



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A Christian Journalist's Fight Against Secular Ideology – Part 2

Guest(s): Megan Basham

Air Date: August 25, 2026

Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love. I'm Roger Marsh, part two of our continuing conversation with Megan Basham, award-winning journalist, broadcaster, podcaster. If you've not read the book *Shepherds for Sale*, you really owe it to yourself to do so, but do so with a very open mind. As I mentioned in yesterday's broadcast, there are a couple of names in particular of people who I read and went oh, you know, wait, wait a minute. But your purpose, as you stated in our last conversation, Megan, was not to say, I'm here to shame and ridicule and bring out your dead and throw them on the cart, but rather to say, look, this is more of a, hey, do you guys realize how much political influence is hitting the pulpit? How much financial behind the scenes influence is hitting these larger churches? And of course, it was met with a firestorm of criticism, no doubt. How did your family bear up during that, your husband, your two daughters? How were things for you? Because in the middle of all this popular best-selling book, and oh, by the way, then there was the cancer diagnosis. But what was the initial reaction like? Let's talk about that.

Megan Basham: You know, they were great because I had never faced that kind of criticism before so it was hard to deal with, but my husband would really be the voice of reason and go, okay, honey, I want you to look at these critical reviews. One, did you think there would not be a response? You know, he's like, come on, babe. Of course they were going to react and pointing out that, look, almost every critical review is either from someone in one of the ministries that you critique or someone who is involved in those ministries or very closely connected to them. So at the time, it was difficult because shortly after the book came out, and I'll tell you, Roger, 2024 was a wild year for me. So I find out in August that I made the *New York Times* best-seller list and amazing blessing from God, something I was never looking for or expecting. You know, I kind of figured I was kind of winding down here. And then this surprise thing happens in my middle age. And then two months later, I sit down with an oncologist who tells me, you have advanced stage three colon cancer, which later was upgraded to stage four. So what that meant was that suddenly I was not in a position to defend myself the way I might've felt like I wanted to defend myself. And I did to some degree, you know, I wrote some pieces and I did some interviews, but I was not

physically able to get out there and kind of take up, you know, for myself the way that my instincts would have been. And I think that was a good thing. And, you know, my husband and my daughters were both kind of going, look. God is in all of this. This is all God's timing. So do you trust that? You wrote that you trusted that. Did you mean it?

So I'm like, well, I didn't expect to be put to the test on it so quickly. But yes, I mean, they kept me sane. And my husband is just, he's my best counselor and my greatest spiritual advisor and my discipler and all of those wonderful things. So, you know, sometimes I would kind of jokingly when he would say these things to me, I don't like you anymore.

Oh, yeah.

But that was God's timing. And I think now looking back that it was providential and it was good because I probably would have been mouthier than would have been good for me had I not been distracted with some other issues at that time.

Roger Marsh:

Yeah, it's interesting. And realizing, too, that one of the things that you were doing not only for the church was to model this authenticity that says, hey, look, I wrote this book. I found this research. It's all verifiable. So I'm not trying to make a name for myself. I'm really just trying to help educate and edify the body of Christ. Oh, by the way, my physical body is going through this attack right now, which we know that depending on your belief on illness and disease and things like that. It's not something God said, and now you need cancer. But then you've got your kids watching. And what kind of dialogues did you have as you were doing the research with your daughters, especially? Because we know that the social media world can just be cruel. And I don't know how many stories I've read of young people in particular who have been bullied online, wind up taking their lives or doing gender mutilation thing that we're seeing right now. You and Brian are right in the thick of this, right? I mean, in terms of having teen and pre-teenage kids at home. As you are discovering these things, what kind of conversations do you have with them about the things that they're reading in the socials, knowing that you're writing truth? But a lot of other people aren't. I mean, they're just, they're making things up. They're getting AI generated things just to get your attention and to keep it.

