Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Rebuilding America: Evangelism on Capitol Hill – Part 1
Guest(s): Ralph and Danielle Drollinger
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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute, supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, Washington, D.C. is a place built around power, policy, and politics. But behind the titles and offices are men and women who face the same need for biblical truth as anyone else. On today's Family Talk broadcast, we're revisiting Dr. Dobson's conversation with Ralph and Danielle Drollinger, the co-founders of Capital Ministries. Their story began with a simple conviction. Rather than merely trying to influence government from the outside, what might happen if someone brought the word of God directly to the people serving inside of it? Well, that vision began in California and eventually reached all the way to Washington, D.C., where Capital Ministries established Bible studies for members of Congress and other government leaders. And along the way, God opened doors neither Ralph nor Danielle could have ever imagined when they first began pursuing this calling. In recent years, the ministry has continued to grow and Danielle now serves as its president. But today you're going to hear about how that calling first began along the remarkable path God used to bring Ralph and Danielle together for this work. So here now is our own Dr. James Dobson with Ralph and Danielle Drollinger on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: I want to tell you that I am so excited today to have a couple of longtime friends here with us in the studio. This goes way, way back, and I'm speaking of Ralph and Danielle Drollinger. Ralph will be remembered, and especially to his basketball fans, for his play at the University of California Los Angeles, that's known as UCLA, and I don't like to utter those words if I don't have to, but in this case, it's necessary, and we're great rivals at USC.

And this man has caused me a lot of grief, because he was a very, very effective center in his last year at UCLA. He's a big dude, seven feet, one inch. His team at UCLA went on to win the NCAA national championship under the legendary coach, John Wooden, who was, of course, the winningest coach, I think in collegiate history.

And Danielle is also distinguished in her own right. She's been a defender of conservative causes at the California state legislature for many years, and that's

when I came to know her, because she was very effective in that responsibility. Both these folks are absolutely committed to the cause of Christ, and it's such a pleasure to have them here to talk about their ministry in Washington, DC, which I find very, very exciting.

Ralph and Danielle are co-founders of Capitol Ministries, that goes back to 1996, and they are doing so much impressive work in the nation's capital today, and I'm anxious to tell you about it.

Ralph, you and I have another history together, kind of an unexpected moment that occurred, I think it was 1988, when I had invited Pete Maravich, the great basketball player from LSU and then the NBA. He was coming out to do a radio program with us Focus on the Family at that time, and he had written a book called *Heir to A Dream* that was about his father, and I asked him if he would like to come out and play basketball with us.

We played three times a week and we were just a bunch of duffers. The night before that, I called you and I said, "Listen, ain't anybody playing on my team that's going to be able to guard this dude," and...

Ralph Drollinger: You wanted to win so bad; you called me to make me get up at four in the morning to drive down and be on your team so that we could beat Pete Maravich.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you get up at four to be there?

Ralph Drollinger: Well, I was living in Lake Arrowhead at that point, so I had to drive down to...

Dr. James Dobson: I didn't even know that.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah, that's all right. That's all right. I forgive you.

Dr. James Dobson: That was quite a morning, wasn't it?

Ralph Drollinger: Oh, quite a morning. Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: We played for about 45 minutes and everybody took a break. You and I kind of stayed on the court. I stayed talking to Pete. Pete and I were talking and he dropped dead.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah. Just like that.

Dr. James Dobson: And I called for you guys to come help me. I started CPR, and you did the chest pump.

Ralph Drollinger: And the CPR, because it took like a century for the ambulance to get there. It seemed like forever.

Dr. James Dobson: That was a highly, highly emotional day. I've talked about it many times. Give me your perspectives on what happened that day.

Ralph Drollinger: Well, it's everything and more than what you're saying in terms of an impact on emotion. It's not too many of us who have not been in the military to see someone die in our presence, and that's what happened. But it always rings in my heart, Dr. Dobson, the fragility of life and the assumption we have that we're going to live another day.

It makes me think of the cliche, "Only what's done for Christ will last." “Only one life to live will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last.” And you've been exemplary in terms of your work ethic. I don't believe theologically in retirement, and once God saves us out of this world, we have a dutifulness to Him to really serve Him and build His kingdom, and we can't presume that tomorrow we'll be able to do that, so we have to work our hardest today for a whole life.

Dr. James Dobson: That poem that you just quoted was on the wall of my grandmother's house and I grew up with that. Only what's done for Christ will last.

Ralph Drollinger: And I'm thinking, too, in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6, Jesus says, "Do not lay for yourselves treasures up upon Earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, were neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break inner steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be, also."

Dr. James Dobson: I could talk to you all day about that, but that's not what we're here for. We want to talk about your ministry. Danielle, I met you when you were working in the state legislature in California. There were terrific battles going on even then over righteousness. It wasn't as bad as it is now, but you had your hands full, and quickly, you stood out as somebody who would not compromise and worked as diligently as, Ralph, you'd just been talking about, in advancing the cause of Christ.

