



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Raising Daughters Who Know Their Worth – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Robert and Bobbie Wolgemuth, Julie Tassy and Missy Schrader

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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 once again to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, every daughter carries an invisible imprint of her father's love, one that shapes how she sees herself, how she relates to others, and how she walks into the world as a woman. On today's edition of Family Talk, Dr. Dobson concludes a powerful two-part conversation featuring author Robert Wolgemuth, along with his daughters, Missy and Julie, and his late wife, Bobbie. Now, Bobbie went home to be with the Lord in 2014, and Robert went home to be with the Lord earlier this year, so they are having a great reunion with Dr. Dobson in Heaven, that's for sure. Robert Wolgemuth's book called *She Calls Me Daddy* is a timeless guide for any father who wants to leave a lasting legacy in the life of his daughter. So here now to continue that conversation is our own Dr. James Dobson.
- Dr. James Dobson: Robert, in your book, *She Calls Me Daddy*, you talk about the difficulty of being a good father, a father to daughters especially, in the early years where you're trying to get started professionally and you're running and huffing and puffing and you're working so hard to try to earn a living for the family and to establish yourself professionally. How did you deal with that?
- Robert Wolgemuth: Well, first of all, it does seem kind of unfair. No, it does seem very unfair that a dad, when he's right in the process of building his career, ought to be spending more time than any other time in his life with his children. So there are ways of coping with that. I mentioned one in the broadcast yesterday, and that is when you have a chance to go somewhere in the car or to do something or even a short business trip, take one of your children along. You can double up responsibility. The things that you had to do because of your career can be part of the process of raising your child because really the secret is time. You have to catch certain moments. You can't say, "Honey, I only have 15 minutes, so let's make this quality." It's really all about quantity time.
- Dr. James Dobson: Bobbie, did you find yourself urging Robert to give a little more time to the kids?
- Bobbie Wolgemuth: I tried not to nag, and there really is a fine line there. I remember saying sometimes, is it always going to be like this? Usually his answer was a veiled, of

course not. But he said, please don't put more pressure on me. Help me. So I would try to not put pressure, but at the appropriate times, I would say, there has to be a better way. You're missing this. I would say most of the time he was very responsive. And to have these two precious children that adored him. And one of the rules we had was when daddy walks in the door, you stop everything. If the TV's on, if you're playing a game, you stop everything and you run and see him. And I got this idea from some book I read that you notice how a dog always comes and wags his tail and greets you. And I said, girls, we are all going to be like puppies. We are going to bombard him when he comes in the door. And so it made him want to be home. I knew he wanted to spend more time with him.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I can see the mail coming on that one.

Bobbie Wolgemuth: Oh boy. Sorry about that.

Robert Wolgemuth: And we've mentioned the project that we did even just this past weekend, that over the years, we built things together. And I know that not every dad can drive a nail, but there are things that I think every dad can do that has a visible, tangible memory attached to it. So that even if he goes to the park and takes a camera and has somebody take a picture of he and his daughter at the swing. That becomes a permanent fixture in their minds that they look back on. There are things like a brick wall in Waco.

Dr. James Dobson: And they don't have to be expensive and they can be simple. For Danae and me on Saturday, we would get on our bikes and when she was very, very young, I had a little seat for my bike and she would get on the back and we would ride to the nearest school. and get into the sandbox and build castles and moats and things, and she will tell you today, you know, she was only three or four, and she'll tell you today that was one of the happiest moments of her childhood. No big deal, but I just took the time. I might say, Bobbie, that Shirley was very helpful to me in the way that you were trying to be with Bob because I had everything I needed to be a very consummate workaholic. If I hadn't had a family and didn't love that family and didn't have a wife who was not willing to just say, well, we'll see you in 12 hours, you know, I could have done that. And she helped me not make that mistake with my kids.

Julie Tassy: And I think it's also important. We never heard mom say, your dad works so much. That never entered our minds. So there was never that negative.

Dr. James Dobson: She always spoke of him in positive terms.

Julie Tassy: Right, and that's if, let's say, she were frustrated with the way he was working too much or not spending enough time with us. Mom and Dad talked about that amongst themselves so that we never thought, yeah, he does spend too much time.

Missy Schrader: And even talking about this, I don't have a memory of that. I don't remember, wow, Daddy was gone a lot. I remember him swinging me out over the staircase

and scaring mom, I'm sure. The things I do remember building whatever. Those are the things I remember more than I don't have this dark, negative feeling back when daddy used to work.

Dr. James Dobson: You can find a way. You said it, Robert. You can find a way. My father was an evangelist. He traveled six, eight weeks at a time, but I don't remember him being gone. I remember what he did when he came home. You know, we built things together and we went hunting together. He was mine when he came home. So you can find a way, even if you're a salesman and you're on the road a lot, you can find a way if you're committed to it.

