



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** National Day of Grandparents Day of Prayer – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Cavin Harper

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Hello, everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, a radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

**Roger Marsh:** Well, welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, someday your grandchildren are going to remember what you handed down to them. And the question will be, is it going to be something that lasts? That's what Dr. James Dobson and grandparenting expert Cavin Harper will be getting to in the heart of today's edition of Family Talk. They're going to turn their attention to the National Grandparents Day of Prayer. It's observed every year on the second Sunday of September, which, by the way, is coming up this Sunday. Cavin will also share how this all got started and what it looks like to make prayer for your grandkids a daily habit, not just a once-a-year event. So let's rejoin Dr. James Dobson and his guest, Cavin Harper, for today's edition of Family Talk.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Hello, everyone again. This is James Dobson, and you're listening to Family Talk, and we're delighted to have you here talking about a very important topic. Yesterday, we began a two-part program having to do with grandparenting. I'm sure there are a lot of grandparents listening to us. And our guest was Cavin Harper, who is not only a grandfather himself, but he's the founder and executive director of the Christian Grandparenting Network. Cavin is also a nationally known speaker and author who strives to help grandparents intentionally and authentically represent Christ to their grandchildren and their families. What more important topic can there be than that? One other unique activity that Cavin is well-known for is something he calls a summer grand camp program where grandparents and their grandchildren experience summer camp together. And your wife is named Diane.

**Cavin Harper:** Diane.

**Dr. James Dobson:** And she's also worked in grandparenting camps, hasn't she?

**Cavin Harper:** She has. She's been a critical part of that whole process.

**Dr. James Dobson:** All right. I want to start today with something extremely important because we're days away from the National Grandparents Day of Prayer. What should grandparents be thinking about and doing? Let's start with that. And I have some questions I want to ask you about it. First, explain it.

Cavin Harper: We recognized that many people didn't even know there was a National Grandparents Day in this country that Jimmy Carter proclaimed in 1978. And so we started out just thinking, well, what can we do?

Dr. James Dobson: So that day actually started with a White House initiative.

Cavin Harper: It was a White House proclamation, yeah. And most people don't even know that, and so few churches were doing anything about it. So our initial objective was just to call people's attention to that. We thought, well, now, it's great that we can honor grandparents, but wouldn't it be wonderful if we could use this day as a call to grandparents to get on their knees and pray for their grandchildren, their children, all their families, even their churches, their schools, just to pray that God would awaken them to the truth that they might walk in it. Wouldn't it be great if we could get all these grandparents together and have some events at their church, in little small groups in their neighborhoods, and just be praying.

And so Lillian Penner, who is our national prayer coordinator, really came up with this vision and has been working feverishly to make this happen. So what we're doing is calling grandparents just to gather together, to link arms and pray together, because Jesus said, where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst. And so that's the whole purpose, just to pray.

Dr. James Dobson: There are undoubtedly many pastors out there who don't know about this day. I am embarrassed to tell you I've learned about it from you. It is something I wish I'd known before. We really should urge pastors who are catching this program or maybe church members who are hearing it and can call and tell the pastor about it to mention Grandparents Day of Prayer and what it's about. Where can they find more material? It's coming up very quickly.

Cavin Harper: It's coming up quickly. I mean, there's still time to put some things together. They can actually go to our main website, which is [christiangrandparenting.net](http://christiangrandparenting.net), and they'll find resources there that help them understand how, how a Grandparents Day of Prayer works. It is really very basic, very simple. We actually took some of those ideas from someone named Shirley Dobson. And just a way of very simply getting people together and just praying.

Dr. James Dobson: You gave me a list of questions here about the Grandparents Day of Prayer. The first one says, what is it? What's it intended to do? And you've already answered that and how it got started. Why is Grandparents Day of Prayer important? What are the objectives of it?

Cavin Harper: Well, it's important, as we discussed yesterday, because that's one of the most intentional things that we can do. And I believe very much in the importance and power of prayer. In fact, one of the things that I've appreciated is Mark Batterson's little book, *Prayer Circles*. And in it, he's challenging us to gather as individual parents and members of congregation around our children and pray.