You couldn't talk much about the gospel then, I guess, but you sure did everything short of that, and it's a pleasure to have you here today, because I have very warm memories of what you did during those years.

Danielle Drollinger: Well, what an honor it is to be here with you, Dr. Dobson. You're one of my heroes. Way back when I was working for the state senate trying to make a difference, I wanted to make a difference, especially with the social issues of our culture, your public policy department snagged me away and said, "We want to hire you to do just this, to work on these issues."

I did that for quite a while with you until you said, "Danielle, I think there's a job in D.C. I want you to apply for. My buddy Frank Wolf, he used to be in the Congress, had a new subcommittee, Children, Youth and Families, and I think

you're the perfect director for that." So unbeknownst to me, I applied. He hired me and off to D.C. I went.

Dr. James Dobson: But he's been a friend. He's now retired from the Congress, but he was there more than 30 years, and what a magnificent job he did, but I had forgotten that I recommended you to him. And then you were in Congress for how long?

Danielle Drollinger: Not that long. Until a bunch of your other buddies in California called me back and said, "Danielle, we want you to come back and start a political action committee to actually run guys and gals that are Christians to office and see if we can make a difference that way," so I left D.C. and came back to California and did that during the Gingrich Revolution, and we won something like 35 races. Were able to get rid of Willie Brown for a few days because we had just the majority by one vote, and so he just kept buying off our Republican friends.

From that point is when Ralph and I, I remember our first date, we talked about my frustrations with sending people to Sacramento, spending these millions of dollars of Evangelical dollars sending men and women into office, and yet they're away from their family and their church for five days a week, every week. And they just weren't making an impact. And I said, "I think that we need to look at this a little differently and look at it from a spiritual perspective."

In my mind, I'm thinking, "Can we hire one chaplain for the state Senate and the assembly up in Sacramento and just kind of root them in their faith, be at the other end of their life?" Well, the whole time I'm thinking one state, Ralph's thinking the whole world.

Dr. James Dobson: How long have you known the Lord? Were you raised in a Christian family?

Danielle Drollinger: I was, but I was quite the rebellious young lady.

Dr. James Dobson: You were rebellious?

Danielle Drollinger: Oh, yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Really?

Ralph Drollinger: She still is a little bit.

Dr. James Dobson: I can see it.

Danielle Drollinger: No, and the Lord halted my life when I was 20 years old, put me in a hospital bed, couldn't move very well, took me off of everything that I was involved with. And I read the Gideon Bible, because I was all alone. My mom and dad were there, but they were very angry at that point, because they found out all of what I was doing as a young non-Christian girl, even though I knew better.

And I opened the Bible and read the woman at the well, and I said, "If You're really the Lord, You can have my heart, because that's me right there in Scripture." And that was the day the Lord saved me. And from then on, it's been different.

Dr. James Dobson: It's still very tender for you, isn't it?

Danielle Drollinger: Oh yeah, of course.

Dr. James Dobson: I see it in your eyes.

Danielle Drollinger: Yes. Yes. Right.

Dr. James Dobson: And when you came out of the hospital, you were dedicated to the Lord?

Danielle Drollinger: Yes, I was. And of course, at that point, I was too sick to go anywhere except home, so I laid in my bed at my parents' house, which I didn't really want to be back at my parents' house, but my grandmother, I'll never forget her. When I'd go in to take my shower or get ready, she would plug in David Jeremiah just far enough from me that I couldn't turn it off, and she would just blast that in my room and disciple me that way. And of course, my mom did the same thing, just really discipled me. Walked me through it. I have godly parents, and the Lord just slowly but surely changed my heart and my life completely.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that where the passion for conservative causes came?

Danielle Drollinger: Yes. And besides really waiting tables, Dr. Dobson, I think my very first job after Sacramento was with you, where my heart desires were being accomplished. I was going to be able to do something that my heart was really saying I wanted to do. The Lord was calling me to this, and that was a real focal point in my life, or change.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Ralph, when did you become acquainted with the Lord?

Ralph Drollinger: I grew up in a quasi-Christian home. I think we went to church a half dozen times my whole childhood in San Diego, and the few times that we went, we went to Tim LaHaye's Church, and I can still remember him in one of those six ventures to church.

Dr. James Dobson: The Shadow Mountains?

Ralph Drollinger: Well, it was before Shadow Mountain. It was a church out on the plains above San Diego, which is the church that then bought that campus. And Tim LaHaye actually had three campuses: the downtown campus, the eastern campus would now be Shadow Mountain, and they had one in Escondido, which would be to the north. But then when Tim LaHaye retired the pulpit to David Jeremiah, he consolidated it all at Shadow Mountain.

