something and you say, "The Lord has answered. Now we must act." Then you leave that place with an authority that is supernatural. And then God uses individuals to begin to touch the conscious, because repentance begins with a conscience that comes alive. Doesn't it? And so therefore, that's why I think your ministry to the family can be used of God to bring repentance. And I would encourage you, that among other things that you're doing, you're not just counseling us and giving us good ideas on how to handle the grandparents and memories, all those things that have blessed me that you've had on the program.

But also it touches our conscience. The conscience is where revival starts. Unless the conscience comes alive, that I'm not living up to God's standards, I will never repent. And the family I think is in the West where we most feel our guilt and we should. And the family is the window into the soul of the West, I feel. That's why we emphasize the family and that's what we're thrilled by what the Lord is

doing here. You've got to keep a balance also. Now I think on the one hand, there must be a call to repentance. But you've got to compare nations also to keep your balance. America has thousands of godly families, beautiful families. And comparing to most of the world, there's more concern for the family in this country, probably than any other country in the world.

Dr. James Dobson: And yet we have the highest divorce rate of any nation in the civilized world.

Luis Palau: But maybe that's why we have a concern because we see the disaster taking place. We are hardly aware of why it happened and it's because we've turned away from God and we've turned away as a nation. Again, I say there are millions of godly families. But as a nation, we have downgraded the word of God. And if there's one thing that Great Britain is paying for is their low view of Scripture. In other words, they have allowed themselves to doubt the word of God. I have not heard all your programs, but I know you have a high view of Scripture. In England, they have sold so many doubts and I bring England because it hurts America. They're our cousins and therefore what our cousins do over there affects us here.

The low view of Scripture, if you begin as church leaders to doubt the authority of the Bible, if you begin to play games and sort of flirt with low view of Scripture, and all right, I'm not going to get on this program. And you may not even want me to, you may clip me off. But if you begin to play games about creation, you begin to play games about the flood, you begin to play games about Jonah and the whale.

Dr. James Dobson: You take one section out, where do you stop?

Luis Palau: Yes, sir. Then you begin to doubt the virgin birth. Eventually nothing counts. And although people will say, and in Europe they'll say this, Jim. They'll say, "Oh, we believe in the word of God and we wouldn't think of checking with anything." But of course, you've got to be realistic. The moment you said that, "But we've got to be realistic," you might as well throw the whole thing out the window. Either the Bible is the inspired inerrant word of God that you can trust or you might as well set up your own religion and go ahead and anything goes. And in a sense, the moment you try to bring down ethical standards, what the word says, what the Ten Commandments clearly state about ethics and the family, you might as well throw it all out.

Dr. James Dobson: Luis, in the closing moments of this broadcast, I'd like you to talk specifically to somebody, a certain person that I have in mind. We try, on this broadcast, to have a certain individual in mind for each program. And it varies from program to program. I'd like you to talk to the man who knows the way, he was raised in it or at least he's heard it. Maybe at one time in his life, he was walking with Christ, but now he's gotten wrapped up in his job and in his work and he's not leading his own family spiritually. And he knows it isn't right, but he's got all these pressures on him. What do you have to say to him?

Luis Palau: In Latin America, religion has always been considered the domain of women and children. So when I started out, I used to pray, "Lord, give me a burden for the man and use me to reach out to the man." I am convinced that it's still Scriptural and it does bless nations when, in God's order of things, men become a model. So usually, I must come on Scripturally from my viewpoint. I don't want to hurt your listeners or whatever stance you've taken.

Dr. James Dobson: No. That's why I ask you the question because I feel strongly about what you're about to say.

Luis Palau: Well, I feel this way, that God appointed the man to lead in spiritual issues as well as other issues, but especially spiritually. And I feel that we men honor or dishonor God by the way we walk and by the way we act. And Colossians says, "Husbands, love your wives and don't be harsh with them." And our little boys and girls are watching us. How do I treat my wife? And then he goes on to say, "Fathers, do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged." Now you've used those verses many times. But the thing that I would say to a man is this, man, what example are you giving your children? When you die, what will your children say about you as a man? Will they say my, father was a hypocrite? Will they say, as some fellows have said to me, in my father's home, I never heard a prayer to God in all my life?

I say to men, man, have you become such a pagan? Are you so heathen that you have never opened the Word of God and let your boys and girls in the Word of God? I often say to men, man, have you ever gotten on your knees beside your bed with your wife beside you, put your arm around her and read one chapter, just one chapter from the Word of God, the Bible? Have you ever, with your arm around your wife, on your knees, beside your bed, led your woman in prayer to God? And I often say to men, and I'd like to say to your men right now, I have seen more men whose families were, if not breaking up, cold and unworn, take advantage of this counsel, get on their knees, put their arm around their wife, open the Bible to John, chapter one, read it, the man, read it.

