



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Nurturing a Child's Prayer Life – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Jerry Kirk, Candy Marballi and Rick Schatz

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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 thanking you for listening today, for your prayers and ongoing financial support. Family Talk is a completely listener supported broadcast outreach and we truly rely on your donations to help us through. If you'd like more information on how you can make a tax-deductible donation to support our ministry today, just go to drjamesdobson.org. You know, one of the first lessons a parent can teach a child is the importance of prayer. But how soon can a child actually understand the significance and power of prayer?

Well, that will be the subject that we'll be diving into on today's edition of Family Talk. Now the program you're about to hear was recorded several years ago. It features three guests who will be introduced by Dr. Dobson in just a moment. Since this recording, one of those guests, Rick Schatz has gone home to be with the Lord. Rick was 76 years old when he passed away and he is survived by his lovely wife, Sharon, three grown sons and several grandchildren. And now let's join Dr. James Dobson as he begins today's program right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, welcome everyone. We're delighted to have you with us today. This is Family Talk and I'm James Dobson and I'm your host for today. And it's a pleasure to have you here because this is a very, very important program we're about to hear. And I've got some guests today that are not new to me. At least two of them are not new to me, and I have known them for a long time.

In fact, I want to start there. Dr. Jerry Kirk back in 1985 began coming to the gallery where I was serving on the Commission on Pornography. It was called the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. And I was knee-deep in the fight against pornography and a lot of the other commissioners were of another point of view. They opposed nearly everything that I believe about the dangers of pornography. And I kept seeing this man out there and he kept coming.

We moved all over the country for these commission meetings and Dr. Kirk was that man. You came up, Jerry, at break time, introduced yourself to me. I can still see exactly where I was seated. And you came up and shook my hand and let me know that there was at least one other person there who understood what I was going through. And since then, you have been a guest on my program, either Focus on the Family or now Family Talk, 13 times. You told me you'd counted them.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: 13 times. And most of that work that we've done together has been in the fight against pornography, which is a tough row to hoe boy. And it's I think more so today than even back then in 1985, 1986. But you became my great friend, almost a brother to me. Jerry, you love the Lord. You were senior pastor of College Hill Presbyterian Church in those days. You stayed there for many years. Now the first thing I want you to tell, I want you to tell a story of how you got into the fight against pornography. Because you probably don't think I will remember that story, but it had to do with a little girl. Do you remember that story?

Dr. Jerry Kirk: I do remember the story. A daughter. She was in her teens of one of my dear friends in the congregation. Came to me and shared with me what had happened to her. And...

Dr. James Dobson: She was abused.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: She was abused. Jim, the thing that Matthew 18:14 is the last verse of Jesus parable of the one lost sheep. And 14 says, "So it is not the will of my father that one of these little ones perish." And I learned the FBI statistic that one out of three little girls, and one out of every five boys would be molested.

And that verse, and it prepared me for The Prayer Covenant too, because I went up the hill across the street from my home, and after learning those statistics, I said, "Father, you tell me you love them. Why don't you do something?" And then I said it again. "You tell me you love them. Why don't you do something?" And I said it five or six or seven times as I was walking up the hill. And finally I said, "Don't tell me you love them. Show me. I want to see it. I don't want words." And that led me to leave College Hill Church. I thought it was for a one-year leave of absence.

Dr. James Dobson: Essentially, He said, "Why don't you?"

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Right. Well, that's right. After I was cried out, He said, "Jerry, I love the children and I want to protect them. Why don't you do something?"

Dr. James Dobson: 25 years, Jerry, that people don't realize how miserable that addiction really is and that whole industry and people don't want to know. It's hard to get pastors

interested in it. And you went back and forth across this country like John the Baptist crying in the wilderness. And one of the people that heard you was me.

And so frequently you and I were on the phone together talking about our passion to change this country, and it was a tough slog. I think we made a difference until the political scene changed. And when Bill Clinton came in, the Justice Department quit prosecuting pornography. And even after that, Janet Reno. Do you remember Janet Reno?

