



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Jesus in Me – Part 1

Guest(s): Anne Graham Lotz

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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 ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and on today's program we're going to revisit a classic conversation Dr. Dobson had with Anne Graham Lotz. Now, Anne Graham Lotz is a woman of faith who really needs no introduction, but in case you're wondering, she is one of the daughters of the late evangelist Billy Graham, and has been named one of the five most influential evangelists of her generation. That's according to the *New York Times*, and they actually got that one right. Through her "Just Give Me Jesus" revivals, she's touched hundreds of thousands of lives all over the world and her books like *The Daniel Prayer* and *Wounded by God's People* have helped countless readers deepen their walk with God. Now, life hasn't been so easy for Anne in recent years. Back in 2015, she lost her beloved husband Danny after nearly 50 years of marriage. Then in 2018, her father passed away. Soon afterwards, she faced a battle with breast cancer that required surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. But through it all, Anne Graham Lotz discovered something beautiful; a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit, which she describes as Jesus in me, in her book by that same title. In this classic conversation and will share how God's presence carried her through these valleys. Her story will encourage anyone facing loneliness, grief or illness. So here now is Dr. James Dobson to further introduce today's guest.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, welcome everyone to this edition of Family Talk, which is a ministry of James Dobson Family Institute. I am James Dobson and we're going to talk today through one of the most highly respected Christian women in America and Shirley and I love her. Her name is Anne Graham Lotz, the daughter of the late evangelist Billy Graham. I also had such love and respect for him and her mother was of course Ruth Graham and she's also gone on to be with the Lord. Anne is with me by telephone today because she has her own illness to deal with and she's not able to travel at this time. But I'm delighted to have her here and I can't tell you how much we love and appreciate you and especially grateful for your joining us today.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you, Dr. Dobson. I love talking to you anytime, anyplace. I've had my last infusion, so I'm raising my hallelujah and so thankful that so much of this past year is behind me. Praise God.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it's not just your physical illness. You lost your husband Danny in 2015, I believe.

Anne Graham Lotz: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: You would've been married for 50 years in 2016.

Anne Graham Lotz: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And I'm sure that's been a difficult time. You wrote a letter yesterday, or at least we received it yesterday, which is not a personal letter, but it has a lot of personal information in it. And the first paragraph reads like this, "Over the past two years, loneliness has knocked on my door. After 49 years of marriage, I had just begun adjusting to the new normal of widowhood when my beloved father moved to heaven. Six months after his funeral, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. The resulting surgery, chemotherapy and radiation meant months at home, sidelined from ministry, only a sovereign God could have arranged my life's events to coincide with the writing of a new book on the subject, *Jesus in Me*. In this difficult season, I have truly experienced the very fresh personal way of constant companionship." And your book is about that and that's what we want to talk about. Anne, I've had 10 female members of my family who have lost their husbands and have been through widowhood, and I've watched that up close and personal. That is a difficult journey, isn't it?

Anne Graham Lotz: Yeah, it is Dr. Dobson, and yet I look back on the last four years, so living as a widow and then out my father. So I'm a widow, I'm an orphan. And then to go through the breast cancer, that whole journey and the Lord has just taken me up. I look back and what stands out is not the pain and the grief and the suffering, but the blessings of God. And He has just balanced the pain. I don't know how to describe it except that it's one of the wonderful ministries of the Holy Spirit that He comforts us and He helps us and He guides us and He stands right by us to help us in an emergency or just a sudden need and I have experienced that. I've never lost my peace. He's given me blessing after blessing. I've had joy. So it is been difficult, but His strength has been sufficient for every single moment of every single day. And I'm not saying there haven't been hard times because I'd be less than honest if I didn't say there are hard times, but God is there for that. And so I just praise Him for seeing me through and I'll never get over missing my husband, never get over missing my father, but I have so many wonderful memories.

So I thank God for the memories. I thank God for those two men who were godly men, and I adored both of them. They're a different relationship with each one, but they were wonderful. And then to be without them, the Holy Spirit has just taken up that slack. So I'm very grateful to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Dr. James Dobson: People didn't know Danny like they knew your father, but he was a good godly man, wasn't he?

Anne Graham Lotz: He was great. He was strong. He was a man's man. He was a leader.

Dr. James Dobson: Absolutely.

Anne Graham Lotz: And so he left a big vacuum when he left.

Dr. James Dobson: Anne, where did you get the strength and the presence of mind to write a book in the midst of all of this that was going on in your life?

Anne Graham Lotz: I feel like it has to come from the Holy Spirit and it was after my husband went to Heaven. I just... because that loneliness did knock at my door and I had God surrounded me with family and friends and prayers of people, but there's still times when nobody's there and you are aware of that kind of loneliness. And so I just began to do a word study on widows, and then I felt like the Lord just put on my heart to study more about the Holy Spirit. And it became sort of a burden that I began to study about it. And then I wrote it down and then I felt like it should be the next book. And so I wrote it down and I had finished the main manuscript before I was diagnosed with breast cancer, but then when I was diagnosed, I had to rewrite.