And then say to his wife, we are going to talk to God. And the love that comes when a man leads his wife life to God is so profound. I often tell men, I am gone a lot from home, but when I take my wife, Pat, in my arms and I lead in prayer, I begin to cry. It's an amazing thing. And it's not that I'm a cry baby, I'm a pretty hard nose character. But there's something fantastically beautiful when a man takes his wife in his arms and they talk to God. The love, the warmth is unbelievable. It seems like the two souls just merge into one. Now, a man who doesn't do that is a disgrace to manhood. A man who doesn't do that is a shame to himself. He's dishonoring his creator. He is being less manly.

Do you know, there are men, Jim, who in their entire lives have never led their wives in one talk with God? There are men who have never said to their children, "Let's talk to your Heavenly Father." Even if they're teenagers, before they leave the door, give them a hug and touch their cheek and say, "Buddy, I'm going to be praying for you all day." What a difference to send them out on the

street, having first been in the Word before breakfast or after breakfast and on your knees talking to your Heavenly Father. So a man is a man when he leads his wife in the things of God, when he leads his children in the things of God and when he makes God the center of his home. Otherwise, what is the meaning of life? And the final thing I'll say is what I often say to men, and I feel great authority in saying it, what memories are you going to leave behind?

My father died when I was only 10 years old. And the memories I have on my father are so strong. I saw him on his knees, reading the Book of Proverbs. My image of him is seeing him in the Lord's supper, calling out a Psalm or calling out a hymn. My image of him is my dad was a big businessman in his day, standing on a street corner beside the missionary, passing out tracks and talking to people who insulted him and spat on him and threw rocks or mud at him. And there was my dad. So I want to be that kind of man. And I say to every man listening to your program today, what kind of a man are you? What images are you leaving in your children's minds?

Dr. James Dobson: Luis, you and I recently attended the birthday party of Billy Graham. And Shirley and I were riding home together on the freeway after that and we were sharing with one another, what we were thinking during that evening, because as you recall, they showed films of his entire ministry and the power of the Lord was there.

Luis Palau: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And I remember saying to her, "Shirley, what was going through my mind is that God is expanding our outreach and doing great things, I think, through what we're attempting to do." But if I get so caught up in that, that I don't take the time to do exactly what you're talking about with my children and my family, with my wife, then I will live to regret it.

Luis Palau: You said it.

Dr. James Dobson: And there is no good work, I don't care what you do for a living, even if you speak to 700,000 people as you have, if you don't take the time for that responsibility you're talking about right now, then you've missed the first priority.

Luis Palau: You said it. You're a failure. I don't care who listens to you. I don't care if you got pictures in the White House and with Queen Elizabeth, what is the point, if at the end of your life, you are not godly? It's just not worth it.

Roger Marsh: Well you've been listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a conversation Dr. Dobson had with the late evangelist, Dr. Luis Palau, who's heart for families and passion for spiritual revival remain as relevant today as when this conversation was first recorded. His challenge for men to lead their families spiritually and his warning about the consequences of moral

decline speak directly to the challenges that we currently face in culture today, do they not? Well Dr. Dobson will be back in just a moment with some closing thoughts so do stay with us for that.

Now if today's program touched your heart or if you know someone who needs to hear this message, I encourage you to share it. You can do so using the Family Talk app or you can also go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. You'll find this broadcast along with other helpful resources there. As we reflect on Dr. Palau's reminder about the importance of spiritual leadership in the home, I want to share with you about a special resource that celebrates family gatherings around the table. Something we'll all think about in just a couple of weeks at Easter time. Shirley and Danae Dobson have created a beautiful book together entitled *Welcome to Our Table* that shares cherished recipes, inspirational stories and memories from the Dobson family gatherings. Award-winning photographer Julie Johnson has artfully photographed each recipe with special attention to the delicious dishes and lovely table settings. Now this lovely book is as much a family memoir as much as a cookbook offering lessons and blessing other through the art of hospitality. Now we'd love to send you a copy of Shirley and Danae's book as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today. So request your copy of *Welcome to Our Table* when you go to drjamesdobson.org. Or you can request your copy of *Welcome to Our Table* over the phone when you call 877-732-6825.

You know these broadcasts and resources are made possible through the generous support of friends like you who share our commitment to preserving and promoting biblical family values. Your gift today will help us continue broadcasting messages of hope and biblical truth to families all across America. To make a secure donation online, go to drjamesdobson.org. Or you can send your gift through the U.S. Postal Service. Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949. And now here once again is Dr. James Dobson with some closing thoughts for today's program.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, this is James Dobson again, and you've been listening to an interview with Dr. Luis Palau, a wonderful, much loved evangelist who held crusades much like the ones that Billy Graham led all over the world. But in his case, especially in Latin America, where he was most known. Luis and I had just met on the afternoon that we recorded the program that you just heard. And we're going to hear the second half of that tomorrow. There is a surprise. Something dramatic happened at the end of the second interview, and I hope you that you will be with us next time. God's blessings to you all.

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