



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** God Won't Leave You There – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright

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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, and I have a question for you. Have you ever been in a wilderness season? A time when you feel like you're stuck in hardship, or maybe you're suffering and just can't seem to find relief, or maybe you're feeling unsure or alone, or possibly even left behind. Maybe you just got out of a trying season recently, or maybe you are in the middle of one. Well, shake hands with the rest of us. You are not alone. Our guests today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk have each gone through their own seasons of hardship, and they found comfort and strength in the Lord to persevere. Our guests are Anne Graham Lotts and her daughter, Rachel Ruth Lotz Wright. And together, they have written a brand new book called *God Won't Leave You There*.

It's Joseph's Story. Anne Graham Lotz has been called the best preacher in the family by her late father, the Reverend Billy Graham. She is a best-selling author and speaker and president of Angel Ministries, which is based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her daughter, Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright, is the vice president of Angel Ministries and the granddaughter of Billy Graham, and she teaches on an online Bible study that reaches over 137 countries. And together, they have co-authored three books, and we are so grateful to have Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright right back with us here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, Anne and Rachel Ruth. Welcome back to our broadcast today.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you so much.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Thank you.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you for having us.

Roger Marsh: Well, we are thrilled to have you. And of course, Anne, in particular, you were one of Dr. Dobson's all-time favorite guests. And I know how much he appreciated you as a friend and also as a co-laborer in the kingdom. And I know that six months ago, if we were doing this recording, he would be sitting here in this seat instead of me. But we're so grateful to have you on and please know how much the Dobsons have appreciated you and your family over the years.

Anne Graham Lotz: Well, he was such a special friend, Roger, and we will always miss him. He was just sort of on his own. There was nobody like him. And personally, he was very kind to me, very supportive and encouraging. Shirley was wonderful. And they made a very powerful, spiritually powerful pair. So we miss him and I'm honored that you would have me come back. I've been to Colorado Springs to be on his program there. I've been on several things with him and I love talking to him. I'd love talking to him whether I was on air or not. Just to have a conversation with Dr. Dobson was a blessing. So thank you for having both of us.

Roger Marsh: Well, we are so grateful to have you here. And Rachel-Ruth, as we were talking about before we got into the studio here, we're just grateful to have you here. I mean, based on some of the incidents that you've been through, we are going to talk a little bit about the Joseph story in just a moment, but you and I have something in common and the fact that we have both had cardiac incidents recently in our lives. And you introduced me to a term that I was not familiar with, but you do write about in your brand-new book. What is a SCAD heart attack? And can you take us on a 60-second tour of what that was like for you?

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Yeah. I went in for a routine stress test where you run on a treadmill and my heart was good, just had a little something that they had always taken care of for years. And it did not go well. It was a really bad situation in that stress test room. And I walked out of there with chest pain and I was like, "Wow, I don't know what happened." I was crying and I was like, "I think I must have pulled a muscle." And it ended up four days later, I was like, "I think I'm having a heart attack." And sure enough, I go. And they did all ... I wasn't sure. Something was going on. And it ended up being SCAD, spontaneous coronary artery dissection where the inside of your artery just shreds and I had the first heart attack there and then morphine wouldn't touch it.

I got the second heart attack the next day that absolutely should have taken my life. And it shredded one artery from top to bottom. And I lost all feeling in my body. I knew I was dying and God just reached down and saved me and brought the blood back somehow in my body so that they get me the OR and they put the big stents all the way down my artery. And I survived and it's been quite a journey since, but I made it.

Anne Graham Lotz: God brought you through.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: He did.

Roger Marsh: He certainly did. And isn't it wild when something like that happens on the inside out and we have to try to figure out what's going on in there. And I don't know about your scientific background. Mine is nothing. I mean, I had no idea.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: No.

Roger Marsh:

Had to learn all these terms. When my aortic valve was in stenosis, it was shrinking, it was failing, and the blood wasn't going back in my system. And then there was an aneurysm that had developed as a result of that. And so either one of those could have taken me out. When I saw the dissection part, I know that that means from the inside out, it's just you have nowhere to go, but the blood just bleeds. I mean, it just goes all over your system and it's not going where God intended it. So I, for one, and for anyone who's ever had their chest cracked or had to have any surgery like this, I'm so grateful that God brought you through it. And I know that that fueled a lot of your passion for this Bible study on Joseph because a lot of Joseph's life didn't make sense.