Dr. Jerry Kirk: I sure do.

Dr. James Dobson: She was the attorney general and she tried to change the law to make it less possible to prosecute those who were producing and selling child pornography. And I, at that time was heard pretty broadly. And we went on the air and we shut down the Justice Department's phones because of what they were trying to do, and we stopped it. It also went throughout the White House, so it was... I mean, we fought some battles, at least to a standstill. But it's still a problem today, isn't it?

Dr. Jerry Kirk: It is, Jim, it's a more serious problem. And your friendship was a major source of strength for me because I was out there in the firing line all the time and I never imagined it was going to touch me so deeply again, but...

Dr. James Dobson: Well, those tears you were shedding just now were the echoes of a pastor's heart that was broken for his people. And it touched me deeply. Now you have a friend that you brought here today named Rick Schatz.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And you brought him to one of those early broadcasts that we did. And Rick, you're here today. You've got two guests. We're going to hear from both of them. And Rick, I want to hear how you met Jerry and how you met the Lord.

Rick Schatz: Yeah. I was not raised in a Christian home, so we used to go to church on Christmas and Easter whether we needed to or not. Praise the Lord, I married my high school sweetheart, Sharon, a day after graduation from undergraduate school. We moved to Boston where I went to the Harvard Business School. And the first 16 months of our marriage, we never went to church once, which was typical for me.

But my wife, Sharon was raised in the church. She was teaching Sunday school at the age of 12. And in between our two years at Harvard, she suggested that we needed to start going to church. So we went, and that was my first introduction to Jerry Kirk. He preached on Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday morning, and Sunday night he asked if anyone there wanted to give their heart to Christ. And...

Dr. James Dobson: That's the last thing you had on your mind.

Rick Schatz: Oh, absolutely. I mean, I thought I was doing great. I was going to a great business school. I was going to make a lot of money and go into the world, but Jerry shared the gospel and I heard it for the first time. Went forward, gave my life to the Lord. So Jerry and I have been following Jesus together since 1968.

Dr. James Dobson: You've been working together.

Rick Schatz: Well, we have. And I was an elder in his church and he came to me in 1990 and asked if I would leave the business world and join what is now the ministry of Pure Hope. I was there for 24 years, became the president and CEO for the last 14 years. Then both of us have left that ministry and we, Jerry founded the 40 Day Prayer Covenant. I've joined that staff proudly serving that wonderful work, became the president in January of this year. So we have an incredible team of leaders. The third guest that is going to be introduced here is-

Dr. James Dobson: Now you getting ahead of me.

Rick Schatz: All right. All right. It's a great part of the team and we're just pleased to be part of the 40 Day Prayer Covenant.

Dr. James Dobson: All right now, both of you guys have mentioned The Prayer Covenant, but nobody knows, or at least many people don't know what that is. Although you were both here some months ago and we introduced that concept. And we're going to talk some more about it today. Jerry introduce your second guest.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Oh, I'd love to do that. Candy Marballi was a leader in Hope Church in Cincinnati. Her husband was an elder. She taught the children and so on. And I was led to preach on the Lordship of Christ and about The Prayer Covenant, that one line in that prayer covenant is, "Jesus, be Lord of my life today in new ways and change me any way you want." That's a liberating prayer. But on that day, I had an elder call again, and over 350 people came forward to enter into The Prayer Covenant. And Candy was-

Dr. James Dobson: And Candy was one of them.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: She was one of those. And she began to pray the prayer. And then she began to think about children that don't know the Lord and that ought to know the Lord. And then she began to think, "How about having a children's prayer covenant?" And so we said, "Run with it. Get some other educators that you can take the adult prayer covenant and adjust these lines to what would really meet the needs of children."

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Candy, that's your cue. What happened to you on that Sunday?

Candy Marballi: Jerry's sermon was filled with so much passion and so much conviction, and he challenged us. He said, "There is no holding back what God can do in and through you if you daily commit to making Him Lord of your life." And so that spoke to my heart and we went forward. It compelled us and we started praying that prayer and we started experiencing the power from it.