But the one time that I heard Tim LaHaye preach, he was using the analogy of turning on a lamp. There's no light under this lampshade, and then all of a sudden, the Holy Spirit can turn on that lamp. And I remember that, and didn't really come together until I was a senior year in high school, and a couple that cheerleaders of our high school basketball team invited me to go to a Youth for Christ Bible study. And that night, I heard the gospel and it all came together, and I invited Jesus into my heart that night.

I remember going home, this was La Mesa, California, it's east of San Diego, and reading through the whole gospel of Matthew. I just couldn't put it down, and I grew really very rapidly.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that interesting? The word really got to the two of you separately.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah. It just came alive.

Danielle Drollinger: Absolutely.

Ralph Drollinger: It used to be a book that I thought I would someday read. It was always kind of a dusty volume in our home, and every time I picked it up and tried to read it, it didn't make a whole lot of sense to me, but now it was just alive and I couldn't put it down. I began to see who Jesus was and what He wanted from me, and by the time I graduated from high school and went to UCLA and graduated from there, I was ready to go into full-time ministry.

Dr. James Dobson: You could have gone into the NBA at that point.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah. For four years, I actually turned down NBA contracts to play with Athletes in Action, and I went to 35 countries of the world playing their best amateur teams with AIA and preaching the gospel at halftime.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't it interesting that you didn't know the Lord, either one of you, and that He knew you and He wanted you.

Danielle Drollinger: That's right.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't it interesting that He sought you out? He got the Bible into your hands.

Danielle Drollinger: That's right.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: He brought the discipling that you were given, because He had a job for you to do, and that's what you're doing today.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah. Yeah, it's just amazing to see where we're at today relative to where we've come from. It's all by His grace.

Danielle Drollinger: By His grace.

Ralph Drollinger: I remember that, I think it's John 15:16 says, to your point, "'You did not choose me,' Jesus says, 'but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.'"

Dr. James Dobson: All right. Let's talk about Capitol Ministries.

Ralph Drollinger: Do you really want to do that? That's a long story. We're having a good time talking about this stuff.

Dr. James Dobson: It's fun to talk about, but I really want our listeners to know that there's reason for excitement and enthusiasm and optimism over what's going on in the federal government, and even in the states across the country. It is amazing to me. I've been at this a long time but I can tell you, there've been moments when I despaired of what was happening to our country. We lost one Supreme Court decision or case after another, and it seemed like when somebody was elected to the presidency, like Ronald Reagan, and it looked like he was going to be able to pull the country back, he did for a time, but he's only there eight years, and then things changed.

Bill Clinton came in and reversed a lot of the work that I tried to do through the Pornography Commission and Gambling Commission, and it has never really recovered since then, so this is the first time that I've said, "Lord, You are here and You are doing something in this country.

Ralph Drollinger: It's really exciting.

Danielle Drollinger: It's so exciting.

Ralph Drollinger: It really is.

Dr. James Dobson: Share your excitement about what's taking place there.

Ralph Drollinger: Well, when we started Capitol Ministries in the California Capitol in 1996, as you alluded to earlier, we had on our hearts the idea of, like FCA, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, goes to high school campuses and builds athletes in Christ with a good, talented disciple maker who uses the Word of God, or Campus Crusade for Christ, formerly on college campuses, or think of Youth for Christ, how I came to Christ through a high school ministry.

We have nothing really of the sort on capitol campuses, be they the federal, the state, or even local government campuses, wherein we have Bible teachers that are mentoring up and coming or existing political leaders. With that idea,

Capitol Ministries was born 21 years ago, and now I think we've started ministries in 42 state capitols with Bible teachers, and we've been in D.C.

Dr. James Dobson: I hope everybody caught that.

Ralph Drollinger: Am I speaking too fast, Dr. Dobson?

Dr. James Dobson: You're handling it well, but I just want to make sure. Sometimes those things go past this.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: But there are 50 states, and you've got ministries and expressions of Capitol Ministries in 40...

Ralph Drollinger: 42.

Dr. James Dobson: 42 of them.

Ralph Drollinger: 42 that we have started. As we did our surveying in 1996, there were three state capitals that already had what we'd call a capitol ministry. There's a lot of prayer groups and fellowship groups, but in terms of an intentional, deliberate, biblically reliant discipleship ministry with in-depth Bible teaching every week where someone's taking you through the whole council of God, there wasn't much of that.

Now, by God's grace, not that all our Capitol Ministries brand, but we've been able to germinate through our influence either a Capitol Ministry, per se, brand, or independent of some sort ministry that is proclaiming the Word of God with the intentionality of making men and women mature in Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, describe what's going on in the Congress.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: You started in the House, didn't you? And then...

