



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Honoring the America 250 Essay Contest Winners – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Crystal Konadu

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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.
- Gary Bauer: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Gary Bauer, senior vice president of public policy at JDPI. I'm really glad that you joined us today. We're going to talk today and continue to highlight the winners of our America 250 essay contest. I have the great honor today to talk to our high school winner of our essay contest, Crystal Konadu. Crystal, congratulations on your big win and welcome to Family Talk.
- Crystal Konadu: Hello. Thank you so much. Hi. My name is Crystal Konadu, like you said. I am a Ghanaian-American, I guess, first generation. My parents are both immigrants. I was born here. I love my country. I love my culture. I love learning about history and writing and reading as well. So crafting this essay was honestly really fun for me. And I'm so grateful that I have this opportunity. So thank you guys so much.
- Gary Bauer: For all of our listeners, Crystal, I think they just all figured out why you were the winner of the essay contest. That was a great first response from our introduction. What a great way to begin our conversation. So, Crystal, I'd like to start. We could tell a lot about you by just reading the wonderful essay, but tell us a little bit more about you, you know, the things you like doing. Do you have hobbies? I think, as I recall from the essay, you're very involved in student government at your school so just tell us a little bit more if you would.
- Crystal Konadu: Yes, I guess I'll start for number one. I love the Lord. I love Jesus so much. I love being involved in my church. I am a student leader at my church. I attend my services all the time. And I love connecting with people who have common faith and also just connecting with kids my age who are newer to Christ or just talking to them about Christ, giving them the perspective of what it's like to be environments like that. I love STEM and engineering and math and science and just learning about how God created our world and how He wants us to steward the environment that He's given us as well and like further and like progress and help people. I am in student government at my high school this year. I'm going to be a senior and I'm going to be the student body vice president, which I'm so grateful for that the Lord has given me that opportunity to lead my classmates and my friends and just continue to uplift my school environment and lead them Christlikeness and just loving one another as well.

Gary Bauer: Did you have to be elected by your fellow students for those positions?

Crystal Konadu: Yes.

Gary Bauer: Well, that's fantastic. You're already a politician.

Crystal Konadu: I don't think so. Thank you though.

Gary Bauer: Now, Crystal, you said a couple of things that really got my attention. You obviously love science and the medical world and so forth. But you said, you know, that one of the reasons you love science if I understood you correctly is that it helps you to better understand the wonderful things that God has created. So you obviously love science and you love god and there's no contradiction is there?

Crystal Konadu: No there's not I personally believe and I do go to a Christian school so maybe I'm a little bit biased but I believe that God is real and active and like Sovereign in creation, just from what I've seen with the way that plants breathe with like stomata underneath the leaves and the way that our nervous system works. It just doesn't make any sense that something evolved to create blinking lights inside of our minds that tell us to speak and understand what we're seeing. I feel like creation very obviously testifies to the existence of God. And the more that I learn, the more that I grow in faith. And I have also observed that a lot of very strong intellectual people who do dive into Christianity from that scientific perspective of trying to disprove it often end up converting as well. So I think that that's definitely evidence that God is real and alive and active. And even though I think the science world does try to push back against Him, I think He's working and moving and revealing Himself in a lot of ways like miracles in medicine. People being healed from cancer miraculously and things like that, stories that we hear more often than not. And yeah, I think that's very powerful.

Gary Bauer: Yes, I agree completely. You know, not everybody, if they see something like the essay contest that we came up with, there's a lot of young people out there that might just read the description of the essay contest and say, Well, that's not for me, or why would I want to waste my time on that? So how did you find out about the contest, and what moved you to say to yourself, you know, that's something I think I can do, and maybe I would even win it?

Crystal Konadu: I found out about the contest through my English teacher. I'm just going to shout her out, Dr. Tilly. She's my number one supporter. She has always believed in me and pushed me to better myself and take my writing very seriously. I've had her for creative writing classes. I've had her for English. She's really just pushed me, helped me grow in the way that I write and the way that I speak as well. And she reached out to me and she told me that she thought it would be a really good fit for me and that I should look into it. And at first, I was like, okay, this sounds really interesting. This is something that I love. I love

America and I love learning about our country's history. History class is one of my favorite classes. And I definitely firmly believe that our country is rooted in Christianity, whether or not people really accept it today. So I was like, this is something that I would love to write about. This is something that I would love to expound upon and also integrate my own life into it as well. So I think that's what made me write. I did not go into it thinking that I would win. I just thought that it was a really interesting topic. And I took my teacher up on the offer and praise be to God.

