



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Standing Up for Righteousness and Defending the Good News – Part 2

**Guest(s):** John Stemberger

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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:** Welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, in Isaiah, chapter one, verse 17, we read these words from the noted Old Testament prophet: "Learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed, take up the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." Those are good words to live by for us as Christians seeking to live out Christian citizenship in the public square.

And on today's edition of Family Talk, we're going to hear part two of Gary Bower's conversation with attorney John Stemberger about Christian citizenship and a few of the latest issues our country is facing. Now, by the way, if you missed yesterday's conversation, be sure to check it out on the Family Talk app or by visiting [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

Our guest today here on Family Talk is John Stemberger, senior council for Liberty Counsel, and also the president of the Liberty Counsel Action Group. He's also a civil trial lawyer with his own private practice. John is the former president of the Florida Family Policy Council, where he served for nearly 20 years. And if you don't already know, our own Dr. James Dobson helped to initiate the beginning of state-based family policy councils. Dr. Dobson has certainly been one to lead by example in this area. Now, let's join Gary Bauer and John Stemberger for today's edition of Family Talk.

**John Stemberger:** In normal human socialization, children have a primary attachment to their parents and this attachment continues on with the advent of public schools, decades ago. That attachment was somewhat removed because the child was away at school, but even then, the child would come back and still be primarily attached to the parents.

Now, the child has a smartphone, so they're not only attached to the friends and these other forces when they're away, but then when they come home, they're primarily attached, again, not to the parents again, but to the smartphone, to the influences of the kids and the culture and all of that, so the

parent's primary attachment and influence is being weakened considerably by the smartphone.

Gary Bauer: John, where can a parent go? I believe we've got resources at JDFI, but in your experience, has the state Family Policy Council's... A place where parents can also go to get information about how to counter some of these cultural and technological influences on their children?

John Stemberger: Yeah. The Policy Councils are primarily interested in policy. The practical matter of a smartphone is a little bit more granular. I don't think a lot of the movement has that, but I'm just going to give a shout-out here to something called a gab phone. Two of my younger children have gab phones and they are phones without the ability to have an app or internet. It has very simple devices. You can have a calculator, has an FM radio, has simple things like that you can text, you can make phone calls. It looks exactly like a smartphone. It's a monthly fee. You don't have to continue on. It's a great product to be able to just say, "hey, here's a smartphone for your children that you're not going to get in trouble with this."

Gary Bauer: John, going back to our conversation about the transgender movement and how it exploded, I think the first time most people began to sort of zero in on what was happening was when these stories started appearing of men identifying as women entering women's sports, women's changing rooms, women's locker rooms stealing the awards and honors and medals that would normally go to the women in that sport.

And there was a lot of confusion at the beginning. People said, "everybody should be able to be who they are." And the reason, at least one of the reasons, that began to move back to common sense was because of people like Riley Gaines, who was a swimmer at the University of Kentucky, I believe, and she graduated, she had been cheated out of an award by a male, a man pretending to be a woman, so it was frustrating for her.

She was on her way to dental school and she has said in interviews, she was sitting one night thinking about the future, when all of a sudden God laid on her heart. What are you going to do? You need to protect women. And she said, "it changed my entire life." Here's this one single young Christian woman, there's no indication she was getting the encouragement from her church or any other particular Christian source, but God laid it on her heart and, single-handedly, she has, in many ways, changed this debate and it's a real story about what a single Christian can do.

John Stemberger: That's right. And then Chloe Cole, who I mentioned earlier, she's another hero. She transitioned to be a young man and then realized, oh, my gosh, in a school setting, where they were talking about breastfeeding, she realized, "oh, my gosh, I cut my breasts off. There's no way I'll ever breastfeed my baby," and began to have a deep sense of regret for this, and de-transitioned, and now

she's spoken in over 45 legislative bodies about her experiences and has just been a real hero.

And let me just say this, Gary. I think there is some sense of legitimate gender dysphoria. Usually it occurs at a very young age, a very young age, like four or five years old. What we're seeing today is not that. We're seeing what's called rapid onset. It's a social phenomenon, as a result of social media, because this is being promoted, so you're seeing teenagers now, not little children, which is where normal gender dysphoria develops, you're seeing teenagers all of a sudden, boom, say, "oh, I want to act out." And it's because it's cool, it's hip. If you proclaim yourself to be transgender, you become an instant hero and you have victim status and all this thing at a social level. And so, that's the problem, is it's being promoted as virtuous and good by social media, and this stuff is just flat out evil.

