



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** For Such a Time as This – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Dr. Owen Strachan

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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 back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. When we reflect on the world around us, it looks like a mess, doesn't it? We see many people striving to live a life based on their own longings and not based on biblical truth or God's visions for their lives. It's as if the words of the apostle Paul 2 Timothy 4:3 have come to light. "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine," Paul writes, "Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear." And believe me, you see that on social media, in the movies, television shows, even the ads on our smartphones and computers.

As believers, we are called to stand for truth. The question is where do we start? Well, today here on Family Talk, Gary Bauer is joined once again by Dr. Owen Strachan, who will speak about how it is still possible for us to make our country great again as the founding fathers intended. Dr. Owen Strachan is the senior director of the new Dobson Culture Center here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. So let's join Gary Bauer and Dr. Owen Strachan right now for the remainder of this important conversation right here on Family Talk.

**Gary Bauer:** Hello everybody. I'm Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. Joining me again today is the senior director of the new Dobson Culture Center, Dr. Owen Strachan. Dr. Strachan is also the senior fellow at the Center for Biblical Worldview of the Family Research Council. He earned a Ph.D. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, his master's of divinity from Southern Seminary. He's a best-selling author, the host of *Grace and Truth* Podcasts. I'm sure you have seen or heard Owen before now. He's been on *Fox News*, on the *Megyn Kelly Show*, with Eric Metaxas on his show. Owen gets around. Owen, welcome back for this second show today.

**Dr. Owen Strachan:** Thank you so much, Gary. Thanks for having me on.

**Gary Bauer:** Owen, there's big debate where the founders religious men, did they want to get away from religion or were they trying to build the country on religion? I

can't believe some of these things are being debated, but one thing we know for sure is that in the early republic, one of the most well-read books would have been the Bible. That would've been a default position. Most of the citizens of the early colonies had to be familiar with that book. And so it informed the founders when they wrote the most important words. And were they influenced by the political philosophy of Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece? Of course they were, but they were probably more influenced by Jerusalem and the word of God.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, I think that's really key. The American founding has so many Christians involved in it, and so you can't separate the American founding from that truth. And even where there are enlightenment voices, philosophical voices like Franklin and Jefferson, Thomas Paine, for example, you recognize that they were very much compatible with in their thinking about the republic, the Christian worldview. And so I think there was a ton of Christian influence in the founding of this country and I'm thankful for that. And then even where there was a philosophy of a reason driven approach to the world that we would say proceeds from an enlightenment worldview, the enlightenment actually championed certain voices in it, championed the dignity of the individual, saw the need for liberty, saw the need for freedom.

And as Christians, we can just wrap our arms around that and say, "We are so grateful for the American founding." We're so thankful for all those Christians who had tremendous influence and were at the table, at the writing of these major documents that have shaped history. And we are the people, whatever precisely you think about the American founding, we are the people who recognize that liberty is a gift of God. So we're not the people fundamentally who are trying to tie people up in strait jackets. We're the people who want people to be free. We want religious liberty in this country. Franklin Delano Roosevelt didn't get everything right, but when he identified religious liberty as the first of all the freedoms, I think he was on the money. And I pray that we'll see religious liberty, which precedes from so much Christian influence in the American founding, extended and protected and preserved in our day.

Gary Bauer: As you know, Owen, God was not surprised when we were born in America or surprised if somebody was born someplace else and yet was able legally to come to America. He knew exactly where we were going to be born. And by being born here in contrast to many parts of the world that did not have in the early years, that biblical framework was an incredible blessing, arguably the greatest blessing we could be given by God. And I think it obligates us then just as we would take care of a beautiful gift we were given, whether it was a new car or whatever it was, that we take care of it. Otherwise, we would be ingrates. And so when you fight for the culture and as I'm doing what I can in Washington to try to make our laws better, I think we're doing exactly what God would have us do to preserve for our children and grandchildren the wonderful blessing of being citizens in America.

Dr. Owen Strachan: I completely agree, and I think you're totally right to tie these things together and I'm very thankful for the vision of Joe Waresak, the president of JDFI, stewarding the legacy of Dr. Dobson in this respect. Policy and culture are not separate from one another. They're distinct, I think we can say they're distinct because I'm not very good at crafting legislation and would not nominate myself for a position along those lines. You're very good at that. But I think we can work together in really rich ways because we want to influence both policy and culture. We want good laws. We recognize that good laws are in a common grace sense, a gift of God, and that's embedded within so much of the American experiment and this system we're in of ordered liberty.

