



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Praying for Your Family

Guest(s): Pastor Jack Hayford

Air Date: May 27, 2026

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 to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. Question, what would it mean to your children and your grandchildren if someone were faithfully lifting their names before the Lord each and every day? Well, on today's edition of Family Talk, we're going to circle back around to a classic conversation from our archives, featuring our own Dr. James Dobson sitting down with the late Pastor Jack Hayford. Now, Pastor Hayford went home to be with the Lord in 2023. Dr. Dobson followed him there on August 21st, 2025. Pastor Jack was a beloved pastor, author, and songwriter too, especially if you have loved the hymn *Majesty*, that's the work of Pastor Jack Hayford. He served as founding pastor of the Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California. He was also the founder of the King's University and Seminary. Pastor Jack wrote more than 500 songs during his time here on earth.

In today's discussion, you'll hear Dr. James Dobson and Pastor Jack Hayford explore the power of praying specifically for your family by name and with intention. Pastor Hayford also shares how God confronted him about his own frenetic pace and why honoring the Sabbath is less about religion and more about how God designed each of us to live. You're going to really appreciate and enjoy this wonderful classic edition today of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I've appreciated your friendship so much, especially the last two or three years, Jack. I've gotten better acquainted with you and I just love you and appreciate what you stand for. In fact, before we get into other topics, I wish you would share with our listeners the essence of what you had to say about the Sabbath. We've kind of gotten away from some understandings of what the Sabbath was supposed to mean. Talk about that.

Pastor Jack Hayford: Well, it does have enormous implications, not only for each of us personally, but for our families and for the preservation of the values that make our life work. The essence, was born out of that experience of my own years ago now that it happened in which I was confronted by the Lord in my own private prayer one morning and essentially, He was saying to me, "You're getting in My way." And as I waited on the Lord over the days that followed, He began to clarify what I

was to do. And the essence of my problem was the frenetic activity I'd gotten into trying to fulfill the demands of a very fulfilling and demanding ministry and was ceasing to give time for the rest of my own body and for the opportunities of being with my family at times of reprieve.

Dr. James Dobson: You were working seven days a week carrying that.

Pastor Jack Hayford: Nonstop, nonstop. I was burning out for God and happy. I mean, I was happy. In fact, that was my primary excuse that this must be a godly way to live because there was so much to do and they were all good things that you were involved in. And I always felt I had the energy for it. Why do I need to ... Don't tell me to take time to rest. I feel good. I enjoy what I'm doing. It's profitable. And for the kingdom of God and all that. And it was in that context of God's dealing with me. He took me away for a number of weeks from our place of service there at the church. And in that time away, I began to just study the Scriptures on the subject of the Sabbath. But two things distilled out of that, Jim. The first was that the Lord showed me so clearly that the Sabbath was something that God established.

He established it before the 10 Commandments. He established it before anybody's debates on what day you ought to observe, that He set aside a day at creation, that He did this immediately following creation, began to distill in my understanding as being one of those things that I was taught in my ministerial preparation studies. You call them creation ordinances. In other words, they're not things that have to do with spiritual regulations as though they have spiritual implications, but there are things that have to do. If you're going to live on this planet and survive effectively, then this is the way you need to live. And when God sanctified the Sabbath, He was setting it apart for a purpose of wholeness because observing the date of whatever day you observe doesn't have to do with our salvation. That's where we get off base as Christians oftentimes and say, "Well, I don't have to observe the Sabbath because I'm going to Heaven anyway." And that's true.

None of my works are the fountainhead of my salvation, but the way I'm going to live on this planet, the way I'm going to live this week very much has to do with that. So the first thing was God said that this is a day I'm setting aside. Now, this is what began to come so profoundly to me. I always argued, "Well, I've got a lot of energy. I can go out. I'd take a day of rest, but I don't need it. I didn't feel-

Dr. James Dobson: I'm not tired.

Pastor Jack Hayford: That's right. I didn't feel vain about that. I didn't feel superior to anybody, but I thought, why take a day? Secondly, there's lots to do and there always is. There was a lot of work and it was good work. Now between those two things, I never observed a Sabbath. As a matter of fact, from the time I entered ministry until that occasion back in the middle 1970s. So by that time I'd been in ministry. I was approaching 20 years and the concept of a day off was unheard of as kind

of almost it would have challenged godliness. It was a part of verifying your dedication, but I didn't consider it something that was militated by God or his word. It's just something I enjoyed doing. Well, the confrontation when the Lord impressed me that I was getting in His way because of my frenetic activity was what got me aside to think about these thoughts.