Ralph Drollinger: About eight, nine years ago, we went to D.C. after having a lot of success with state capitol starts. And Danielle and I, off to D.C. we went, and a couple of the congressmen invited us in. We came in on their coattails in the House, started a House Bible study. And then long story short, some of those House guys got elected to the Senate and they said, "Hey, we like the high protein diet of the Word of God. There's nothing else like it here. Come on with us," so we started the Senate Member Bible Study.

And then when Trump was elected, all of a sudden someone in the Trump administration was plucking guys out of our House and Senate Bible Study, and

we could see something's happening here. Interesting. And so those guys said, about six of them that were now cabinet secretaries, "Let's start a White House cabinet member Bible study," and now we have 11 White House cabinet members in our weekly Wednesday morning Bible study.

Dr. James Dobson: Does that amaze you?

Ralph Drollinger: It's amazing.

Danielle Drollinger: And Dr. Dobson, it's the best Bible study I've ever been involved with. They come early; they leave late. They just are devouring the Word.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that right?

Danielle Drollinger: It's so exciting.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, my.

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah. And they let me teach for the longest time without interrupting me. The House and Senate guys, they like to interrupt me, but not the cabinet guys. They're a little more dignified, especially than those House members.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you in the Senate, also?

Ralph Drollinger: Yeah. We have 12 of the Senate members now in our Bible study out of the hundred. And with this upcoming election, people get out and vote, we see seven more on the horizon that'll be prime candidates for an in-depth Bible study in the Senate.

Dr. James Dobson: We're out of time. We talked a lot about basketball today and other things.

Ralph Drollinger: Well, that's your doing, not mine.

Dr. James Dobson: That's not my fault.

Ralph Drollinger: Yes, it is.

Dr. James Dobson: That's what I'm excited about, too.

Ralph Drollinger: Let's keep going.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's just continue on, and we'll let people hear next time what we're about to say.

Ralph Drollinger: You bet.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that alright?

Ralph Drollinger: Amen.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. Thanks for being with us today. It's been a pleasure, and sit tight.

Roger Marsh: Well, today's Family Talk broadcast featured a powerful reminder that faith isn't meant to remain inside the walls of a church alone. Ralph and Danielle Drollinger have devoted their ministry to bringing the word of God to men and women serving in government. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. We featured part one of Dr. Dobson's classic conversation with Ralph and Danielle Drollinger, co-founders of Capitol Ministries. If you missed any part of today's conversation, remember you can always hear it again online at drjamesdobson.org.

Well, the timing of this program is especially significant, of course, because tomorrow is Election Day. All across America, citizens will have the opportunity to make their voices heard at the ballot box. And if you haven't voted already, we want to encourage you to get out and vote tomorrow. You know, voting is one of the most important ways we participate in the life of our country. It gives us an opportunity to thoughtfully consider the people and issues before us and then make our choices according to our convictions. So today, take some time to pray. Ask God for wisdom and discernment. Learn about the candidates and issues that will appear on your ballot, and then tomorrow make sure you exercise your right to vote. Regardless of what happens when the votes are counted, our responsibility as Christians doesn't end when we leave the voting booth. We should continue to pray for those who serve us in positions of authority and ask God to give them wisdom as they make decisions that affect our communities and our nation. And for more information on the position that we as believers have in stewarding our right to vote, we encourage you to check out the free e-book available from the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. It's called *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage the Public Square.* You can download that e-book for free when you go to drjamesdobson.org.

Family Talk is made possible through the generous support of friends like you who share our vision to promote religious freedom, respect for the American founding, and righteousness in the culture. If you believe this nation is worth fighting for, then I am inviting you personally to stand with us today. Your gift of any amount helps keep us broadcasting biblical truth to millions of families all across America. Now to make a secure donation, you can visit us online at drjamesdobson.org. If it's easier, just type in those initials, jdfi.org. Those websites are one and the same. You can also speak with a member of our constituent care team. That number is 877-732-6333. 877-732-6825. Or you can reach us through the U.S. Postal Service. Our ministry mailing address is The James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949. Once again, our ministry mailing address is P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

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 joining us today. Be sure to join us again next time right here as we hear the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Ralph and Danielle Drollinger of Capitol Ministries. “Rebuilding America: Evangelism on Capitol Hill” will again be our theme on the next 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.

There is in the world of nature a phenomenon known as the adversity principle, which means that difficulties and hard times can actually be more beneficial to plants and animals than continual easy living. As strange as it seems, habitual well-being can be disadvantageous to a species. Could it also be that adversity is beneficial to human beings as well? Within limits, that seems to be the case, although we complain and squirm when it comes our way. Our first response to trouble is to say, why me, as though some great injustice had befallen us. Could it be that we and our children need the disappointment, the inconvenience, the stresses, and the discomfort in our lives? I believe we do. and that character and strength are often the byproducts not of pleasure but of pain.

For more information on this topic, visit drdobsonminute.org.