Gary Bauer: Well, I haven't met your English teacher, but thank her for us.

Crystal Konadu: I'm going to surprise her after this because she doesn't know yet.

Gary Bauer: Well, that'll be great. I'll be interested to hear what her reaction was. I think, you know, we know that in the public schools, they really have gotten off the rails about this and they're not really teaching. They're not teaching American history. They're teaching anti-American history in some ways. And so I'm so... it's like music to my ears to hear a young woman like yourself say that you love history and you love studying American history. That's a really wonderful, if we're going to save our republic, you know, we need more young people like that. So do you try to read history books or history things outside of the classroom?

Crystal Konadu: I do. I love historical fiction. I also love watching YouTube videos that kind of highlight really important historical events through like animation. There's a channel called Oversimplify that I would always watch before a big test because he really breaks down like really major events like D-Day or like the ending of World War II and things like that, like the whole scope of it. in a way that's very simple and kind of makes it sound like drama, if that makes sense.

Gary Bauer: Yes, sure.

Crystal Konadu: I really enjoy looking at it through that lens and also looking at it from the direct historical perspective, watching documentaries about the lives of veterans after a battle or coming out of a war and things like that.

Gary Bauer: Yes. You might want to check this out. Hillsdale College has done some work with the White House and they've developed a number of historical animated videos about different parts of the American Revolution and what happened at Constitution Hall. And there's no politics in them. It's just pure American history. But they're very well done, you know, really professionally done. And they're kind of a joy to watch because it's presented in a way that it's even interesting maybe to some young people that aren't that interested in history.

You know, I had the pleasure of meeting your mom and dad before we started officially having our conversation. And, you know, I know from my own life that having a mother and father that are committed to the right things really matter. So I don't want to embarrass you, but could you tell us a little bit about, you

know, the role your mom and dad have played in leading you in the direction you're going and the obvious, you have all the traits of somebody that is going to be very successful and also love God and love their country. So how did your mom and dad help mold the young lady that we're talking to today?

Crystal Konadu: I think they did everything. I guess from a very young age, they've definitely instilled in me who I am, keeping me and my brother involved in church. We've always gone to church regularly from Sunday school all the way through like doing things with my youth group. To this day, my mom has always been very supportive. She's helped me and like know who I am and just trusting God, even when things get scary. Like if I feel like, "Mom, I'm going to fail this class." She's like, "No, you're not going to fail. God is with you; God is on your side. He's going to help you to pull through." And my dad also always being there to double check my work because he's a major professional, also super involved in my life and in my education. They decided to put me in a private Christian school, basically, well, yeah, basically my entire life, which I know is a huge commitment and a huge sacrifice. They made that decision to give me the foundations that I have today that have made me who I am today. And I couldn't be more grateful for that. They're the reason why I'm here. They're the reason why I am who I am. They gave me my name. They helped me grow into that name to become the young woman that God has made me to be.

Gary Bauer: Well, as I said to them before we began to talk, they've obviously done an incredible job. Everybody wants to pay teachers more and they should be paid more. But parents are the first and most important teachers that a child has. And every child needs somebody that wakes up in the morning whose number one priority is to love that child and guide that child. And you've been really blessed, Crystal, to have both a mom and dad that's doing that for you.

Crystal Konadu: Absolutely.

Gary Bauer: Tell me a little bit about as I read your essay and I've read it a number of times. You know, if you don't tell anybody, I might steal some of it from my next speech, but I'm not going to steal it. I might quote from it, but I'll give you credit if I do that, because you make some really great points. But you obviously have this love of science. So tell us a little bit about what your hopes are after you graduate from high school and where you see your life going in the years ahead.

Crystal Konadu: Yes, I would say the first thing I want to do is just spotlight the Lord, because this time last year, I had no idea what I wanted to do after I graduated. And sophomore year of high school is usually around the time that you start getting all the big questions like, OK, take your SAT, get your score, figure out whether or not you're actually going to be able to do college work and things like that. It was very stressful. I was feeling kind of down on myself, kind of doubting myself when I started taking my first hard classes. But I just kept seeking the Lord. And I was like, God, please show me what I want to do. You know, I love engineering and science and helping people. So please help me find a way to put all those things together and not lose my head.