As you know, when you do a book, there's a lot of rewriting, editing, and it just became alive to me. So I had the basic foundation of the manuscript, but it was after that breast cancer diagnosis that it just came alive. And one of the wonderful things Dr. Dobson is at the moment, you might not recognize the Holy Spirit, but looking back I could see, oh, that was the Holy Spirit. He brought this person to me, and that person wrote that letter or that email or that text, and you just begin to see that He has surrounded me with Himself and He works through people. I came out of that with just a renewed commitment to be the kind of person that He can work through in the lives of other people.

Dr. James Dobson: You say in this book that you didn't learn much about the Holy Spirit when you were growing up in a strong Christian household. How could that be?

Anne Graham Lotz: I don't know. I was raised in a Presbyterian church. My parents and grandparents, they loved the Lord. They loved Jesus. They obeyed Jesus, they proclaimed Jesus, they studied their Bible. They taught me to love my Bible and to pray and get answers to prayer. But for some reason, I cannot remember ever being taught about the Holy Spirit. And in the Presbyterian church that I was raised in at the benediction, they say in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, actually. He was the Holy Ghost when I was growing up and when somebody gets married, they pronounce some man and wife in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost or when you're baptized. Ghost is a little bit off putting for a little girl. So I just didn't never really thought about the Holy

Spirit. He was like a P.S.; like you have the wonderful Father and Jesus, but the Holy Spirit is like a tack on, an add-on that I didn't exactly know.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, I didn't either. I grew up in a pastor's home and I learned to pray before I learned to talk because I was imitating the sounds of prayer that my parents made. And yet I didn't know a lot about the Holy Spirit. When I pray, I pray to Jesus and with reference to God, but I don't often say, dear Holy Spirit, I'm approaching you today on my knees. I don't think many people in the church, even those deeply committed to Scripture and to what it tells us about salvation, I don't think many of us really understand who the personhood of the Holy Spirit is. He's really equal to the other two, isn't He?

Anne Graham Lotz: That's right. He is God. And Jesus said, "It's better if I go away because if I go away, I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit who will come to live in you." And that's a paraphrase. But I thought, what could be better than Jesus being visibly present with me? But He was saying it's better for Him not to be visibly present and have the Holy Spirit invisibly present because the Holy Spirit would not just be with us, He would come to live in us. And so the Holy Spirit is actually Jesus in me. And when I was a little girl, Dr. Dobson, I can't remember the year, but I was eight or nine years of age and I'd seen a picture about Jesus on TV and felt very convicted of my sin. And I got on my knees beside my bed and I told God I was sorry and I asked Him to forgive me and to come into my heart.

And I believe Jesus answered that prayer and came into my heart. But Jesus actually technically didn't come into my heart because He lives in a man's body up in Heaven. He's getting ready to come back and rule the world soon. But He came into me in the person of the Holy Spirit. So even though we don't know His name, and even though we may not be familiar with the Holy Spirit, if we've invited Jesus to come into our hearts, He comes in in the person of the Holy Spirit and the Bible says He will never leave us and He'll I never forsake us.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell me why you titled your book *Jesus in Me* and not *Holy Spirit in me*?

Anne Graham Lotz: Because I feel like Jesus is more familiar. The Holy Spirit is Jesus in me. And the subtitle is really my aim for the book, which is to experience the Holy Spirit as a constant companion. And so having Jesus on the inside, if Jesus was with me and I walk out of this room and I go into the yard, then He's no longer with me. I'll leave Him in the room so I would be without Him. But when Jesus is in me, in the person of the Holy Spirit, wherever I go, He goes. He lives inside of me. I'm never separated from Him. And so Jesus in me, all that Jesus is, just as Jesus was the exact representation of the Father, the Holy Spirit is exact representation of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is equal as you pointed out. He is God. He's a distinct person in Himself, but He's all that Jesus is: His mind, His will, His emotions, and He's available in spirit form. He's the Holy Spirit to come inside of us. It's a miracle. And the Bible says when He does, we become a new creation because on the inside of us now, I have two people. I have Anne Graham, I was born as Anne Graham, and then I have the Holy Spirit who is Jesus living inside of me, a

new creation. And the secret of the Christian life actually is learning how to live out your life in that new creation.

Dr. James Dobson: You made reference in your letter that I just read to the loneliness that you've experienced through these losses. Did the Holy Spirit comfort you during that time? Did you feel Him? Were you aware of His presence?