Gary Bauer: When you look at Hollywood, every day it seems like there's a new story about this starlet or that movie actor that has a trans child or maybe two trans children. It's almost, in those circles, become like a fashion accessory. It means they're in, look at me. My little boy's been wearing dresses since he was nine years old. And they're proud of it. It shows you what can happen when a society and a nation gets unmoored from the Judeo-Christian values that undergirded the whole founding of America.

John Stemberger: Yeah, the bottom line is you can't become transgender unless you know what it is, right? It's like you have to promote this stuff in order for someone to even think of this nonsense. It's really insane and it's damaging our children at an exponential rate. It has to be stopped. And what I love to see is the pendulum is finally swinging back. England has completely banned gender reassignment surgeries. We're seeing people wake up and it's got to happen because, once they see the fallout and the human tragedy that this is and how it plays out in people's lives, the suicide rate is exponentially higher, Gary, amongst people that have experienced this 10 years in. And so, I think eventually, as a society, it's kind of like smoking, we're eventually going to figure out, this is really bad, why didn't we figure this out?

Gary Bauer: Yeah, the other side, and some Christians fall for this, they play the compassion card, the other side does. "Oh, you need to love these children and accept them and so forth." The most loving thing you can do for these children is help them get treatment for whatever disorder they're experiencing. It is not to cooperate in their dysfunction in this area and do these life-changing horrific surgeries. I can only imagine the future lawsuits that are going to be filed against some of the medical institutions, doctors and so forth that cooperated in this.

John Stemberger: It's happening already, and that's where I say hooray for trial lawyers. Go after these guys and really make them pay for what they've done. It's really horrific what the pharmaceutical industry has done to these children.

Gary Bauer: John, talking about good things happening, and what can happen when Christians get involved, the state of Oklahoma, the legislature, after hearing from a whole lot of people, in what admittedly is a conservative state, but nonetheless, they did something which hasn't happened very many places, and that was voted to display the 10 commandments in classrooms.

Now, they were wise, I think, in creating a legislative record that said that the 10 commandments are an historical document. They certainly have historical significance to the United States, but it's been interesting to see that the same forces that want to expose little five-year-olds to graphic sexual information are having a meltdown over the idea that some kid in a high school in Oklahoma might see "thou shalt not kill."

John Stemberger: It's unbelievable. The left sees religion and faith as some kind of bacterial infection, which their goal is to disinfect the whole region and make sure it doesn't affect anyone. It's just quite remarkable.

Gary Bauer: Do you think that could grow this idea? I know that Texas and a couple of other states have thought about this 10 commandments idea, and I believe your colleague, Mat Staver, has said that there's absolutely nothing wrong constitutionally with the display of the 10 commandments. It's quite consistent with American history.

John Stemberger: We just had a huge victory, several years ago, in the US Supreme Court, something called the Lemon Test, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*. It's a famous case you learn about in law school, it's dead now, it's a lemon test determine whether something was in violation of the establishment clause. With that gone now, the new test really allows religious symbols to show. And that's what we should have, Gary. We should have an accommodation, right? We should accommodate all faiths and have this... Let the marketplace flourish, whether it's a creche or whatever it is, and let people decide what they're going to do. I think that's a good thing. As policy issues go, if you line them all up, the 10 commandments is not the most urgent thing, but hey, it's a positive development in the right direction. It's a moral standard that is raised up in a public setting, so I think it's a great thing.

Gary Bauer: I'd be happy if the church started putting up the 10 commandments and then we could move on to the schools. John, you mentioned, a little earlier, that great book that you put together on the sanctity of life issue. I was really gratified that you asked me to do the chapter on Ronald Reagan. Most of our listeners know that I worked for him for eight years and I was under Secretary of Education and dealt with a lot of the issues we're talking about. But I also was domestic policy advisor at the White House for a couple of years.

I was with Reagan many times, when just a small group of us would have lunch on Mondays, and the sanctity of life issue would come up, and he was the real McCoy. This was something he cared deeply about. He made, admittedly, a mistake, when he was Governor of California, signing a law that I think he had

been misled on. But after that, he worked and talked and actually wrote his own little monograph or little booklet just on the sanctity of life when he was President of the United States. And I know this issue has motivated Dr. Dobson all of his life, and that it's been an issue very important to you.

John Stemberger: He's probably the only living President that's ever written a booklet on the abortion issue, so that's really powerful.

Gary Bauer: There was a baby born who had a number of birth defects and their parents were misled, and they decided not to have a very simple operation done on the baby to open the digestive tract. And so, the baby was put off in the corner of a nursery with a sign hung on the crib that said, "do not feed."

John Stemberger: Wow.