What we're trying to do with this is to build even bigger than that and say, let's not just make it individuals circling around their children and grandchildren. Let's do it together. Let's make a big circle, linking arms to pray, because we believe that lives are transformed by the power of God, not just by our actions. So if we want to be conduits of God's transformational grace and blessing, I think prayer is the most power pipeline that we can have for making that happen.

So that's part of it. And the other part of it is that we are wanting grandparents then to say, okay, wasn't this an exciting time for us to be able to gather together to pray. Let's do this on an ongoing basis. Let's form gap groups, grandparents at prayer, and let's get together on a regular basis and pray over our families.

Dr. James Dobson: How widely is this celebrated?

Cavin Harper: Well, we are a small organization, but we have hundreds of groups right now who are doing this and churches who are doing this in the United States. We have scores of churches in South Africa who have picked up on this and are really enthusiastic about doing this day of prayer, which is why we don't call it National Grandparents Day. We just call it Grandparents Day of Prayer. We have people in the UK, we have people in Canada, we have people in Australia who are joining with us in this day of prayer.

Dr. James Dobson: What a great concept, and I hope that the program we're doing today will help get it out there. You would like it to be recognized every year for grandparents.

Cavin Harper: And our goal is to get churches to embrace this and call their grandparents together for prayer. And it's not that it has to be limited to grandparents, but it's specifically targeting grandparents to say, let's start the charge here.

Dr. James Dobson: Are there resources available to help people do this intelligently and with intention?

Cavin Harper: Yes. Besides some of the resources they would find on the website, our national prayer coordinator, Lillian Penner, I mentioned earlier, has written a book called *Grandparenting with a Purpose: Effective Ways to Pray for Your Grandchildren*. And so that's an important resource that I think grandparents.

Dr. James Dobson: Can get that from you?

Cavin Harper: They can get that right from our website. They can find it. And we would love to be able to put that in their hands. There are other prayer resources that you will find on our website as well. Mark Batterson's book I mentioned earlier. But we want grandparents to recognize it's just about doing it. It's not a complicated thing to pray. It's just a matter of doing it, being intentional.

Dr. James Dobson: Cavin, I want to do something I rarely do here on this broadcast. I want to read to you and to our listeners because there's a very inspirational story about

grandparenting that appeared in my book, *Bringing Up Boys*. And before we came into the studio today, I asked a staff member to find that copy for me and to bring it to me. And I have it in front of me. I hope I don't put people to sleep but let me read to you what I wrote there. I said:

"I can't tell you how many Christians have told me they accepted Christ as adults because of the early training given to them by their grandparents. Jeffrey Canada is an African-American man who grew up in the streets of the Bronx. He is the author of the book *Reaching Up for Manhood: Transforming the Lives of Boys in America*. In it, he shares some of his personal experiences and tells how he overcame many adverse circumstances. Canada gives great credit to his grandmother, who eventually turned him around and gave him a moral compass. He relates a story about her final days while dying of cancer. It was during a terribly difficult period of his own life. Both his brother and his infant son had recently died." This is what he wrote.

In other words, this is in his book.

"I might have been able to accept one of those deaths, but not all three. Why had God taken my infant son, my brother whom I worshipped, and now was going to take my grandmother whom I cherished? The answer to me was that there was simply no God. Not only did I doubt the existence of God, but my own life lost meaning. Why was I working so hard in college, away from my family and friends, sacrificing so much when death could come at any instant, making all my hard work folly?

When I went home to see my grandmother, she was bedridden. The cancer had robbed her of her strength and would soon take her life. Right before I went back to school, I went into her room and I asked her the question that was tearing me apart. I know it was selfish of me to ask her of this while she was dying, but I had to know, 'Grandma, do you still believe in God?'

'Of course I do. Why do you ask me that?'

'Because you're sick. You have cancer.'

'Being sick doesn't have anything to do with faith.'

'But how can you have faith when God has done this to you, made you suffer, and for what? What did you do to offend God so much that you have to be in pain like this?'

'Jeffrey, listen to me. I know you've been through so much with the loss of your son and your brother, but don't lose faith in God or yourself. God has a plan, and you're part of it, so you can't give up. Faith is not something you believe in until things don't go your way. It's not like rooting for a football team and then when they start losing, changing sides and rooting for another team. Faith means you believe no matter what. Do you hear me? It's easy to have faith when you have a million dollars and you're in perfect health. Do you think that

proves anything to God? Your problem is that you think if you study your books hard that you will find all the answers. All the answers aren't in the books. They never will be. So do I believe in God? Yes, more now than ever before.'