The third thing that distilled out of this was my coming to terms with the fact that God was saying, "Here is a principle that you I have set aside a day. I've shown you this is the way just as surely as you can't jump off of tall buildings and not expect to be splattered on the sidewalk. I mean, you are not constructed for violating the law of gravity. You cannot violate the law of the Sabbath, not related to the law of keeping it for salvation, but the law as a creation ordinance. You are a creature on this planet and God who..." I had to chuckle when I saw this. God could have said, "Well, I observed the Sabbath, but I wasn't tired either."

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Why? That's the first time I'd ever heard that thought. God has no limitations. He is all powerful and all knowing. He did not observe the Sabbath because He was worn out.

Pastor Jack Hayford: Right. Nor because He couldn't think of anything else to do.

Dr. James Dobson: Right. So our excuses are gone.

Pastor Jack Hayford: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: The fact that we are busy and we need to do it or that we're not tired, those excuses don't work because neither of them applied to God. He did it in order to bless that day and ordain that day.

Pastor Jack Hayford: Well, the most profound impact on me came when I realized that there was a subtle form of idolatry in my violating the observance of a day of rest each week. And the idolatry was the supposition that I was wiser than God or had more strength than Him. And the obvious question would come to mind, "Well, if I'm using those days, how will I get my work done?" And the Lord brought to my mind the parallel of giving patterns. Now we practice regular tithing and I've learned long ago that I am much better off with only 90% of my income to start with than with 100% because of what God does in blessing the 90% as a result of obedience.

Dr. James Dobson: Ministers, especially pastors, do have a tendency toward compulsive overwork, don't they?

Dr. James Dobson: Workaholics.

Pastor Jack Hayford: And the need is great. And you understand that, but God was not saying, because God sanctified the Sabbath did not make Him less loving, less

compassionate, less merciful, or less committed to human need. So it goes right along with the package of His love and generosity of character.

Dr. James Dobson: Jack, you have grown up in a family where prayer was extremely important, haven't you? I've heard you say before that your father was a man of prayer and prayed especially for his family.

Pastor Jack Hayford: One of the most moving memories concerning my father was the day that he told we children at the Thanksgiving table. It was only two years before he went home to glory with the Lord and all of us were around the Thanksgiving table sharing. And so this means this is 1977. I am now, at the time I heard this 43 years of age and that's the first time I heard my dad say this, but he said, "I pray for all of you kids five times a day." And if my father said that, that's exactly what he did.

Dr. James Dobson: What did he mean by that?

Pastor Jack Hayford: He meant that he mentioned our names before the Lord specifically five times every day. I didn't ask him ever when those five times were, but I later figured out when it was. My father was diabetic and he had to take insulin three times a day and the kind of insulin that was available at that time. I don't know that people need to take that frequently anymore. And I know my father and the way he built his life. I can tell you, my dad prayed when he got out of bed, when he went to bed and when he took his insulin. Five times a day, my dad prayed for we children.

Dr. James Dobson: What a heritage.

Pastor Jack Hayford: Oh my. There's no way to measure the blessing, the treasure of that. And of course, my mother's the leader of about a hundred women in our church, very, very strong, powerful women's prayer group called, they called the group the Gideon principle and the influence of my mother and the prayer not only in covering we children as we grew up, teaching us to pray as well as my dad's prayer for us, but the impact of my mother's prayer leadership in the ministry of our church. There are so many lessons that have distilled through our family relationships on the subject of prayer. The first thought that comes to mind is so simple and so basic that I probably ought not to even try to elaborate it because then it turns into a sermon. I preached on the text, but just to simply lay it out there, I was in the Philippine Islands for a conference of several thousand Philippine pastors in Manila and I awakened early one morning just because of jet lag.

And as I lay there in bed not wanting to rise, didn't want to disturb my roommate at the conference. One of the guys on our staff was traveling with me and the Holy Spirit whispered to me as I began to pray for other matters, pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on your children and your grandchildren. And there immediately came to my mind those words in the book of Acts where

I'll pour my spirit on your sons and your daughters, handmaidens and so forth. And I was moved to the conviction of the very thing you've been describing of the power of the prayer of the seniors, of a family, of what will distill as an ongoing flow, even beyond your own lifetime if you commit yourself to regular prayer for the working of the spirit of God on your children and your grandchildren. I name every one of our children and grandchildren before the Lord bring their face to mind as I say it.