Gary Bauer: And there was a Christian nurse at the hospital. She told her boss she was feeling bad, and she went home, got on the phone, started calling anybody she could. Somehow, she got through the White House operator and one thing led to the other, and we were able to brief President Reagan about this, and he ordered us into the federal courts to try to find rights for that baby.

And the courts at the time could not find one word in our constitution to defend baby Doe. And so, baby do starved to death in the heartland of America. And I remember seeing the President literally have a tear, the most powerful man in the world, go down his cheek when we filled him in that we weren't able to save that baby.

John Stemberger: Wow. What a powerful story.

Gary Bauer: It is an important issue in the battle over life right now. We've won with the overturn of *Roe vs. Wade*, but we're not doing real great now that states are dealing with the issue. We've lost a number of state referendum and there's a bunch of them on the ballot this November, which is another reason that Christians need to turn out. But there's a big one on the ballot in Florida. Give us a little bit of background on that.

John Stemberger: Yeah, there's six states, Gary, that will have a bad abortion amendment on the ballot. Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Nevada, South Dakota and New York. And New York just got back on the ballot. It was knocked off for a brief period of time. Those six state, there's going to be a huge battle. And unfortunately, in Ohio, where they just lost their battle, a really bad abortion amendment was passed, 24% of white evangelical voters voted for the bad abortion amendment. 20% of people voted for Trump and then voted for the bad amendment.

This is the base. We need to have a base vote here. We've got to get the base out. In Florida, we're very encouraged. We have a 60% hurdle, which makes it more difficult to pass an amendment, a very unique hurdle, but these other

states, we're all going to need Christians in all these states to really rise up and just vote no on these bad abortion amendments. They're very deceptively worded. They're not as they seem and they're way too extreme, every single one of them.

Gary Bauer: And as usual, there are hundreds of millions of dollars available from all kinds of questionable sources to do these ad campaigns that really distort what the ballot initiative is all about. I'm hoping that when you cite, and I've seen that figure, that a quarter of white evangelicals voted the wrong way, that that was because they were confused, but it's also a reminder of why... I know pastors have a lot to deal with, but pastors have got to educate their congregations about the sanctity of life.

John Stemberger: That's right. And that's another reason why pastors should be very familiar with their state policy councils. They do engage in these battles. They're very aware of it. They produce voter education materials that are completely legal to pass out in churches. And so, again, we just need to be good stewards of our citizenship and not waste the influence that we have as a citizen. It's just a very simple comment. You don't have to become radical as a church. You just have to just be an active citizen and be a good steward of your citizenship. Make sure your people vote. It's a part of our duty.

Gary Bauer: Every once in a while, I'll hear from a church leader who will say, "Gary, I'm with you on the life issue, the abortion issue, but Jesus does not address the abortion issue. And I'm like, "really, Pastor? Are you reading the same Bible I am?" The whole Scripture, the whole ministry of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is a ministry of choose life, so that you and your children may live. I just don't know how a Christian can be confused about this.

John Stemberger: You have to look at the Old and New Testament as a whole, right? And there's plenty of verses in the Old and New Testament that support the fact that God is the author of life, that he knows us in our mother's womb before we were even born. It's sad for any Christian leader to look at the scripture as a whole and just say, "oh, Jesus didn't address this, he didn't address human..." He didn't address a lot of things because we didn't have the kind of nonsense that we have in our society back then, right? But you can still extract principles, from without the scripture, that understand why we should come down on these issues as a matter of ethics and good Christian policy.

Gary Bauer: John, have you seen the latest figures? It's been a while probably. But just a simple matter of you got to register to vote. If you're not registered to vote, you're not even fulfilling the obligations of secular citizenship, let alone Christian citizenship. And I remember years ago, when Dr. Dobson was at Focus on the Family, which, of course, he founded, and of course, he was very active, and still is, on public policy issues. They did a run on their mailing list.

There was a program you could run your mailing list by, and it was something like 30 or 40% of the people on the Focus on the Family mailing list were not

registered to vote. I remember Dr. Dobson doing program after program, pounding on the table, saying, "come on, folks. Are you listening to me on the radio? Get out there." We really do need to register. If we don't, then our places in the public square are taken by people that want to build a quite different country than the one we want.

John Stemberger: Gary, in the Scripture, there's a lot of teaching about being submissive to the government and being submissive to civil leaders, and that was written at a time where you had kings and basically monarchs running the show, where citizens really had no ability to affect anything. We live in a government, however, that is a government of, and by, and for the people, we are the government. Literally. And so, it's our responsibility. If we don't participate, it is disobedience to the concept of the structure of what we're trying to do. Literally, you have to participate in order to have the kind of constitutional republic we have with a representative democracy.