I reluctantly went back to Bowdoin where I was attending college after spending a week with my grandmother, not knowing that this was to be the last time I would ever talk to her or see her again. She died within weeks of my leaving. I spent the rest of my sophomore year in a daze. The combined losses was too much to comprehend, but I knew that I had to keep trying, not lose my faith because that's what my grandmother wanted. When I became suddenly frightened or depressed and found that my faith was weak and couldn't sustain me, I felt I could borrow my grandmother's faith. Even though she was no longer alive, her faith was real and tangible to me. Many a night I leaned on her faith when I felt my own couldn't support my doubts.

Every child needs a grandmother like mine in their lives, a person who is older and wiser and is willing to fight for as long as it takes for that child's soul. A person who is willing to hold his or her life up as an example of faith. A person who both forgives and teaches forgiveness. A person whose abundance of faith will be there in sufficient supply when children need it. Because sooner or later, children need more faith than they possess. And that's where we come in.' With that, I will hasten to a closing thought..."

And I went on to give my interpretation of what I've just heard. I've read that because what a great example of a grandmother who ministered to her grandson in a time of confusion and doubt and gave him the strength and the faith to continue even after her death. There she lay dying of cancer, and she did what a grandmother needs to do in a moment like that, and a grandfather too. What a great example. Isn't that a wonderful story?

Cavin Harper: It is, and who is better in the position to be able to share those kinds of things than those who have been around the block a few times already. Because faith is really not so much about trying to figure out what's ahead. As it is, is looking back and seeing God's faithfulness, which is what she was doing. She was pointing to God's faithfulness in it all and knowing that what lies ahead. Who better can communicate that than a grandparent who's been down the road?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that's why I appreciate your book and why I appreciate this conversation because grandparents are in a little different role than their parents.

Cavin Harper: They are.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, their parents are disciplining and training and guiding and making them do the homework and all those things.

Cavin Harper: 24-7.

Dr. James Dobson: But a grandparent is out there with a little different responsibility and different role. And I believe it is God-ordained.

Cavin Harper: I agree with you 100%. And it's not only a different role; it's a different relationship.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Cavin Harper: I mean, it's a relationship that's really hard to describe in words, but there is something unique about a grandchild-grandparent relationship that is not the same as a parent-child relationship.

Dr. James Dobson: Have you had an opportunity to be in a role like this with one of your nine?

Cavin Harper: I have not because I've not been in a situation where that kind of crisis.

Dr. James Dobson: Well it is unique.

Cavin Harper: But I have had the situation. I have a prodigal grandson. He's 18 years old. And just in the last year and a half, he's just turned his back on God and everything and gone off in a really different direction.

Dr. James Dobson: Breaks your heart, doesn't it?

Cavin Harper: Breaks my heart. But I've had the opportunity just a few weeks ago to sit down with him at breakfast and just to be able to share with him that, you know, no matter what you do, I'm going to love you. And I'm going to be there for you. But what I want and what I desire, I believe, is what God wants for your life, and that is He wants the very best. He wants you to know the truth. He wants you to know what is really good for your soul and good for your life and to walk in that truth. So if you want to know anything about life and you've got questions about things, I'm here for you. I want to help you walk this journey because I want to see you succeed. Maybe not as you see success. I want you to succeed in a way that is going to be really what God designed for you and is going to be your ultimate source of satisfaction and delight, not the things that you're pursuing now.

Dr. James Dobson: But you have to be ready for those moments because you don't know when they're coming.

Cavin Harper: I have to be ready. Absolutely ready. In fact, my prayer, you know, Michael O'Brien is a Christian artist, and he wrote this song that has been kind of my prayer, is called *Petition*. And he says, "Let thy ways, Lord, be my compass. Let my heart be thine complete. Let my failures, every trouble, let my friends to thee release." And then he goes on to say, "Let thy glory be my crown. Let thy word, Lord, be my comfort. Let my soul be thine to keep. Let my life dwell in thy shadow. Let my faith still rest in thee." I pray that prayer not only for myself, but I pray that for my grandson.