I mean, you were in what seemed like good health and all of a sudden you're finding out that you've got arteries that are shredding from the inside out. So I'm sure that as you are approaching this study of Scripture, the two of you, knowing the pain and suffering that you have been through individually and collectively, this whole idea that there are seasons in life where we go through times that just don't make a whole lot of sense. Why is Joseph, Rachel Ruth, why is Joseph so special to you now?

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: It is. I could burst. I can't tell you how much Joseph means to me because the process, the path that God put Joseph on was one that he never would've picked for himself. His dad wouldn't have picked for him. I mean, it wasn't the way life was supposed to go. And then it was exactly the way God wanted it. And God needed to get him to Egypt. He had him have jealous brothers, a dad who favored him and all this mess that a family creates. And then God used that to get him sold into slavery by his brothers and get him to Egypt. And then it was a long suffering. It wasn't like he learned his lesson after six months. I mean, it was almost probably 14 years of enslavement and then imprisonment and just awfulness. And all through that, God had a purpose and a plan.

He was creating deep character in Joseph, training him, teaching him all kinds of things to get him ready for the ultimate position he had in, which was second in command of all of Egypt. I mean, it's just awesome. So everything we go through is for a reason. It's not like a whim. Like let's just let her go through that. God had an absolute purpose for all the pain and suffering in your life. And it's just incredible.

Roger Marsh:

Part of the appeal of this book for me is the fact that you take a story that's so complex and takes so much time and not only time, but we're talking prime time. Joseph was what, 17, 18 when he gets sold into slavery and he loses basically his 20s and part of his early 30s. Right now, you'd think if someone had to endure something like that, it would wreck them. It would just completely ruin them. But the fact that you break his story down into three different parts, the first part being God is with you, the second part, God is guiding you. And the third part, God will bring you through. It really does have a significance to our journey as Christ followers for all of the tough seasons that we go through. Talk about that whole intentionality that we need to have because God certainly has it for us.

Anne Graham Lotz:

You just made a statement that Joseph lost his 20s, but actually from our point of view, it would seem that he lost his 20s, but actually it was during his 20s that God was preparing him for what he would do in his 30s. So I think Rachel-Ruth has just written something just challenging people not to waste their suffering, not to waste their hardship, that God has a plan and purpose for it. So in Joseph's suffering and his being sold as a slave, being sold then into Potiphar's house and taking over Potiphar's administration, then being betrayed and going into prison, taking over the prison. But during that process, he learned the Egyptian language. He learned the Egyptian culture. He learned a lot of things from Potiphar's house about the way things needed to be run in Pharaoh's house. And then when he went into prison, it was Pharaoh's prison. So he would've interacted with people who had been in the court. So he learned about the government and the administration. And when God called him out, which you said that you had no forewarning of your heart issues, Rachel-Ruth didn't either.

Joseph had no forewarning that he was going to be delivered. It was just like he had been being enslaved, imprisoned for 14 years, and suddenly he gets a call. Somebody says, "Joseph, quick, take a shower, change your clothes. Pharaoh wants to see you." I mean, that was in a nanosecond. And then he goes to Pharaoh's court comes before Pharaoh. And I love the way that Rachel-Ruth pointed out, he didn't change. So the same person, the same character that he was in Potiphar's house, the same person, the character he was in prison, that strong God-like character and his focus on the Lord was in Pharaoh's court. So God used those 20s, the years that we would think would be lost because he wasn't dating, he wasn't starting a family, wasn't building a business, but God used it for something more important to make him into a man that would be not only a leader, but a ruler of Egypt, which at that point was the dominant nation in the world.