Megan Basham:

Well, and it's good that you brought up my husband in this because, and I'll preface this by saying he still works at *World Magazine*. He actually came in as I was going out. And I would say he was you know, part of the new guard that has been so effective in riding the ship at *World* in 2020, back when that was all going. And he came in and they started a broadcast news program, their first video content for students to teach them news, for Christian students, Christian parents, to teach them news literacy and to be wise consumers of news. And I'll plug it. The program is called *WORLD Watch*, but I bring that up to say that that was part of what we were doing in our home at that time going, okay, we need to be wise consumers of news and we need to employ all those wonderful news literacy principles that dad has been teaching you. And I mean, the good thing is

my younger daughter, I mean, they were 10 and 15 at the time. So neither one on social media. So they probably didn't see it as much as you were expecting because we didn't let them on social media. And even now my 17 year old, we've allowed her one private account and that's it on Instagram, just because she's a dancer and she likes to, you know, look at dance videos and stuff. So we eventually, when she turned 17, we said, okay, you can have an Instagram account. That's private. But they didn't see much because of that because they were just not on at all. And neither one had phones or anything like that. So they didn't have a lot of opportunity to see it. But as I spoke to them, there was a lot of discussion of, look, when you speak truth, we all like to think it's like a Disney movie and everyone's just going to stand up and cheer for you and be persuaded and that's not real life. Real life is that you are going to face pushback when you speak this kind of truth, particularly when it's within the context of the church. Things can get very hot very quickly. And the important thing that you have to do, and I didn't always model this perfectly. So sometimes the conversations that I would have with my kids would be, I lost my temper. And you know those proverbs about not letting your tongue run ahead of you? I did that. So we need to not do that. And I would say, you know, take a post down or I would amend a statement because in my anger once or twice, I might've said something that I wished I hadn't said. And so those were part of the discussion. So it was both, we need to stand strong for truth. And I think that's what I'm doing. But also occasionally in pushing back against her critics, mom went too far. So, you know, now mom is having to learn these lessons too in a way that I hadn't before. About what Proverbs tells us about regulating our emotions and our anger and our tongue. So, you know, we never stop growing.

Roger Marsh:

That's for sure. You know, and I have to wonder when you see the prevalence of social media and how many times we've been at restaurants and we've seen a young family together and it's mom and dad who are engrossed in what's happening on their scroll and their feed. And the kids are sitting there like, hey, can we get some more, you know, French fries? It's really, the modeling is so very, very important. And I love the fact that you and your husband both take the time and took the time, especially during that season, to say, okay, we're going to point out the things that aren't right here. We're going to celebrate the things that are. But if we messed up, we're going to call ourselves out on it too. And that's self-regulation. Would you put that maybe as the top of the heap in terms of saying, you know, for all the things that we're trying to monitor, there aren't enough filters in the world to keep our kids safe from technology. But that self-monitoring, that self-regulation, that controlling the tongue, as Proverbs said, that's becoming more important now than ever before, wouldn't you agree?

Megan Basham:

Yeah, absolutely. And I do think that, you know, we live in an era where in the past, I think maybe it was easier for parents to say, we are going to control this until they're adults. And I think we're having to start inculcating these lessons at a younger age because they are going to have to self-discipline at some point because you cannot monitor them all the time. They're going to go over to friends' houses and have access to this kind of, you know, online world,

materials. And, you know, some of it's really bad, you know, when we're talking about pornography and things like that or violent content. But then there's also stuff that I go, I just don't want you guys involved yet. You are young and you don't need to be having debates online yet. You know, I mean, there's a there's a season for that and that's fine. And it's not necessarily always a bad thing. It can be a good thing. And I engage in some online debates, but it shouldn't become your whole world. And it's also not something that you need to preoccupy yourself with at this stage of life, because I think that was something else that. I learned as we went through it because it was new to me. And you don't quite know how you're going to handle something like this until it happens. But, you know, there was a couple of months there where I went, I allowed it to sort of overwhelm our family. And my husband kind of went, we can't all live in this headspace of what's going on with the debate over the book. And he was absolutely right. You know, it was after a couple of months, he's like, I think, and the cancer diagnosis helped with this. It's time to in the fashion of John MacArthur, and I struggle with this, you know, I always thought John MacArthur did this wonderfully, but it has not tended to be my style, is to say, let the Lord fight for you. You know, let your yes be yes and your no be no, and then let the debate rage as it will. So that's a process that I learned too, and that, you know, I kind of openly discussed with our daughters as I was going through it that I am learning this too.