Dr. James Dobson: I want to explain to you why I got choked up a minute ago reading this. I had difficulty reading the last portion of it, and there's a reason for it. Because my mother's mother had cancer. And I came to see her at the hospital and I was only about 10 or 11 years old. And I stood at her bedside, and she was in the last days of her life. And she looked up at me, and she could hardly talk because she was in a lot of pain. In fact, what Canada experienced with his grandmother, I experienced with mine. And she looked up at me, and she kind of prophesied about me. And she said something about my faith and my love for the Lord. And then she said, and she was wrong about this, but she said, you're going to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ all across this country. Well, I'm not a preacher and I didn't get called into the ministry, but I've been talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Cavin Harper: I think you boldly proclaimed it across the world.

Dr. James Dobson: And I stood there and listened to her, and I never forgot what she said.

Cavin Harper: You know, those are the kinds of things, those are like words of transformational blessing in a child's life, to be able to hear a grandparent speak those things that says, I believe in you. I believe in God's plan and purpose for your life. And I am going to be walking with you and praying with you and cheering you on until you cross the finish line, until I cross the finish line.

Dr. James Dobson: Gary Smalley and John Trent wrote a book called *The Blessing*. And they talked about the fact this is a biblical concept of laying your hands on the younger generation where their children are grandchildren and praying for them and blessing their lives. And I think we ought to do that.

Cavin Harper: And why aren't we teaching and preaching more about that? It was their book that inspired me to begin making a focus on this whole issue of blessing in our GrandCamps. And I can't tell you. How many stories and the times that we are sitting there through these ceremonies and everybody's weeping as this grandparent is speaking these words of just their heart and soul, wanting to speak into this child's life, how powerful that is.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, our time is gone quickly. I'm sorry for taking so much of the time on that story.

Cavin Harper: It was a great story.

Dr. James Dobson: But I think the Lord wanted me to do it. And it spoke to me, and maybe it will minister to others. And this book is going to minister to many people the title of it is *Courageous Grandparenting: Unshakable Faith in a Broken World* and it does take courage to set aside the time and the training to be of influence to your children and grandchildren. We're so busy. We're doing so many things. We're racing and running. We're going on vacations. We're watching television. And we forget the one primary thing we're here to do, which is to pass along

our faith to the next generation. And if we falter in that, if we fail in that. Not only do we not reach our own children and grandchildren who we will never see again if they don't know Christ and they die in an unrepentant state, but we also break the chain for the next generation and those to come and that's what the Scripture tells us to do. Cavin, you're a good man.

Cavin Harper: So are you Dr. Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm glad to have a chance to work with you and what a pleasure to have you come by.

Roger Marsh: Well, you've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's family talk and the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Cavin Harper about the National Grandparents Day of Prayer. What a great reminder that praying for our grandchildren is not a once-a-year event. It's actually a daily privilege, and it's one of the most powerful things we can do for the generation coming after us.

By the way, if you'd like to hear this program again, especially with Grandparents Day coming up this Sunday, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org), and you'll find both parts one and two of this conversation. That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). And while you're online, be sure you also check out Dr. Dobson's outstanding blog post that he wrote about Grandparents Day. He actually wrote it several years ago, but it recently resurfaced online. A writer from the *Epoch Times* wrote an op-ed piece about the importance of grandparents in the lives of their children and quoted Dr. Dobson's article as well. It's generated quite a bit of interest and so we encourage you to search our website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). You can find Dr. Dobson's blog on grandparenting and also take our grandparenting survey as well. All of that awaits you and there's no cost or obligation to you other than a little bit of your time when you go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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

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

Dr. James Dobson: The thousands of cards and letters that I get from listeners. One of those letters came in recently from a nine-year-old girl named Christina. She sent me a poem that she had written and dedicated it to her grandmother. Let me share it with you. She said, "There's a place that I like to hide. There's a place with love inside. It's my Nana's garden." Isn't that a creative bit of writing from a nine-year-old girl? Christina does sound like a very lucky young lady to have such a loving grandmother. I've always believed that grandparents have a God-given responsibility to help care for and nurture their grandchildren. Children

instinctively crave the companionship of their elders. Grandparents, let me encourage you to stay close to your grandchildren. Don't meddle, but do be available. And parents, do what you can to foster closeness with your moms and dads.

Roger Marsh:

For more information visit [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org).