Anne Graham Lotz: I was aware of His presence, Dr. Dobson, every day, every moment of every day. I cannot tell you, from the moment I found my husband because I found him unresponsive in our pool and I had to call EMS and because of my phone call to 911, I had helicopters circling overhead. I had people lining up in the street to peer into the yard. It was, and yet my son-in-law quickly came, put his arms around me. My children met me at the hospital. The doctor was there to give me a hug and took my husband to ICU. People were so caring. And then from when we disconnected him and he went on to Heaven, we were reading Scripture to him and singing to him and praying while he moved to Heaven. And then the Lord just helped me through all of those. As you would know, funeral arrangements and things that you have to go through that are so daunting and overwhelming.

And it was almost smooth and it was a celebration of my husband's life and the legacy that he left behind. And it was a joy and God gave me strength for all of it. And my daughter, my youngest daughter stayed with me during that time. And then the day my husband went to Heaven, my older daughter and her husband, they had sold their house. They were living in a hotel because their rental place had fallen through and they asked if they could come live with me. So they lived with me for 16 months. So the first 16 months of being a widow, I was never alone in my house. I never came home at night and found nobody there. And I won't go into the circumstances of my daughter's situation, but it was a miracle. And we all stand amazed at the timing of God and the way He knows in advance what's going to happen, and He prepares you for it. He arranges circumstances knowing what will carry you through. So I never sank deep into depression. I felt ministered to, I felt loved. Every devotional we had, we focused on the blessings of God. And it was a very precious time. I look back on that and it was so precious. We never had a cross word, never tension. And then after 16 months, they felt they needed to move out and it was time.

So God blessed me through people. My son and my other daughter also were very present. In fact, in my cancer journey, my two daughters were with me every single trip to chemotherapy except for one when my younger daughter couldn't go and my older daughter went with me every day to radiation, which was daily for a month and did it with joy. So my daughter today actually said it was fun. Just meeting people and having those little divine appointments and being able to comfort other people with the comfort that God has comforted us with has been a blessing.

Dr. James Dobson: Anne, I can just envision the people listening to us who are widows. There must be thousands and tens of thousands of them, and they're identifying with what

you're saying today, and we'll draw comfort from this book. But it's amazing to me how many places in the Scripture talk about how God loves and cares for the widow and the fatherless child. It's in the Scripture many times, isn't it? He's very tender to the women who have lost their husbands.

Anne Graham Lotz: Yes. And so after my husband went to Heaven, one of the things I did was do a word study on widows and all the promises that God gives to widows, and it really is precious. So the Lord has special promises for widows and for orphans or the fatherless. So I've claimed every single one, and I just encourage any widow that's listening or widower to do the same thing, just to study and see what God's Word has to say and then claim those promises for yourself.

Dr. James Dobson: I know they would be encouraged by that. The Holy Spirit is referred to in the Scripture as they heavenly paraclete. That means, as I understand it, one who comes alongside of, is that your understanding of that word?

Anne Graham Lotz: Yes, He is a helper. In fact, it's wonderful. In the amplified version, it takes the word comforter or counselor that is in some versions, and it gives it seven alternate translations. So He's comforter, He's counselor, He's the advocate, He's the intercessor, He's the standby. And there's so many different aspects of His name that flesh out His character because names in scripture reveal character. So Jesus was named Jesus because it means He will save us from our sins. He's the deliverer. And we think of Peter who was Simon, what meant wishy washy and compulsive, but he was changed to Peter because he would be so strong in his faith, he would be a rock and strengthen others. So the names of the Holy Spirit reveal something about His character, who He is, and He's wonderful. So paraclete would be one and the helper. And He has helped me so many, many times that it's almost hard to single out one time that it just stands out in my mind when my husband left, and it was such an emergency.

In fact, that could be also when I could say He was the standby, because crises don't catch Him by surprise. So He knew that was going to happen. And so just at that moment, you can lean hard on Him. You just rest in Him. And at that moment, He gives wisdom and strength and peace. And it doesn't mean they're not tears, it doesn't mean there's not grief, and I don't mean to make light of that, but somehow His help and His strength and the peace that He gives over for me anyway, balanced, the grief and the pain.

Dr. James Dobson: Anne, I wonder if there were times when you found yourself on your knees saying, "Lord, this is almost too heavy to bear. Would you help me carry it? That this pain, this loss, this sense of emptiness when a loved one goes on to Heaven is a tough road to walk. Will You walk with me, put Your arms around me and comfort me?" Do you pray that kind of prayer?

Anne Graham Lotz: I did. And I don't remember specifically a time during the widowhood, but during this cancer journey, I can tell you after my fifth chemotherapy, I had such strong reaction to it and such terrible side effects that I prayed that prayer. And the doctor had not ever, and she's head of the breast care center at the

University of North Carolina, and she had never seen this reaction to that kind of chemo. It was very bizarre and it was drastic. And so I wanted out. I told God I just couldn't do this anymore. And I wasn't even sure I wanted to live that bad to go through that. And the Lord just clearly revealed to me I believe in my spirit that He had healed me. And so I told Him I believed it, but I said, "I want You to speak to me through Your Word" because you can have feelings and impressions and they can be dead wrong.