Roger Marsh: I understand Dr. MacArthur had quite... I mean, if Dr. Dobson had an influence on you, Dr. MacArthur did as well, especially in your faith journey.

Megan Basham: Yeah, absolutely. And I talk about that a little bit in the book. I lay out my personal testimony that we discussed a little bit on our last program. In the very last chapter, which I felt was a little bit different to put it at the end instead of the beginning. But I kind of liked the idea of laying out all the evidence and then going, here's why it matters to someone like me. And yes, John MacArthur's probably the most influential, high-profile public pastor that I didn't know personally in my life. So when I became a Christian, his book, *The Vanishing Conscience*, was just transformative in my life. Because when I initially became a Christian, I was a little bit caught in that, I would say, more progressive, spiritual. therapeutic approach to saying, okay, things are trauma, you know, you're working through. And look, I'm not saying that, you know, obviously we're on the Dr. Dobson show so I value psychology and I value the social sciences, but, and I learned this from Dr. Dobson as well, that so much of that can be an excuse for our own sin and refusal to participate in our own sanctification. And John MacArthur's preaching and teaching, particularly in *The Vanishing Conscience*, confronted me over that. And it was really the thing that broke the chains because even as you become a Christian, you maintain sometimes some of those bad habits from your unsanctified, lost self. And so there was a period of maybe six months where I was still struggling with alcohol abuse after I became a Christian. And I was going to Christian therapy. And they were kind of telling me, well, you have to work through these traumas and eventually that desire for sin will go away and that all sounded pretty good to me because I was

also being told, hey, it's not your fault that you're doing these things. And that also sounded really good to me.

Roger Marsh: Oh, yeah.

Megan Basham: And then I read John MacArthur's book that went, actually, no, that's not biblical. Here's what scripture says. And I made the joke that it was like the old Bob Newhart skit. If you ever saw it, it was from *MADTV* where he plays a counselor where his only advice is, stop it. You know, people come into his office and say, here's the self-destructive habits I have. And he's like, just stop it. And that was kind of John MacArthur's preaching for me. He was going, you in the power of Christ, those chains are broken. It has no jurisdiction over you anymore. It should have no hold over you. You in the power of Christ can stop it. And that was just absolutely transformative for me. And I feel like I kind of moved on from that book in a new... in a new walk of sanctification, but also a new confidence that, wait a minute. Yeah, I don't have to do these things. I'm not a slave to these things anymore. I'm a slave to Christ. So that was really transformative.

Roger Marsh: I love that. Megan Basham is our guest today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know Megan from her work with *World Magazine*. Now we're writing for *The Daily Wire*, and I find it somewhat ironic in God's great sense of humor that you were able to write such a biblically-based book at a place that is not typically known for, I mean, it's not like *The Daily Wire* is the place where you look for biblical inspiration, though a lot of people who are Christians, I know, love what *The Daily Wire* does. The book *Shepherds for Sale* is linked up at drjamestobson.org or jdfi.org. Megan, you were talking about your history and we've talked about the cancer. And you've been through a lot. I mean, there's no question about that. And a lot of parents wrestle with the how much of my past. You mentioned your days at ASU. So it has that reputation and you lived it. You lived the American dream and you were a Christian. And I'm sure then, as you got back into your faith, were sanctifying some of those bad behaviors and saying it's not that bad. It's somebody else. It's my fault. And now you have daughters who are looking at you and saying, Mom, what was it like for you when you went to college? Were you always really strong Christian like this? How are you and your husband handling those conversations? Because we hear from a lot of parents here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute that say, I'm not so sure how much of my past I should be sharing with my kids. How are you guys navigating that?

Megan Basham: Well, I didn't start out telling them at five years old. Mom had a bit of a problem in college and it landed her in jail a couple of times, in fact. So don't do this. And that's in the book too, you know, all the fun things that happen when you live that lifestyle. But as they got older and I started to think, okay, these are the times when that kind of stuff, like let's say, you know, as we're approaching middle school, 10, 11 years old, that was the time when I would be very careful not to glorify it. Because the one thing I think that can be a danger when you talk about these things is you can say, Christ saved me from all that, but I had a

really good time. And there can almost be an attraction there. And so I think we have to be very careful not to talk about sort of our time in the war, if you know what I mean.