And he was second in command. And God would use that not only to save Egypt from the famine that was coming, but to save the whole world, including his own family back in Canaan who were going through that famine and were starving. So God, you just never know what the big picture is. And I think one of the things we have to do is just trust the Lord when we don't understand. God has a plan. And Jeremiah 29:11 says that God has a plan and purpose for us, not of evil, but to give us hope and a future. And we just have to trust Him. So Joseph was a ... I love the fact during his life, it said again and again, God's favor was with Him. God caused everything he did to prosper. So Joseph had to be aware that God was with him even though he was imprisoned and enslaved.

Roger Marsh:

Boy, I'm so glad you brought up that favor aspect, Anne, because I think about the Christmas greeting that we all send out from Luke chapter two. "Peace on earth upon good will toward everyone upon whom God's favor rests." And you see that God bestows it to us, He gives it to us. And even that Jeremiah 29:11 passage, it's important to remember that the people of God got that blessing, if you will, from Jeremiah when they were in Babylonian captivity. So I mean, it's not that God just parted the Red Sea again. It said, "Off you go." He said, "This

is where you're going to be." Talking with Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel Ruth Lotz Wright today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, their brand new book is called *God Won't Leave You There*. It's Joseph's story and we have a link up at [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net).

Rachel-Ruth, talk about that fact. I mean, we kind of hinted at this, alluded to it a little bit earlier that when it comes to suffering, and as your mom just pointed out, suffering is where God does some of His best prep work in our lives for sure. But let's face it, nobody, I mean, if you talk to Joni Eareckson Tada, she would not say, "Hey, this is the ministry I was hoping for." Most people get involved in ministry for things that were hardship, and yet we as human beings, as carnal Christians, we don't want to suffer. Talk about what it's like when you realize, "Hey, I don't want to go through this, but God has a bigger plan. God has a bigger purpose."

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: I love that you asked this because after those heart attacks, it was three years of so much pain because they said it could happen again. And I went to, ended up going to the ER 12 different times thinking it was happening again. I had blood clots in my lungs. I had a mini stroke and it was scary. And there were so many nights that I was just like, "Lord, what do I do?" And I would just dive into the Scriptures just reading. And God spoke to me over and over and over again. And He gave me a promise. And the verse actually said, "You will not go that way again." And I knew God was telling me that I was not going to have another SCAD heart attack, but then comes the process, am I going to trust Him? Am I going to take Him at His Word or am I going to let fear take over?

And so God teaches us through the process. There's a reason why it's as long as it is, like three years or 14 years because every minute counts. God's using every minute to refine us and make us better. And it was miserable. And there were times where I was just scared out of my mind or I'd cry or I'd be like, "Why me?" But now I know. I mean, God was just, He did bring me through, but He taught me so much about trusting Him that even in the darkest moments of life, He is there. And I experienced His joy and His peace and comfort and He is my everything. I mean, I even go to bed at night and pretend I'm holding His hand. I just love Him and I couldn't live a day without Him. And life stinks. It just is hard. It just is for everybody, most everybody.

And how could you possibly do it alone when you've got a heavenly Father that wants to shepherd you and love you and guide you and make you better and take you to a place that you never could have gotten to if you just had everything given to you by a silver spoon or whatever. He's got an excellent, wonderful plan for you in every second of it.

Anne Graham Lotz: And Roger, I think if I could interject that, I think if somebody's going through that, bottom line, you have to decide what you think about God and you have to trust that God is good. And back in Genesis chapter three, the first temptation that the devil made of Eve was, you have God said, and did He say you couldn't eat this out of all the trees of the garden in the garden? And he was causing Eve

to think God was holding out on her, that God wasn't the good. And right there, if you don't really believe God is good, then you're going to struggle in your suffering and probably have fear, resentment, bitterness. Why me? God, why don't You bless me? Why don't You love me? Why aren't You answering my prayers? But when you believe God is good and you trust Him, then you know whatever comes into your life, according to Romans 8:28 is for your good and your good is not health, wealth, and prosperity.