But then we also recognize it's not only that we should influence policy and law, we also need to influence what we call culture. And so we want to infuse some of this toxic air that has been pumped into America over the last 50 to 60 years, in particular, with the pure oxygen of God's grace and God's truth, cohering in what we would call the biblical worldview. I guess this is a little bit of an interesting image right now that I'm debuting, but we want pure oxygen of the biblical worldview to be breathed in this space once more. And so we're working together along these lines and I'm very thankful we get to do that.

Gary Bauer: Yeah, it's already evident. It's going to be a great partnership, Owen. You also alluded to, for lack of a better phrase, the culture of death that surrounds abortion. And I've thought about this a lot about is it culture that changes the law? Does the law change the culture or is it a chicken and egg, it's a circle and one feeds on the other? But if you go back to 1973, most states regulated abortion. So the law was correct, but then the Supreme Court, some people felt out of nowhere, struck down all those laws and said that somewhere in this document that I believe was God inspired the Constitution, there was a right to abortion. So from 1973 to a couple of years ago, one generation of young American women after another were told to be a modern woman, you have to have the right to get rid of this inconvenience, your unborn child. You can't be a modern woman unless you're in favor of that.

And so that was driven into their minds all those decades. Legally, we finally overturned *Roe*. And in the last couple of years, we haven't been doing very well at the ballot box on referendum dealing with the sanctity of life. And I think the reason appears to be to me that we have a bunch of young women that think we're taking something away or they've been deprived of something that helps define who they are. So they have been so immersed in the culture of death that they are voting the wrong way on laws, and that's going to be a huge problem going down the road.

Dr. Owen Strachan: It is, it is. Yeah, people have found in the constitution and related documents, all sorts of things. And so Scalia famously decried Kennedy's sweet mystery of life passage, and we recognize that the American left has unearthed a great deal in the Constitution that the founders never put there. And so that's a part of our witness, both in policy and culture. We say we interpret documents according to authorial intent as best we can, take some work, but we stand for that. And

then we recognize yes, that the culture of death has affected women in a profound way. It has caused them to think, many of them, that they can do with a baby in their womb what they want. And so we stand against that in love, and we very much stand against men who would try to take advantage of the sexual revolution and do whatever they want with women and prey on women and thus bring children into the world that those men do not want.

So we have a lot of work to do. We say no to abortion, but what we also say yes to as much as we can in our work, and I'll talk about my work and culture, we're trying to help people understand the evil of sin, the evil of abortion, for example. And we don't blink at that. We have to make that clear. It is wrong to murder a baby in the womb for any reason, but then we also unfold the beauty of life and the fact that God makes every child in the womb and we unfold the goodness of childhood and of parenting children and loving children and raising them well. And that's what I see, Gary. I'll even see today in America in 2024 families who I think understand the goodness of being a family. But you're out at a restaurant and you just see all the kids on devices, let's say.

Gary Bauer: So depressing.

Dr. Owen Strachan: It's like an instant buzzkill when you're out there with your wife and your kids and you're just trying to enjoy a nice meal and you're in a beautiful place and then you're just surrounded by this sea of iPads and no one's talking to each other and the husband and wife themselves are checking their phone the whole meal. And you just look around and you go, "I'm really glad you're part of the vanguard that will have kids. And I'm guessing you love your kids," these people around you.

Gary Bauer: Yes.

Dr. Owen Strachan: But do you want to invest in your kids? Do you want to make eye contact with them? And so we have a lot of work to do, Gary, not just to say no to abortion, but to say yes to fatherhood and motherhood in a meaningful way.

Gary Bauer: No question about it. And it's very tempting to make that device the babysitter. That would be questionable even 30 or 40 years ago and that culture. But today, it's totally unacceptable. There's almost nothing, as we've sadly found out, take Disney for example, which generation of American parents thought, "Now that's a cultural place I could go. That's movies and cartoons and entertainment that I can rely on." You can't assume just because there's cartoon characters on the TV set that the message is the right message.