And I would say around this fall and like last spring, essentially, the Lord really showed me that He was calling me into medical engineering and medical device fields and things like that because I love helping people. I love volunteer work. I love providing for the underprivileged. And so the Lord really put on my heart that He was calling me into a career as a biomedical engineer. Specifically, my dream is to start a non-profit organization that provides prosthetics and medical assistance and all different kinds of help and aid that people who cannot afford to get things from those like upfront costs at hospitals and different medical care and things like that can come to that facility, come to that company and get the things that they need completely free of charge. I don't know exactly how that would work. I'm still researching how companies like that work, but I know that that's what the Lord is calling me to do, just to be there for His people, to help those who can't help themselves. And yeah, even though it might not be something that I could get rich off of or become famous for. I do want to be there for the Lord's people and also shine His light onto others so that even if they don't ever step into a church building, they can see that there are people out there who don't know them, but still care for them. And that would prayerfully point them to their Creator also.

Gary Bauer: Could we impose on you today to read your essay to us? And if you stumble, just keep on going here. Just read it. And our listeners will be able to hear at least part of it when we broadcast the show.

Crystal Konadu: Absolutely.

Gary Bauer: Fantastic.

Crystal Konadu: My essay is titled, "A City on a Hill, Christianity's Roots in America and My Call to Continue God's Work." As the sun rose over Plymouth Plantation on a cold November morning in 1620, 13-year-old Elizabeth Tilly sat alone by her cabin fireplace, contemplating the recent deaths of all her parental guardians and the tragic aftermath of the first winter. Left orphaned in the new colony, Elizabeth considered the life she left behind in Bedfordshire, England, to travel to the new world. Despite severe loss, her decision to persevere shaped generations to follow her. Elizabeth's story is just one of many Puritan pilgrims who wielded their iron faith with resolve to strive towards a brighter future. One where they could freely practice their beliefs and live unswayed by the societal pressures of the world around them. This bold Christian faith has been the root of the United States of America from the very beginning. Americans have fought for freedom, stood firm in their beliefs, and strived to impact others around us, just like Christ calls the church to do. One of the most influential Puritan trailblazers was John Winthrop, the leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the most prominent in New England. Winthrop gave a speech called "A Model of Christian Charity," in which he commissions the new colony to provide a framework of Christianity to the world and colonies to come. He quotes Jesus' words in Matthew 5:14, stating, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill." The eyes of all people are upon us. Winthrop believed that the Lord was calling him to

glorify Him by faithfully walking in His statutes. He also highlights caring for the needy as a fundamental duty of God's people, rooting American generosity in Christian beliefs. These Puritan values not only established the American drive for exceptionalism as a godly model for Christianity, but also called on Americans to make a remarkable impact on their neighbors.

Hundreds of years later, Americans now work as the hands and feet of God in countless countries today. The Charities Aid Foundation ranks the United States as the sixth most generous nation in the world. Alongside this statistic, the National Philanthropic Trust accounts 66.7% of total giving in America to come from individuals, not churches or organizations. On the faith-focused side, the World Christian Database lists the United States as the top sender of missionaries, increasing the current dispatch of 135,000 missionaries around the world. A specific American whose views have maintained Christian influence for centuries was William Penn. He was an influential Quaker and founder of the New Jersey colony. Some of the most significant codes cited trials for impeachment of the governor, review and nullification of unconstitutional laws, limiting capital punishment, and absolute freedom of worship. These pivotal texts were the landmark values of social freedom that heavily influenced the United States Constitution a century later. Penn continued to push for individual freedoms that contradicted the culture of his time. The roots he and other founders planted later spread to inspire the views of abolitionists and civil rights activists who pushed for the changes that shape our inclusive, equality-centered society in America today.

The battles of social reformers like Thurgood Marshall, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King Jr., and Dolores Huerta have impacted and unified everything from our public school system to our military. Americans boast a nation in which individuals with all backgrounds, religions, and socioeconomic statuses can learn and grow alongside one another. Beyond charity, academic exceptionalism and social justice, Christian values have impacted America in a myriad of other ways. American presidents have also called for national days of prayer in times of crises like assassinations, wars, and terrorist attacks. These are just a few of Christianity's direct contributions to the founding, development, and growth of America, giving the nation its roots and identity to this day. Learning all this information about America's spiritual foundation changed my perspective on our nation's religious roots entirely. At my church, I have spent this past year collaborating with my youth leaders to craft enjoyable events and experiences for our students where I can also minister to them in small groups. Jesus' words in Matthew reiterates the Puritan value for service Wynthrop referred to in his speech. I know that using my positions this way will display that influence is a tool God uses to equip His people to serve others.