And so, I think that we have to think about the fact that it's not just, "oh, yes, I have to obey the government." We are the government. We can appeal. We can file appeals in courts. We can put people out of office. We have this system that's very dynamic. And so, we read the scripture. We have to understand it in the concept of an American republic that operates within this representative democracy.

Gary Bauer: And the Bible itself, as you know, is filled with the stories of heroic men and women that stood up to government, that had tried to advise government to do the right things and often paid a terrible price that, fortunately, we do not yet have to pay to speak up here in the United States.

John, maybe I'm wrong, but I've always been struck that, at the end of the day, you're an optimist and the good sense of that word, you're not foolish. You don't try to put a good gloss over everything. You're a realist. But I think, as men and women of faith, we are supposed to be optimist. Can you give us a word of encouragement about whether we can still do things to make sure that America's best days are still ahead?

John Stemberger: Yeah. I go back to the point that I made at the opening, Gary, and it's that I, really, over the years have, developed a holy resilience to success and failure. When I succeed, when we win an election, I'm not so emotionally hyped up, and when we lose, I'm not emotionally depressed. I want to maintain a steady pace of just, "you know what? I'm called to engage and I'm just going to continue to it. As long as God's given me breath and a heartbeat, I'm going to continue to do what he's called me to do." And as believers, we need to have the same resilience. We shouldn't be depressed or try to gauge are we winning or losing. We should just be engaged in doing the right thing in the context of what he's called us to do.

Gary Bauer: John, this has been two great days, and I appreciate everything you've done and all the hard work and your commitment to faith, family, and freedom. We are to

act, but as believers, we're also always to pray, and there's a lot to pray for. For America's families, for our country. I'd like to ask you, if you would, to lead us in a prayer, as we think about and ponder the things you've shared with us the last two days.

John Stemberger: Sure, I'd be honored. Father, thank you so much for this day. Thank you for our life. The fact that we get to live and breathe and be alive in this moment in history. You could have caused us to be born in any time in history of the world, but yet you have caused each one listening to this show to live and move and have their being at this point in time, so Father, help us to see our prophetic role in the time and place that we live. Give us wisdom. Have mercy upon us. Forgive us of our sins, individually and collectively as a nation. Have mercy upon us, God. Have mercy upon us.

Help this country to come back to its bearings, Father. Help them to love you more than they love themselves. We thank you for this great work that Dr. Dobson has birthed and we pray continued prayer for his health and his longevity. Thank you for Gary. And Lord, we just ask that you go before us and give us protection and favor with each passing day, and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Gary Bauer: Amen.

Roger Marsh: What a wonderful prayer, indeed. Friend, that was the conclusion of Gary Bauer's conversation with attorney John Stemberger here on Family Talk. And if you'd like to share today's program with a friend or a family member, remember you can easily do so from the Family Talk app or by visiting [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

Now, if you enjoyed listening to Family Talk over the past couple of days, I want to encourage you to check out the Defending Faith, Family and Freedom podcast featuring Gary Bauer. Each week, Gary shares his unique perspective on current public policies through the lens of the U.S. Constitution and an unapologetic biblical worldview. You can listen into the podcast by visiting our website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org), and then clicking on the tab for the Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast. Then you can choose your favorite podcast platform and start listening right away. It's that easy. And with the presidential election coming up on the 5th of November, make sure you keep your eye out for Countdown to Decision 2024 Resources from the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. As believers, we need to stand together, pray, and then vote.

As we conclude today's broadcast, a personal note of thanks. If you enjoy listening to Family Talk, visiting our page, or sharing our programs with friends and family, here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we do want to thank you for your prayers and your faithful financial support of our ministry. Family Talk is a completely listener supported outreach. It's only due to your financial support that Family Talk can continue producing the encouraging and insightful programs that you enjoy each and every day.



Now, summertime is typically a slow time for giving, when it comes to broadcast ministries, and this summer has been unusually slow, so we encourage you to prayerfully consider partnering with us financially as much as you possibly can. When you make a donation to the JDFI, your contribution helps us maintain a strong Christian voice in the public square, and every dollar you donate will help us as we fight for life and traditional marriage, God ordained gender identity, and a biblical worldview that parents can pass on to their children. You can make a donation online through our secure website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's D-R James Dobson .org.

You can also give a gift over the phone when you call 877-732-6825. A member of our constituent care team is happy to take your call Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Mountain Time. Again, that's 877-732-6825. And if you prefer, you can also give a gift 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. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for listening today. May God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow stronger in your relationship with Him. And be sure to join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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