And it was in my quiet time every morning for two years, and I was praying and saying, "Jesus, show me clearly what you want me to teach the upcoming children's choir program." And He gave me a vision clear as day of a children's prayer card. I was very excited, jumped off the couch, talked to my husband. He said, "Call Jerry. I think he'll love the idea."

Dr. James Dobson: Candy, explain that in greater detail. There are people listening to us right now. Maybe there's some women particularly that I'm thinking of, who are going through life, raising the children, being a good wife. Many are in the workforce, but there's no real meaning and purpose there underneath it. And something that you have just said has piqued their interest. Explain what it was that led you in this direction, and what was the Lord saying to you? And did the sense of purpose and meaning have anything to do with it?

Candy Marballi: Very much so. As a bit of background, I was born and raised in a Christian home. I received Jesus at the age of six. My father was a pastor. I grew up serving Jesus. My parents gave us all kinds of ministries to be part of. That joy that comes from serving Jesus is something that once you begin doing it, it just explodes within you and you want more and more and more of it. And as a mom and as a woman, I would say, making Jesus the center of everything you do gives us purpose, gives us fulfillment, gives us direction. Because when we pray and we say, "Jesus, what is your will for my life this day, this very day," He answers that prayer. He makes it very clear.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's the covenant part of it.

Candy Marballi: That's the covenant. What I love about the prayer and what prompted me to ask Jesus, "What do you want me to teach?" And I always go to Jesus. I said, "Make very clear each semester, what do you want me to teach to the children?" And I realized when He gave me The Prayer Covenant, the children's prayer covenant, and I did some research, there's not a lot out there on prayer, but children I think need to be grounded in who they are in Christ, just as we adults need to be grounded in who we are in Christ. And so this tool that provides a Christ-centered prayer, gives direction.

Dr. James Dobson: Jerry, many people feel like children are simply too young to enter into a prayer covenant or relationship with God. We may be talking about four, five, six, seven year-olds or maybe junior highers or those in high school. Do they have the capacity to get a hold of that concept that the all-seeing, all-caring, all-loving God who made everything that there is, is interested in them as a human being and will hear those little cries that occur from these little boys and girls? Straighten us out on that.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Well, to be honest, I thought they were too young. I really did. And then Candy came along and she not only came along, but she was training children. I have seen what happens between parents, through parents when their child really comes alive in Christ. And this children's prayer covenant is so simple, but so clear and so liberating and so demanding.

It's all of that wrapped into one. And thousands and thousands of children have responded to the children's prayer covenant, and they're teaching me. The reality is God is at work in them and can transform them. And when they start praying for each other, something powerful happens.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm a product of that. And I want to apologize to our listeners who've heard me tell a story before because it's my favorite story. And it goes back to when I was four years old and my father was a minister, and I had heard prayer in our home before I was able to understand the meaning of the words. So I began mimicking their prayers when I didn't know what I was doing. But I knew something was important, I got it.

And when I was four, I was sitting in a church service by my mother and my father had preached, and he invited people, as you just indicated, to come to an altar and give their hearts to the Lord. And I didn't ask my mother. People were walking down the aisle and I walked with them and I went over to the right side. I remember every detail, every detail. Don't tell me a child can't know-

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Amen.

Dr. James Dobson: ... what he's doing. And I knelt and I began weeping. And I wish I could remember what I was thinking. I was just broken before Jesus Christ. And my dad came off the platform and came over and knelt beside me and put his arm around me and began praying for me. My mother was right behind me. And that was the most important moment of my life. How could that be? How can a four-year-old comprehend enough of that divinely inspired moment to recall it all these years later? And I haven't lived a perfect life. I wish that I could say I could go back and change some things that I did poorly, but I've tried to live by that.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: And you know-

Dr. James Dobson: In my whole life.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: ... the reality, you met Jesus.