Finally, I believe the Lord is calling me to serve my country and nations around me by using my love for design and medicine to glorify Him with my career. I want to become a biomedical engineer and open a non-profit organization that provides underprivileged patients with the prosthetics, implants, and monitoring devices they need completely free of charge. Although some may

view this business venture as unwise, I am rooted in Proverbs 19:17. God promises that whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and He will reward them for what they have done. The Puritans build their lives off of this solid ground. Specifically, William Penn displayed similar values. By choosing to stand up for religious minorities, Penn works towards a goal beyond his lifetime. His efforts not only secured the favor of God for America then, but also the gift of liberty filled life for generations to come. Drawing inspiration from Penn has helped me put my dreams into focus. I do not care about being rich, influential, or popular. My greatest goal is to serve God and enrich His people. Through my journey, I will not only grow as a daughter of Christ, but also pave the way for my friends, classmates, and nation to fight for freedom by living rooted in His truth and serving others.

Gary Bauer:

Wow. Well, folks, you heard what Crystal wrote, and now I'm sure you understand why she was the winner of our essay contest. Crystal, that was well-spoken just as it was well-written. And as I was listening to you say the speech out loud, you know, I didn't need a reminder, but it did remind me that the James Dobson Family Institute that sponsored this contest, Dr. Dobson devoted his entire life to the things you talked about in the essay, to religious liberty and to wanting to make America a shining city on a hill, that great biblical phrase that the founders also used. Dr. Dobson went on to be with the Lord last year after many, many years of fighting for the things that you wrote about. And I wish he could have done this interview because he would have been on cloud nine to see a young American like you upholding the same values that he devoted his life to. But I have no doubt he's looking down from Heaven and enjoyed hearing this essay. And because it's very much handled or dealt with all the things that he loved and cared about in faith, family, and freedom. So, Crystal, God bless you. Congratulations to you again. It was great to briefly talk to your parents. We love the essay. We're honored to give you the award and we look forward to doing more things with you in the months ahead.

Crystal Konadu:

Thank you so much, sir. I'm so honored. I'm so grateful that I got this opportunity. God bless you all as well.

Roger Marsh:

Well, what a remarkable young woman. Crystal Konadu reminds us that the future of this nation rests in the hands of a rising generation that still believes in faith, family, and freedom. And as we celebrate America's independence all throughout this weekend, we can take heart in knowing that students like Crystal are carrying that torch forward. And congratulations, Crystal, on winning the high school division of our America 250 essay contest, sponsored by the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, with an assist from our friends at the Herzog Foundation.

You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and I encourage you to check out the winner's presentations at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) or [jdfi.org](http://jdfi.org). And as we give thanks for the freedoms we so often take for granted, I hope you'll join us in the work of preserving them. As a listener-supported ministry, we depend on partners like you to defend religious liberty, strengthen families, and share the

gospel with the next generation. Right now, your gift will be doubled to go twice as far. It's our USA 250 matching grant of \$250,000, thanks to some generous friends of the ministry. Every dollar you give during the month of July will be doubled in size and impact until we hit that \$250,000 plateau. So let's get there as soon as we can. Give us a call at 877-732-6825, a member of our constituent care team will be happy to help you with the transaction. 877-732-6825. You can make a secure donation when you go to [jdfi.org](http://jdfi.org), or [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). They're both the same place. Or if you prefer to write to us, our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute and the Family Talk broadcast, we are wishing you and your family a blessed and happy Independence Day. I'm Roger Marsh, inviting you 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: Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 patriots who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Roger Marsh: With today's Dr. Dobson Minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: The men who drafted and signed this amazing document knew full well the dangers they faced in doing so. They were men of means, well-educated, with a lot to lose. Carter Braxton of Virginia saw his ships swept away by the British Navy. He later died in rags. Thomas McKean lost his home to the British and fled into exile with his family. Francis Lewis lost his home and property and watched helplessly as his wife was jailed and killed. Five of the signers were captured and killed as traitors. This Independence Day, let's not forget the sacrifices that were made by so many to purchase our freedom. The Fourth of July is about much more than fireworks and picnics and baseball.

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