Dr. Owen Strachan: That's exactly right. And that's where it takes a lot of work to be a Christian father and mother, I would say all of it powered by God's grace. But my word, there's nothing easy about being a plugged in dad and a plugged in mom. It takes you to your limits. It takes you past your limits and especially when the culture isn't in any way, at least a lot of it, partnering with you to raise your kids

well, now the culture in many ways, as you're talking about with bad Disney programming, is against you. And so that has you redoubling your efforts.

And it can be exhausting in general terms to be a dad or a mom, but it can be exhausting, especially today because it can feel like there's never a place where you can pull over by the side of the road and just take a break. And I think there's a lot of tired dads and moms out there. I think there's a lot of couples struggling in their marriages. And I think part of what we're going to have to do now and in days ahead is invest in a major way in marriage and the family. This is thankfully the legacy of this very organization. We got to redouble our efforts, though, because people need help and people need encouragement.

Gary Bauer:

Yes. So an exhaustion, that is exactly what I think a lot of parents feel. But nonetheless, God's given us these precious gifts, and if a father's willing to literally give up his body to protect that child and his spouse, then certainly we can give up some materialism, some of our time, maybe a sporting event we want to watch or whatever to make sure we're there when they need us.

Owen, and you mentioned it in the beginning of our conversation that one of your goals was to get the church to find its voice in all of this because the church is the place that ought to be speaking to this culture all the time. I was disappointed in just a little check I did after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, at least in the Washington, D.C. area, how few pastors said anything about the following Sunday. This would've been a time for celebration. The Bible says, "I set before you life and death. So now choose life so that you and your children may live."

And then I think on the other side of this, so often I get letters, you probably do, it's been some of the most heartbreaking letters I've ever received where parents write and say, "Wow, we saved all of our life. We sent our daughter or our son to get a university education, and they've come back after their first semester and I don't even recognize them anymore." And at least part of that, I think, is because the churches haven't prepared that child, that young American, to be ready for what they're going to be confronted with at the average American university.

Dr. Owen Strachan:

I think that's right, and I think we've got to recognize that we're not raising kids, at least in a lot of cases, to live behind the walls of a commune so that evil can never get in. We're trying to raise our kids as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we want them, actually, in some form to go out into the world and to be salt and light by the power of God's grace. So I don't see necessarily a lot of families where that kind of mentality has obtained. And you're exactly right, I fear there are not enough churches where Christians are being equipped to go into the world as witnesses unto God's truth.

We've seen over the last 15 years the rise of an ideology in political terms I call neither left nor right. I didn't come up with that, but I think that's a useful heuristic. So neither left nor right, and I think that's what's been fed to the

younger generation in particular over the last roughly 15 years, at least a good portion of them in a lot of churches. So churches now pat themselves on the back for not doing really any discipleship in terms of public square issues, political issues, even cultural issues. And then pastors get really upset when people tune into Fox News or podcasts or conservatives or Joe Rogan or Jordan Peterson or whoever it is, and just eat this red meat as it's perceived. And they actually chide their congregants for listening to talk show voices or whatever it is. When in reality, those voices are courageous in a lot of respects and they're willing to call a spade a spade.

Pastors aren't here to be pack leaders. They're not here to be partisan first and foremost. But if a pastor seeds discipleship and basically stops discipleship at the line of politics and culture, what are people going to do but turn to outside voices? They need help. So I can't make all of this right, Gary, but what I can do is try to be a voice that says, "Pastors," as you just said, "Disciple your people in all of life, biblical worldview." And then I'll apply this to the upcoming election. I'll dare to go where angels fear to tread Gary, and I'll say even help your people understand that they should vote. This is my judgment. This isn't an iron law from Heaven, but they should vote for the best possible candidate they can to preserve what is left of this civilization. I really would push for that over neither left nor right nonsense.

Gary Bauer:

Well, I agree, Owen. And look, if you look at the problems facing America, and I'm not talking about what's the appropriate level for marginal tax rates, godly men and women can disagree over that level or over the particular size of a bureaucracy or whatever it is, but on fundamental matters, racial reconciliation, what the purpose of life is. What is it that all children in America growing up should be taught about the nature of liberty and how liberty without virtue will fail first of all? And that capitalism without virtue becomes just a system of exploitation. So there's big issues here, and if Christian voices aren't involved, there's no way we're going to come up with the right answers to any of these problems.