Robert Wolgemuth: You really can. It just has to be an important thing to you. And you have to work at it being important to me. My family's very kind to me now because it's been a long time since they were small. But the truth is, you don't want to listen when they come home and have something to tell you. You're distracted. Either you're too tired for any more information, or you have other things on your mind that you want to work on. And you have to say, no, I'm going to just buck up on this. I'm going to tough it out and listen carefully. Because my natural propensity is not to be a good listener. It's to be a good talker.

Dr. James Dobson: Bobbie, you all have done a better job in your family than almost anybody I'm aware of at making music part of the ethos of the totality of your family. Fortunately, you both sing and your two girls sing, so you've had the equipment to do that.

Bobbie Wolgemuth: Well, it's happened since they were very small. I don't think it's necessary to be a musical family for this to be effective but from the time the girls were very little, it started in the car, and we would sing hymns. Robert and I both were brought up on old hymns of the church, and the theology and the doctrine and the awe of God you get from the words of these hymns are so magnificent that we decided that the girls were going to learn hymns. And before they could read, we just would sing them to them. After they got old enough to read, we literally took three hymn books in the car, and the girls would each have one and we would say turn to page whatever. But the teaching of hymns, the old hymns of the faith, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," "This is My Father's World," it teaches you who your Father in Heaven is.

My mother recently passed away, and the song, "When We All Get to Heaven," is an incredible comfort. A kid knows this is where grandma is going because they've learned the hymn from the time they were little. When we all get to Heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be.

Robert Wolgemuth: Music has a way of coming back to your mind. If you've memorized those songs, then years later when you're doing something like mowing the yard, a song may come back to you. And again, it's like exercising those muscles or seeds planted in the ground. They just keep coming up. And again, what you're remembering then is the lyric that affirms your faith in Christ, that affirms good, solid Christian doctrine.

Dr. James Dobson: Robert, I know you felt, as Shirley and I did, and Bobbie, that the spiritual dimension of raising children outweighed everything else you were trying to do. How did you lay that spiritual foundation?

Robert Wolgemuth: Well, we've been talking a lot about it now with singing to your children, singing with your children when they were small. Our goal in terms of the dissemination of our faith to our children, our goal was to make it normal. That is, when you're riding on one of those weekend errands and your daughter's in the car, you say, "Look at that beautiful sunset. Isn't God wonderful?" And you leave it at that. You don't say, "You know, it's just like Pastor Smith said last week in the 8:30 service and then again at 11." You just let it go. You let it be a normal part of your life. So often when somebody is known as a Christian or a religious person, then they're put in this special category. And so if you're at a neighborhood party, people only talk to you a certain kind of way. They don't laugh with you, enjoy you. You're kind of a religious person. Kind of like when Billy Graham used to visit Johnny Carson. He was always the first guest. Then Billy Graham would leave, and then they'd have fun. So your job is to make your faith and your love for Christ a normal part of everything else.

Dr. James Dobson: Robert, is raising these two girls a highlight of your life?

Robert Wolgemuth: It is. Even just sitting here talking about it, I'm overwhelmed realizing that really there isn't very much else I've done in my whole life that compares to this.

Dr. James Dobson: All right, let's open the microphones if anybody would like to come. Give us your name and where you're from and a short question.

Amy: I'm Amy from Colorado Springs. Self-esteem and creating a good body image and an image of yourself as a woman is really hard in society today. We get so many wrong messages. I come from a family of five girls, and it's been a big challenge for my dad. And I wonder if you could maybe comment on how, as a man and a father relating to these daughters, you built that self-esteem that's so important for women to have, and how your relationship with your wife may affect that for the girls as they're watching and growing up.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that a great question?

Robert Wolgemuth: That is a great question, Amy. My relationship with my wife, and parenthetically, I know that what 40 percent of the people who will listen to this broadcast are not in a marriage maybe 30 percent or 25, anyway a lot of people but for couples who are together the most important thing you can do to build the esteem of your children is to never let your love for each other have even... your kids get in its way, let me say that again. When Julie was born our second daughter she was born with a lot of physical problems at the beginning. It was a shock to all of us. And I got a card from a friend of mine that I'll never forget. He said, the most important thing you can do for Julie in the midst of all the

physical problems and all the therapists and all the specialists is to love her mother.