Your ultimate good is to be conformed to the image of Christ. So we see that in Joseph's life. We could see throughout the book we wrote where we saw Jesus in the shadows of his life. He's a very Christ-like Old Testament character. And I've seen that in Rachel-Ruth and what she's gone through, just that Christ-like character coming through. And I know Joseph cried. And in fact, Scripture talks about him just being chained with a iron collar around his neck and weeping. And we know that Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, He wept as though there were great drops of blood. And so it's okay to cry and to seek God and try to understand what you're going through. But bottom line, you just have to trust that God's good. He knows what He's doing and He'll bring you through.

Roger Marsh:

It's interesting as we were talking with Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright today here in Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk about Joseph's story as they delineate in their brand new book called *God Won't Leave You There*. One of the aspects of Joseph's life that I didn't really take into consideration until reading this book is the fact that there are a lot of times when people are going through tough times and you see someone who says, "Okay, I can do this." I mean, God's got me and using the old analogy, there may be a pile of manure in this room, but there's a pony in here somewhere type of thing. I mean, not to be that naive or Pollyanna, but I mean, it really is kind of our attitude. And one of the things, and this is a question for both of you, when did you have the aha moment that Joseph was a man who was literally surrendered and obedient in his faith and wasn't just saying, "Okay, I'm in this prison. Okay, I'm stuck in slavery. Okay. I guess God's going to get me out at some point. I'll just kind of keep treading water until He does." Joseph doesn't give us that example. Everywhere he goes, like Anne, you said, he learned the language, he learned the customs, he learned the ... He knew God was doing something. When was that aha moment for you when you realized, "Hey, Joseph really is the kind of guy we should be patterning our lives after through hardship."

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: I mean, I was just thinking right off the bat, I'm blown away that when he's thrown in the pit and sold into slavery, he's not like, "Get me out of here. I demand my rights. I am a prince of a wealthy man in Canaan. Let me go." And his immediate submission to what he must have thought this is God's plan. And when he's laying out there while they're traveling to Egypt and he looks up at the stars, was he asking God, "What?" I mean, we don't know. We'll find out in Heaven, but he gets to Egypt and he just jumps right in. I mean, he becomes a slave. Even when he is in the slave block, he wasn't screaming and saying, "Don't you dare poke me and I shouldn't be here. I was taken against my rights." And somehow God gave him the ability to understand there's a greater purpose for

this. And he just thrived in Potiphar's house. And even when Potiphar's horrible wife tempts him, Joseph still doesn't fall for the temptation when he could have.

He just could have been like, "Forget this, Lord, I don't know where you are. I'm going to enjoy this woman and go on with it." But he did it in everything he followed the Lord. And I think the aha moment is all of Joseph's life. I'm like, he followed the Lord wholeheartedly and it's possible to do that. I just finished teaching the book of Joshua. Joshua was the same way. I mean, he followed the Lord from beginning to end. And I know a lot of people aren't like that. You've made a mess of your life and you've been suffering and you've been bitter and angry. It's okay. God is a God of mercy and grace. You just turn to Him now and you said, now it's my aha moment. Now I'm going to follow the Lord and I'm going to watch Him help me through this and He will. He is the rescuer. He is your champion.

Roger Marsh:

I love this. I love this enthusiasm for Joseph's story. And at the same time, I understand too that this is, oftentimes we talk about David being a man after God's own heart and look at all the dysfunction in his family. Well, Joseph's family wasn't exactly a bed of roses either, right? I mean, my goodness from, I mean, the favoritism his father showed to him, but then, I mean, to be sold, it's bad enough when somebody outside your family turns on you. But for Joseph to have that first turn of the screw being his brothers selling him in slavery, and then it just kind of wanders on from there like, where are they? Why did they do this? Talk about the fact that when you look at this, and Rachel-Ruth, if you'd like to take this on as a question, now that you are a mom, you've been a daughter of famous parents and that type of thing, what have you learned about trusting God with your own family across multiple generations knowing that everybody's watching you and it hasn't always been perfect?