But when He speaks to me through His Word, then I have something to hang onto. And so I went to sleep, and the next morning I was asking Him to speak to me through His word. And my daughter, my youngest daughter, Rachel-Ruth came and she was sharing with me what she was going to teach in her Bible study that morning. And it was 2 Kings chapter five, when Neman, the Syrian general came to Elisha and he had leprosy. And Elisha told him if he'd go dip in the Jordan River seven times, he would be healed. And Neman didn't want to do that because the Jordan River was dirty and muddy, and he said they had better rivers in Syria, but he did. And when he dipped the seventh time, he came up and his skin was like that of a baby. He was healed of his leprosy.

And it is like the lights went on because in my mind, because I had two more sessions of chemotherapy to go, and I felt like God was speaking to me through His Word saying, "Anne, I know you don't want to go through the chemotherapy, but you go through this seven times and you're going to come up clean." And so I finished out the chemotherapy and I finished out the radiation because I felt God also told me to do what the doctors told me to do so I wanted to be obedient to them. And so now all that chemo is behind me, and I'm just, I praise God, I believe I'm healed. But that was a prayer of desperation, and I remember that that will stand out in my mind because it was one of those bottom of the pit experiences. But the Lord pulled me up and He pulled me up just not only speaking to my spirit, but speaking to me through His Word. And so I just go in confidence that I'm going to be okay. And to be honest, Dr. Dobson, for people who are listening and they don't have a physical healing, there's a greater healing than the physical, and it's the resurrection.

So if He wants to take me to glory, I'm so fine. My brother-in-law, you knew my other brother-in-law, John, but I had a brother-in-law, Denton, who was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer the same time I was diagnosed with breast cancer and he went to glory. He's already in Heaven. But he told me, he said, "Anne, you and I are in a win-win situation because if we die, we're going to go to Heaven. And if we live, we have more time to serve the Lord. So you can't lose out either way." So I've sort of handled life loosely, to be honest. If I had children or babies, little children or babies, I wouldn't feel that way. But I don't. I'm old enough now. If the Lord wants to take me home, I'm ready. If He wants to leave me here, then I want to serve Him the best as I can, the time that I have left.

Dr. James Dobson: You are a wonderful blessing to us. Are you regaining your strength? Is your vitality returning?

Anne Graham Lotz: It's slow, but I'm working on it. So I walk two miles every day, a mile in the morning, a mile at night. I'm trying to eat the way I should. That's been the most discouraging thing I think, is that I can't bounce back. But everybody, all the medical personnel tell me, it just takes time. So I don't want to become impatient with myself, but it's hard not to be.

Dr. James Dobson: Anne, this 30 minute discussion has gone by so quickly. You've been a blessing to me and I know to others, but I haven't finished the questions I wanted to ask you. If you can stay on the phone, we'll say goodbye to our listening audience and we'll pick 'em up tomorrow. Is that okay with you?

Anne Graham Lotz: I would love to. I've got a few more minutes and I would love to talk to you.

Dr. James Dobson: Alright, blessings to you.

Roger Marsh: Even in our deepest valleys of loss and illness, the Holy Spirit is our constant companion. You've been listening to a special edition of Dr. James Family Talk featuring Dr. Dobson's classic conversation with author, speaker, and evangelist Anne Graham Lotz. Now, if you'd like to hear this program again or share it with someone who needs encouragement, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And once you're there, you'll also find a link that we have for Anne's book called *Jesus in Me*. Again, that's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

For the last 15 years, the James Dobson Family Institute has been privileged to bring you conversations like today's; messages that strengthen marriages, guide parents, and point hearts toward Christ. This ministry exists because friends like you recognize the importance of equipping families with truth and encouragement. So keep in mind, you can make a secure donation to support us online at drjamesdobson.org. And while you're online with us, remember, this is a milestone year for us here at the JDFI.

It's our 15th anniversary, and we would love to hear how Dr. Dobson has impacted your life or family. Your meaningful memory will be a gift as we celebrate God's faithfulness through this ministry. Now, when you go online to drjamesdobson.org on the landing page, you'll find a place free to make a donation, but also to share your story. So go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. You can also call us at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. So grateful you've joined us today on behalf of Dr. James Dobson and the entire staff here at the JDFI, thanks for listening and be sure to join us again next time when we'll hear the conclusion of this inspiring conversation featuring Anne Graham Lotz sharing more about experiencing the Holy Spirit as our advocate in times of injustice. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust, for the family you love.

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