Let there be a space of opportunity to bring to mind something about them that ought to be mentioned quite along with their name. Some years ago, my father was reading in the book of Exodus where the priest Aaron was...Moses was directed on how to prepare the breastplate, the ephod it was called. It's kind of a funny word for this special equipment that was worn by the high priest of Israel and that on the shoulders there was to be engraved stones that had the names of all of the tribes of Israel. So there's these 12 names of the tribes and it specifically says in that 28th chapter of Exodus that these names were to be carried into morning and evening into the presence of the Lord when Aaron would go into the tabernacle to worship as a memorial to the Lord.

My dad came from his devotional Bible reading that day and my mother didn't tell us this story until after my dad was gone. Daddy came to the breakfast table after that to mama and he says, "Honey," he said, "I've never seen this, that the Lord told Aaron to just all he would need to do is come and stand in God's presence with those names on his shoulder and that would be a memorial to God." He said, "The Lord says in the New Testament, 1 Peter chapter two, for example, says it twice that we've been made priests unto God in Christ and that our priestly role of intercession," he said, and he wasn't saying, "let's don't pray specifically and pray for petitions that are detailed in prayer." But he said, "Let's start doing something." He said, "Every morning as though it were our two shoulders together that we were bearing together, let's just take the names of our respective families." They of course were Hayfords being married, but my mother's family, her family name was, her maiden name was Farnsworth and every morning they started doing this.

This is just an incredible story. They would simply say at breakfast time together, "Lord, today we hold before you everyone anywhere living named Hayford, anywhere living named Farnsworth." And we pray this, "that You would let Your blessing be upon them and that there would be some opportunity for any of these to whom we are related by blood, that they would have an opportunity to come to know Your son. In Jesus' name, amen."

They would do that every day. Lord, we pray for the Hayfords and the Farnsworths, for the Farnsworths and the Hayfords. Now, about seven or eight months later after they started doing this, one day my dad got phone call. My folks had lived in Oakland, California by that time for 30 years. Nothing like this had ever happened. And the guy on the other end of the line said, "Is this Jack Hayford?" I'm named after my dad and my dad had happened to answer phone. He said, "Yes." And the man said, "Well, I'm just traveling through town on a

business trip." And he said, "My last name is Hayford also." And he said, "Lately, I've just started looking in phone books wherever I'm to see if there's any other Hayfords." That's not a common name. So they began to converse for a moment and through the exchange we're asking about each other's families and when my dad said, "Well, I have two sons that's in the ministry." Then the man edged a little closer to the subject of spiritual truth and relationship.

And well, come to find out the man was a Christian and when this was disclosed and my dad and he were sharing their testimonies, the man said, "It's an exciting thing to get to share that with you and to find another Hayford that's a Christian." He said, "I only received the Lord about five months ago."

And my dad didn't tell him about this praying for Hayfords, but after they finished the conversation, the man was gone. They never had occasion to talk to him again, but my dad shared with my mom and they were kind of tickled because they'd just been praying for Hayfords. Jim, in the year following, they're starting praying that way. They had three occasions, each one different but just as unusual as that where through peculiar encounters of people seeking them out in ways that just as different as that one, they had instances of people named Hayford that had come to Christ during the time since they'd begun praying that. Now, this happened in that first year, never happened again after that, but my mom and dad said they believed that God gave that to them as a confirmation, not only that their prayers were being heard, but that this was a very valid principle.

Dr. James Dobson:

I would strongly recommend that the parents who are out there, especially parents of young children, pray specifically for three things. This has been my emphasis and Shirley's emphasis with our children. First is for their salvation. There's no more important decision, no more important matter in the universe than that we lead as many people as possible to the Lord, but especially our own children. Secondly, to pray for their future spouse if there will be one. Out there someplace for most kids is a little boy or a little girl who's experiencing things, who is going through life and their lives are going to come together. They're going to be one flesh. Why not begin to hold that individual up before the Lord early and ask that that person would have the kind of influences and the kind of exposure to the Christian message that would be necessary. And then third, to pray for the school, to pray for the teachers. That influence is so profound and so great, especially those three things. You want to elaborate on that?