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Yes, it's not. I mean, it can get very difficult. Even with my own kids in my mind while they're growing up, I have this whole thought of how their life is going to turn out. And then when it doesn't, I'm like ... And I just had to trust the Lord, especially even with my oldest daughter. I went through a very difficult time and I was on my knees just begging God, Lord, please, please make it quick, bring her back to You. And He has. I mean, it's just been awesome. But family dynamics are difficult and I can feel inadequate coming behind mom and I struggled through school growing up and all that. And it's just like we are who God created us to be. We can't try and be somebody we're not. And God made you for the way he made you, the way you look, the way you think, the way you speak.

And it's all for a plan. And all of our families can go through different situations and really hard things and things that you wish never had happened in a family. But again, just like in Joseph's family where he's got the jealousy and the favoritism and then they almost killed him and then they throw him in a pit and they don't even listen to him, "Wait a second, stop guys. What are you doing?" Nothing, none of that. And he just really suffered from his family. But so if you were somebody who has gone through tremendous difficulty in your family,

awful dynamics, abuse from a father or whatever it might be, Jesus is the ultimate. He's the one that is the one that we look to for the example, for our father figure, for our husband figure, for our best friend. He wants to swoop down and be your everything.

So if you've come up in a situation that's hard in a family, maybe Jesus is just saying, "It's me. I'm going to be your everything." And it's better than anything we could have ever had in the perfect family.

Roger Marsh: I love that enthusiastic response to a question that could be very challenging for people when you think about the family dynamics. And yet as we talk about Joseph's story, a lot of people when they look at a season of heartbreak or uncertainty, there's a lot of stress that goes along with it because of that uncertainty, sometimes it even manifests itself in physical illness or that type of thing. This book gives us the concept and more than just a concept, we see it play out that God does provide peace for us in the middle of heartbreak, in the middle of uncertainty. Well, the time has gone by so quickly and this fascinating conversation about Joseph's story, and we've only really scratched the surface. So we're going to need another program to continue. Anne Graham Lotz, Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright, would you consider joining us again next time to continue discussing God won't leave you there, your brand new book about Joseph?

Anne Graham Lotz: That would be our pleasure.

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright: Absolutely.

Roger Marsh: Well, I love the way Anne Graham Lotz put it. If you really don't believe that God is good, you're going to struggle in your suffering, but when you do believe that he's good, everything changes. You've been listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk featuring my conversation with Anne Graham Lotz and her daughter, Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright, discussing their brand-new book called *God Won't Leave You There: Out of the Pit and Into God's Promise*. It's Joseph's story. Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you want to pass it along to someone who's going through a difficult season right now, visit [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net) and there you'll also find a link for this brand new book. And if today's conversation struck a chord, maybe because you're in the middle of a wilderness season yourself, I want to mention with you a free resource that speaks directly to that experience.

The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has put together a 10-day email series called "When God Doesn't Make Sense." It's based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book of that same name. To sign up to receive yours absolutely free, go to [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net) and search for "When God Doesn't Make Sense" or call a member of our constituent care team at 877-732-6825. They'll help you navigate the signup process for the free email series, or you can ask them about the special booklet that is also prepared and available for you as well. That's 877-732-6825. Every day, we hear from families who are walking through difficult seasons and found

exactly what they needed through the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. That's why this ministry exists, to strengthen families through biblical truth, to point people toward the gospel of Jesus Christ and to stand for the values that hold families together. If you believe families need a trusted biblical voice to turn to in difficult times, we invite you to partner with us.

You can make a secure donation when you go to [jdfi.net](http://jdfi.net). You can also write to us at 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 next time for part two of this conversation with Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright, discussing why God won't leave you there in the middle of a difficult season. It's coming up right here on the next 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.

Dr. James Dobson: A prescription for renewed family life could begin with this simple phrase, slow it down.

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

Dr. James Dobson: There's no doubt that the modern world has become terribly hectic, but we all need to creatively waste some time now and then to walk along kicking rocks and thinking pleasant thoughts. I can provide a simple prescription for a healthier, happier life, but it must be implemented by the whole family. First, add no new time-consuming activity of any type until you agree to remove one of equal dimensions. Second, as a family, you must simply resolve to slow your pace. Learn to say no gracefully. Resist the temptation to chase after more pleasures, more hobbies, more social entanglements. Even the busiest of families can slow themselves down and find a new measure of sanity and wholeness.

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