And I think sometimes parents think their kids have to be the top priority in order for them to have the esteem they need. No. What they need is to see what a relationship between a husband and wife look like. And I think kids many times are given too much burden with significant decisions in the house. You know, what do you think we ought to buy? Should we buy a green couch or a yellow? Go ahead and make decisions. Be the father, be the mother, let them be the kid. And they'll learn self-esteem that way. They don't learn self-esteem by you putting a lot of adult kinds of issues into their lives. In fact, the truth is that even if you're on an hourly wage, set aside money for babysitters. Leave them with a babysitter. Take them to the nursery at church. You don't have to hover over them in order for them to have self-esteem. They'll watch your confidence as a father or as a mom, and they'll pick that up. They'll catch it far more quickly than you'll be able to teach it to them.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, research on this is absolutely clear. The relationship between a father and his daughter is absolutely vital to a girl's self-esteem coming through the years and is highly relevant to her relationship with her future husband.

Robert Wolgemuth: Yeah, and Bobbie said this earlier. The Lord was good to her in giving her a wonderful daddy and a mom, but in this relationship kind of thing we're talking about, and a mom to me. Again, my dad's fantastic. My dad was very, very strict and a good teacher to me, but it was my mom who told me I could do it, who believed in me. And because of that, my mom, Bobbie's dad, then that gave us so much more in terms of help in being good parents. Now, again, lots of people say, "Well, I don't have a good mother or a good father." The truth is you can stop that cycle now with your own family, with your own children, with your own relationship, so that your children and grandchildren will be able to say the same thing about you.

Julie Tassy: One of the things that Daddy did to build our self-esteem was to compliment other little girls, our friends, on things that were important, truly important, such as manners and good qualities rather than beauty and appearance, things that we couldn't...

Dr. James Dobson: Do anything about.

Julie Tassy: Right.

Robert Wolgemuth: For example, you're in a restaurant and a girl with blonde curly hair walks past and you say, "Look at that little girl's beautiful curly hair," and your daughter's sitting there with straight brown hair. You've just told your daughter what's important to you, curly hair, blonde hair. And until she can have access to a bottle of peroxide, she will feel like her hair isn't good enough. So the truth is what you do is you look for things in other children that you want to build in your own children, and you speak those things. You say, "Look how that little

girl answered her mother. Isn't that wonderful?" You're directing your children toward what's important to you. You also look for ways to compliment your children, catch them doing something right. It will be far more valuable than any of the no's you've been giving them all along. So you say, "I happened to walk by your room today and it looks wonderful." It has so much more power than day after day saying, "When are you going to clean up your room?" So you look for ways to catch them doing something right.

Missy Schrader: And we heard, I love you a lot. We were hugged and told I love you a lot. Not I love you because you did this, but just plain I love yous a lot.

Dr. James Dobson: Unconditional.

Missy Schrader: Yeah, that's very important growing up. That's important now.

Dr. James Dobson: Next question.

Susie: Hello, I'm Susie from Aurora, Colorado. As I've been listening to you, I have, I guess not so modestly, I almost thought my parents could have written the book because our lives paralleled so much your daughters. I had two brothers and was the only girl, but the time singing in the car, hymns, riding on the tractor with Dad, going to the dump, you know, just those things that are special memories now. But as I've been an adult now for over half of my lifetime, I have not come across a close friend who has had that same precious experience to cherish. And I just wonder how rare you have found this relationship to be.

Dr. James Dobson: Unfortunately, it is rare, isn't it?

Robert Wolgemuth: Yeah, but again, our goal is to say it's like cooking. Cereal is about the best I can do, cold cereal. But there are cookbooks in our house. If I can read, I can cook. And so the truth is, I want this to be an encouragement to dads who maybe didn't come from a family like this, who could say, "I don't know where to begin," to be able to say, "yes, there are some places you can begin." You can do this, and you can do this, and you can do this, so that he can do those things and begin to feel the joy of having done those things. We don't want this to be a frustrating experience for people who don't know what this looks like and what it feels like from their own experience. Does that make sense? Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Bob, do you realize how many people we're talking to right now who are listening to us out there somewhere who wanted that kind of family, the kind of family you all have had more than anything in the world? And it has eluded them. I'm always conscious at a moment like this of those who've experienced such pain as children. Some of them have been rejected by a spouse. We really do need to be understanding of those who hear you talk and say, "That's what I was trying to do, and I couldn't pull it off." What do you say to them?

Bobbie Wolgemuth: One of the wonderful things that this year I've experienced is people that have been going through some really hard times have found that the church and the people in the church are their family. It obviously doesn't make up for the time when you were a little girl and you didn't get hugged by your daddy, but in so many ways, the body of Christ. does help with the healing and with the unmet needs where you are a part of a family that really works. And there is a provision, I believe, that God makes on this earth for those that don't have a close family, that you have a church family that can help that.

Dr. James Dobson: Next question.