So instead, I try to be very deliberate about saying, this was not fun. Eventually, I did tell them, for example, as my daughter started taking driving lessons, hey, here's some things that I did when I was still a teenager, like 19, and these are the dangers and these are the consequences. Don't do this. And I was also really careful to tell them I was miserable. It made my soul sick. And there are so many things today that I wish I hadn't done. Now, God redeems those things, and He forgives me for those things, but it doesn't mean that it doesn't leave you with regrets that you will still have and say, I wish that I had not squandered some years and some of what could have been my most effective years, you know, on a college campus and in my early 20s writing. You know, I could have expended my talent in such a more productive way for the kingdom of Christ, and I regret that I didn't. So I try to tell them not the nitty-gritty details, but enough that they understand and enough that they understand that it wasn't fun. These things look fun. They're not. And the next day, you will have a soul sickness, particularly if you're a Christian or if you grew up in a Christian home, that you are also going to experience internal turmoil that your non-Christian friends maybe won't because they don't know the truth. And the truth is meant to make you uncomfortable, and it's going to because you are children who know the truth. So don't think that, you know, if you have friends who are going to sort of blase, go out and do these things and not feel bad about them, I got news for you. And I know from experience, you will because you do know the truth. And that is why we have inculcated it in you.

Roger Marsh: I love that. pragmatic framing, but also with the spiritual maturity that says, look, I have this responsibility now. I lived through this. You're still here. I mean, when you think of all the things that could have potentially, I'll find a better euphemism, muted your testimony as opposed to the things that, there are a lot of people who don't survive your college experience. They don't survive cancer.

Megan Basham: Some of my friends did not, by the way, Roger. Oh, no. a couple of friends, you know, funerals I attended. So I tell them about that too, that look, not everybody gets out alive if you mess around with this stuff.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, it's very, very difficult. And I think that though the way you've handled it, I mean, it's been the hallmark of your writing, of your reporting, your broadcasting, you really are a triple threat, which I think the media definitely does need. What's on the horizon for you? I mean, to have a *New York Times* best-selling book must be a feather in your cap. And I'm sure that there are some people now who are saying, OK, great. What's the next investigative book you're doing? And you're probably saying, wait a minute. God told me to write this one. And it was 15 years before that one that I wrote my first one. So it's not like I'm cranking. You're not on this treadmill that says every 18 months I've got to put out a new book. But what is on the horizon for you, Megan Basham, with your life, with your ministry, with your career?

Megan Basham:

Yes. And, you know, cancer, once again, when my first book came out in 2008, that was about how young women, which I was at that time, can support their husband's careers in order to have more financial flexibility to stay home with their kids. I then went out and did that for 15 years. You know, I had a nice little, very part-time job with *World* that grew over the years as our kids got older and needed less hands-on care. But that was what I did. I had a book come out in 2008, did the *Today Show*. You know, it was kind of a big, not as big of a splash as this one, but, you know, it got some attention. And then I kind of went away quietly. This time, it was sort of funny that it came out and then cancer happened. And so part of what I'm doing for the next few months is we'll be being very deliberative about keeping up on my treatments, which right now, as far as we know, I am no evidence of disease. So praise God for that. But I am stage four. So we'll be doing a lot of hopefully preventative care and consistent scanning. But in the meantime, I am working on, I just talked to my HarperCollins editor, looking to do something similar to *Shepherds for Sale*, but with the Republican establishment going, why, even when conservatives win, does it seem like so often we don't get what we voted for from our elected officials? So let's look, so I'm going to be looking at some of the similar money influences and why is that the case? And then also just for fun, and this was cancer too, that I said. When God offers you something fun that you've wanted to do your whole life, even if it doesn't seem professionally practical, just say yes. So another editor came along and said, you seem to me like someone who has the chops to write a novel. Do you have any ideas? And I went, oh man, I have wanted to write this one particular novel for like a decade. So when he offered me that opportunity, I jumped at it. So I am almost done with that. And we're looking at bringing this historical thriller out next summer.