Pastor Jack Hayford:

Oh, I couldn't say amen any stronger to anything you would say than that. And those are so practical and so obvious that sometimes the very obviousness of them bypasses the perception of the need to pray for it. It's just like, well, those are things that just happen. None of those things just happen. You can govern, I believe this with all my heart. You can govern in prayer what kind of teachers your children will have be exposed to, what kind of government they'll come under in school. It's going to be a different environment because of prayer. In my book, *Invading the Impossible*, which is a book on prayer, I deal with

confronting this notion that life is just a set of circumstances that are somehow predestined to unfold inescapably as it's going to come about and then you sort of navigate as best you can rather than recognizing that the sovereign God has given us a sovereign will as well.

We don't have sovereign power as He does, but we have a sovereign will. And when He directs us to pray in all things, in all things offer these matters to Him, He's doing that because the partnership of our role on the earth side of things does make a difference. I don't understand how all the dynamic of prayer works.

Dr. James Dobson: Or why? Why would He care? Why would He care what we ask of Him? But He does.

Pastor Jack Hayford: He absolutely does. And people could say, "Well, couldn't He just do it without us?" I love John Wesley's words. He said, "Without Him, we cannot. Without us, He will not. " And the wisdom of our accepting our prayer partnership with God, not laboring with the theological question. Well, if God wants it to happen, he can just do it whether we pray or not. That isn't the issue. He has willed that we pray and therefore it becomes very significant part of the quotient and the chemistry of it all.

Dr. James Dobson: We have a minute or two left. Would you speak specifically to the person out there today who is really struggling to try to make it in a world that seems to undermine the family and where there just doesn't seem to be a lot of support for the biblical concept of what a family is supposed to be. Give some encouragement to that person in closing.

Pastor Jack Hayford: Well, first, I just want to just encourage anyone that cares enough. They're obviously tuned to this broadcast because they care about their family and they're looking for answers. I want to first just congratulate them and I don't want that to seem superficial at all to congratulate you on your commitment, your care, your concern and to say don't let up. Secondly, find a starting place and let me offer one. The idea of God's glory coming into the midst of people is linked at the classic episode of Israel's coming out of Egypt, a story that everybody knows if they'd never read the Bible because they've seen that Cecil B. DeMille *Ten Commandments* is pre-played every year over national television and that Exodus where they came out of sore oppression, there are families that are as much enslaved in circumstances as ancient Israel was and the starting place is to in your own prayer as we've discussed it today, bring that family under the covenant of the blood of the Passover lamb just by your prayer.

If no one in that family even cares about God, Jesus, the Bible or church, you and your own life can say, "Father, I begin to cover my family just as surely as You would spread a blanket over a little brood of deer animals You were trying to warm from the winter chill." Let there come a blanket of prayer that you in the simplest words put over your family say, "I begin to lay hold of what was done at the cross that its power break whatever evil or human failure would

seek to destroy our family and the glory of the Lord that was the same glory that attended their pathway out of Egypt will begin to make a way of Exodus for you.”

Roger Marsh:

Prayer isn't just something we do in a moment of need. It's a legacy we leave for the people we love most. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk featuring a classic conversation that Dr. Dobson had with his good friend, Pastor Jack Hayford. Now, Pastor Hayford went home to be with the Lord in 2023. Dr. Dobson met up with him in 2025, but this conversation still resonates with parents and grandparents today. In fact, if you know a parent or grandparent who needs to hear this content, go to jdfi.net and you can listen to it again or share it with a friend. And while you're there, you can also learn more about Pastor Jack Hayford's book, *Invading the Impossible*. That information is waiting for you at jdfi.net. The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute exists to strengthen marriages, equip parents to raise godly children, defend the sanctity of human life, and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible.

And that mission depends on the generosity of friends like you. If these daily broadcasts have encouraged you and your faith and if they've equipped your family, we invite you to partner with us. Every gift that is donated helps us continue putting trusted biblical truth in front of families who need it on radio stations, digital platforms, and basically everywhere people are searching for hope. Now you can make a secure donation through our website at jdfi.net. If you prefer, you can also speak with a member of our constituent care team. That number is 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Now, if you'd prefer, you can send your request and your donation through the U.S. Postal Service. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80949. Once again, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, or just use those initials JDFI for short. P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh and from all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us 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.

Hello, friends, Roger Marsh here. In today's rapidly changing world, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute remains committed to our founding mission to preserve and promote the institution of family and the biblical principles on which it is based. Thanks to your prayers and faithful support, we're reaching millions through our daily Family Talk broadcasts, online resources, and policy initiatives. As President Reagan wisely said, “freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction,” and that's why we are working tirelessly to uphold faith, strengthen families, and protect our God-given freedoms. Thank

you for standing with us in this mission. Together, we're making a difference for generations to come.