Scott: Hi, my name is Scott, and I'm from Chino Hills, California. We're here visiting, my wife and I. I have three children myself. My oldest is 12 years old. She's almost 13, my only daughter. And I was wondering how you got your daughters to this stage without getting any gray hairs. My daughter's almost 13. She's reached that point of adolescence, like you were talking about earlier, where she seems like she's starting to break away a little bit, be by herself more, spend more time in her room by herself. You try and start conversations by opening up with a question and it's yes or no or fine or okay or whatever, nothing else.

Robert Wolgemuth: She puts the tennis ball in her pocket.

Scott: Right, right. It's okay, give me the ball back. How do we do this back and forth? Can you elaborate on maybe helping to keep that communication pipeline open a little bit through these years, which I know will be difficult, but can you talk a little bit more about that?

Robert Wolgemuth: Yeah. Scott, I would say, first of all, don't be worried. She'll come out of that tunnel. So don't panic. The other thing I would say is there are things that you can listen to on tape that are exactly for this moment. Take her in the car. Take a trip. Put *Preparing for Adolescence* in like we did. I'm dead serious. And what it does, it gives you somebody else to respond to. She's not responding to you lecturing. She's responding to this guy lecturing. And so you can say, how did you feel about what Dr. Dobson just said? Suddenly, she's not defensive because it's her dad. It's somebody that she hasn't met who's making a lot of sense on this tape. So don't panic. Go ahead and use other materials that you can respond to objectively with her being there.

The other thing I would say is it could be that it looks like she's really pulling back from you, and so she may not welcome affection. Up to this point, you may have been able to hug her in public. That's okay. What I would encourage you to do is to be affectionate, but look for good times to do it. Before she goes to sleep at night, knock on her door, make sure that she says, come in. And just say to her, "I want you to know that if I could pick any girl from anywhere in the whole world, I'd pick you all over again. And don't say, don't you feel the same way about me? Just let it be there. And that will reinforce your love for her in her heart. And then when she's out of that tunnel, you'll all get that back.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, Bob, I'm absolutely convinced that that pulling back, that pulling away during the adolescent years is divinely inspired. I mean, it doesn't feel like it is, but that's the process by which the daddy-little-girl or mother-little-boy relationship changes to the peer relationship, the friendship of adulthood that Missy and Julie referred to earlier that you're enjoying now. How does that process take place? There's some pain in there and if it never occurred, if there never was tension between the generations, you would just slide on into the adult years with an inappropriate parenting child kind of role. And so when that occurs, I think if you just see it as not only natural, but probably healthy in the long run, and just keep trying to maintain contact, and you'll connect again.

Robert Wolgemuth: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Robert and Bobbie and Missy and Julie, thanks for being our guest for these two days. Bob, I'm so proud of this book that you've written, and I know that the Lord is going to use it. Missy and Julie, you think you'll ever write a book about your family life?

Missy Schrader: I think we'll... I'll stick with dad's being the one.

Dr. James Dobson: Let him be the spokesman, right? Well, it's sure been good to have you all here talking about this. There's always a risk at exposing your personal life, your early home life to millions of people like this. And I appreciate your willingness to do this. And Bobbie, we'll see you guys on a vacation somewhere, right?

Bobbie Wolgemuth: Thanks.

Robert Wolgemuth: Somewhere soon.

Roger Marsh: The bond between a father and his daughter is one of the most formative relationships in any young woman's life. And Robert Wolgemuth's words today here on Family Talk are a beautiful reminder that the small, everyday moments of intentional love are the ones that will last a lifetime. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. We just heard part two of Dr. Dobson's conversation with author Robert Wolgamuth and his wife, Bobbie, and their daughters, Missy and Julie. Now, Bobbie went home to be with the Lord shortly after this recording. Robert remarried Nancy Leigh DeMoss, and they ran the Revive Our Hearts ministries for many years until Robert went home to be with the Lord earlier this year. As I mentioned at the start of the program, Dr. Dobson and Robert and Bobbie Wolgamuth are enjoying a wonderful reunion in heaven right now. By the way, if you missed any part of today's broadcast or if you'd like to learn more about Robert Wolgemuth book called, *She Calls Me Daddy*, go to [jdfi.org](http://jdfi.org).

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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 listening today. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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

Dr. James Dobson: The circus performer who walks the tightrope understands that one skill is needed more than any other, and it is balance.

Here's today's Dr. Dobson Minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Well, there are men and women today in the same condition. During my 14 years at USC School of Medicine, I saw a pattern in the lives of young medical students that demonstrated this imbalance dramatically. During the first or second year the students threw every energy into their work to the absolute exclusion of everything else. At first, it seemed like a workable approach but by the third year their spouses began to realize that they had been replaced by the profession of medicine, and that's when marital conflict and divorce became pandemic among the students. It doesn't matter how noble the reason for the imbalance; its consequences are just as destructive. In short, we have to set a pace for ourselves that we can keep for a lifetime.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org).