Dr. James Dobson: I did.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: And He changed you.

Dr. James Dobson: And children can understand that. We must begin teaching them who Jesus is, that you can talk to Him.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And I took it really seriously. There's another aspect of this story. Shortly thereafter, I was on my tricycle and I fell and I hurt my hand. I don't know how I did it, but I really hurt my hand and I was wailing. And my mother said, "Why don't you ask Jesus to take the pain away?" And I hadn't thought about that. And so I did. And then I started crying again and my mother said, "Well, what did He say?" And then I said, "He said He was trying to water the flowers and the trees, and He'd help me when He could."

I had my own explanation for lack of answers to my prayer, but it became very real to me. Well, the time has really gotten away from us in a hurry here, and there's so much more that we need to say. Candy, if we had another hour, I would ask you to explain in greater detail what this covenant is all about, what the relationship between a child and God really is, and how you get that across. Would you all come back and next time we'll start with you giving the answer to that question. Is that fair?

Candy Marballi: That would be my joy. Thank you. Dr. Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: I loved having you all here. Rick Schatz is with us, Dr. Jerry Kirk and Candy Marballi is also with us. It's been great to have you here. Let's do it again.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Wonderful.

Rick Schatz: See you tomorrow.

Dr. Jerry Kirk: Yes. Look forward to it.

Candy Marballi: Thank you so much.

Roger Marsh: It's no secret God certainly loves children and isn't it amazing how He can touch their lives, especially through prayer. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for the second part of this conversation here on Family Talk. Our topic once again will be how to nurture a child's prayer life here on Family Talk. During the past half hour, you've heard Dr. James Dobson joined in conversation by Dr. Jerry Kirk, the founder of The Prayer Covenant, also Candy Marballi, the president emeritus of The Prayer Covenant, and we heard from the late Rick Schatz, who was the organization's former president before passing away recently at the age of 76.

The Prayer Covenant is a movement designed to inspire and encourage Christ-centered prayer partnerships among adults as well as children that empower discipleship, transformation, and evangelism. If you'd like to learn more about The Prayer Covenant, simply click on the link at the bottom of today's broadcast page on our website. Go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And while you're

there, be sure to review other resources available from Family Talk as well. You can also find all of those using the Family Talk app on your smartphone.

Children are truly vital for leading generations to come. The kids today are going to be the adults and leaders of tomorrow. And here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we want to walk alongside you as a parent and help you and your family grow closer to God and to each other. If you haven't already signed up for Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter, I highly recommend this valuable resource. It's meant to share a biblical perspective on important topics that are affecting families today. And it's free. To start receiving Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter even today, go to drjamesdobson.org/newsletters.

That's drjamesdobson.org/newsletters. And while you're online at drjamesdobson.org, also remember there are loads of free resources available to you. Audio, video, some blog posts and more. Look for the free resources when you go to drjamesdobson.org today. And finally thanks for remembering that Family Talk is a completely listener supported broadcast outreach. The summer months can be a real challenge for ministries, and we are well-aware of that fact. This summer appears to be one of those challenging summers but we know that listeners like you will faithfully consider praying for our ministry and also consider making a financial contribution. Now if you'd like to make a donation online, it's really very simple to do, it's safe and secure. All you have to do is go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org.

Keep in mind you can also give a gift right over the phone. Call 877-732-6825 and a member of our customer care team will be happy to help you handle that transaction right over the phone. Again the toll-free number to call is 877-732-6825. And keep in mind, if you like to write letters, and we love to receive letters, you can also send us a note of encouragement. You can also include a prayer request and a tax-deductible donation in support of the Dr. James Dobson's Family Institute all through the U.S. Postal Service. Our ministry mailing address is The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado. The zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh thanking you for joining us today for another edition of Family Talk. Be sure to tune in again tomorrow for part two of this fascinating conversation about enriching our children's lives through the power of prayer. Till then, may God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow stronger and closer and deeper in your relationship with Him.

Announcer:

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