Roger Marsh:

How exciting. The work never ends. And yet in God's economy, with the day being like a thousand years, whether it's 10 years between projects or not, you're operating in His time and you're certainly in His hands. And we are very grateful. And I hope that paging John Boehner or whatever your new book on the Republican Party comes out will be a big smash too. Because I know there are a lot of people in the Body of Christ, especially, who will be very curious to read a book like that and ask that question. Why does it seem like it just keeps sliding down that slippery slope? Isn't it great to be in the position where God says, ask that question, find those answers. The answers are there. And then you have the platform to share that story with us. It's a great gift you've been entrusted with. And I appreciate the way you're stewarding it, Megan Basham, because you're helping so many people, whether it be parents, grandparents, younger people coming along, people in the church for a short period of time, or people in the church for a longer period of time who have to keep our eyes on the Lord first and foremost. And it's a great work that you're doing. How can we pray for you and your family in these days ahead? Because there are so many different things on your plate and on your husband's plate. And this is an exciting time. Oh, by the way, you're raising a teen and a pre-teen. That's no small task either. How can we best pray for you?

Megan Basham: Oh, thank you so much for asking, Roger. Well, one, pray for clean scans, please, and no return of the cancer. And then just for, I think, clarity, if I can ask for that on how I spend my time and how my husband spends his time and what we're working on and that we're covering the stories that would enrich the body of Christ.

Roger Marsh: Is the American church better off now than it was before you wrote *Shepherds for Sale*? I mean, I'm not suggesting that this one book was going to be the pivot piece for all American Christianity. But as you're looking at things now, do you think that we're in a healthier place, getting a little more honest with some of the influences that may or may not have been helping?

Megan Basham: Yes and no. So I think that the threats that I covered in that book, you know, they're not gone. entirely, but they are, you have seen a lot of those major ministry leaders and high profile pastors quickly backing off things like critical race theory and endorsing Black Lives Matter and some of those more woke issues. So I think that's a good thing. On the other side, you know, I think we see some concerning things that I did not anticipate coming from. They call it the dissonant right, but I don't even feel like it's right wing. It just feels like a new version of the left that's masquerading on the right, where, you know, just a lot of, almost misogyny and extremism is maybe a good way to describe it. So some of those things that when I look at some of these young men, I go, I actually think you have some good points and I agree with it, but it's maybe developing in a deformed way that we need to talk about a little bit. But it's also one of those things that I go, I don't know that that is the area for me to cover. I think that there's probably some good men in leadership who need to step up and talk to those young men so I'm hoping that we continue to see that.

Roger Marsh: Point taken and a very good one. Megan Basham, what a great privilege it's been to have you here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk today, discussing your book, *Shepherds for Sale*, which we've linked up at drjamesthobson.org and also your website as well. God's richest blessings to you and your family in the days ahead. And thank you for being with us today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Megan Basham: You as well. And thanks so much for having me, Roger.

Roger Marsh: Well, Megan Basham didn't back down, even facing a firestorm of criticism as well as a cancer diagnosis all in the same year. And today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we concluded my two-part conversation with this award-winning journalist. And if you'd like to hear this program again or pass it along to a friend, remember you'll find both parts one and two at drjamesdobson.org. And while you're there, you can also look for Megan's book called *Shepherds for Sale*.

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 spending a part of your day

with us. 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 National Center for Education Statistics released the findings of a study recently that should not surprise us. It showed that children are far more likely to get good grades in school if their fathers are highly involved in their schoolwork. The investigation revealed the critical nature of participation by both parents, but especially fathers, in the educational setting. When this involvement does not occur, the child's chances of achieving academically are dramatically reduced. In fact, everything works better for kids when their parents care. But when mothers and fathers are distracted and overcommitted or strung out on drugs or alcohol, it's the young and the vulnerable among us who suffer the most. The truth of the matter is that children can't raise themselves. They require enormous amounts of time, energy, patience, and care. So moms and dads, you're needed at home and at school.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit drdobsonminute.org.