Dr. Owen Strachan:

That's exactly right. And even back to our discussion about the American founding, Christians did contribute a real sense of political liberty to that discussion. But I would say that's where you see so much of the virtue that has obtained in this culture in days past coming from, it was pastors who were willing to speak about a moral life and an ordered life and a God-centered life. And we've got to recover that. We need to have a church that is confident in the Word of God and that does not reduce discipleship and being a Christian to a prayer you prayed 15 years ago, a line you wrote in your Bible, a date you wrote in it, that's glorious. That's the day of being born again, as best we can perceive it, many of us.

But there's this whole thing called the rest of your life that Christians desperately need discipleship for. So here's the thing, we're not in ideal circumstances, I would say, with regard to this conversation, but it's a market opportunity, Gary, for any pastor who will in a gracious loving convictional way,

help people try to make sense of this crazy world by anchoring them in the Bible. There's going to be people who respond to that, and that's a good thing.

Gary Bauer:

Absolutely. The Christian pastors of the Colonial period in America, there was a great awakening and it came from those pulpits, and it led to the American Revolution and all that followed. In the years leading up to the Civil War, that tragic event, 650,000 Americans die over the issue of whether one man can legitimately own another. And, of course, the answer was and is no. But that second great awakening paved the way for the end of slavery in America.

Martin Luther King, he was the Reverend Martin Luther King. He built the entire civil rights movement on the teachings he heard in church and that he himself preached. So all these examples of Christians in churches, and now we look back and go, "My goodness, look at what they did." That's the opportunity today for pastors and priests and the pulpits of America to rise to the occasion now, at this moment, to save this great nation, make it a godly nation again, and by doing so, I think bring less suffering, less horror in our country and in the world we live in.

Owen, this has been great to spend this time with you. I'm excited about working with you and we're already working together. I think that the JDFI family all over America is going to be excited too. Let's strive ahead to bigger and better things and hopefully at some point be able to look back on all this and decide that we did make a difference following God's guidance about what we should do in the public square. Would you mind closing us in a prayer?

Dr. Owen Strachan:

Absolutely. Gary, thank you for those words and I'd love to end on prayer. How fitting. Father, thank you for this conversation with Gary Bauer, a man who has been so courageous and is years and years ahead of me, like Dr. Dobson, in the fight for what is good, true, and beautiful in this world. I thank you for faithfulness in days past and even in the present and in days to come from these men. And I pray your blessing on these different works. I pray your blessing on the Dobson Policy Center. Thank you for it. May its work increase and bear much fruit. And I pray your blessing on the Dobson Culture Center. I pray that you'd use it powerfully for your glory.

Father, I know that many people out there as they've listened to this conversation, I know that they're feeling discouraged and disheartened in many respects, and it feels like there is just so much darkness and there is much darkness in this world and in this country, but Father, thank you that you do much of your best work in the darkness. You are not scared of the darkness. You are not trying to stay as far away from the darkness as you can, but in a salvific sense, you sent Jesus into the darkness. You sent Jesus into the heart of the Roman Empire, and you use Jesus to win our salvation. So we pray that even as we're in dark days, you will use very humble little beings like us and our friends in this team at JDFI and Joe Waresak as president and all the folks involved. We pray you'll use us to do great things for the name of Jesus Christ. In Jesus name we pray, amen.

Gary Bauer: Amen.

Roger Marsh: Well, that certainly was a wonderful prayer here on Family Talk, and I hope you've been encouraged by the conversation featuring Gary Bauer and Dr. Owen Strachan from the past couple of programs. The truth is, there is hope that with God, we as believers are equipped to positively influence culture. And if we want our children and our grandchildren to have a bright future as well, we have to step up and we need to make changes right away.

Now, if you'd like to share today's program with a friend or family member, remember you can do so easily from the Family Talk app or by visiting our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). And if you haven't done so already, I encourage you to visit the new Dobson Culture Center. The DCC was established to help families and individuals engage culture with a biblical worldview and to help live our lives boldly as believers. Now, to visit the Dobson Culture Center, simply click the Culture Center link on our homepage at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). And while you're there, be sure to sign up for the free "Lighting Up Culture Weekly Report" from Dr. Owen Strachan and the Dobson Culture Center. To start your free subscription, you can click the links at the top of our homepage, [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org), or visit the Dobson Culture Center directly when you go to [drjamesdobson.org/culture-center](http://drjamesdobson.org/culture-center). Together we can lift high the grace and truth of God in a culture that desperately needs to hear it. Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and you've been listening to Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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