



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Welcome to Our Table!

Guest(s): Shirley Dobson and Danae Dobson

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and you know, tomorrow here in the U.S. is Thanksgiving Day. It's a day when families all across America will gather around tables to share a meal and count their blessings. Well, many of us will anyway. More than anything though, it's a time to pause from our busy schedules and recognize God's faithful provision in our lives. Whether your celebration will be large or small or tomorrow or sometime later in the weekend due to schedules, remember that Thanksgiving reminds us of what matters most. Gratitude and togetherness. Now, this year here at the James Dobson Family Institute, Thanksgiving and the holiday season are somewhat bittersweet. It's the first time here at the JDFI that we'll be commemorating the holiday without our founder and chairman sitting at the head of the table, if you will, as Dr. Dobson went home to be with the Lord earlier this year on August the 21st.

But today we thought it would be appropriate the day before Thanksgiving 2025 to revisit a conversation that Dr. Dobson had with his beloved wife, Shirley and their daughter Danae, discussing the book that Shirley and Danae wrote about the holidays and hospitality. It's a great book called *Welcome to Our Table*. This book is as much a family heirloom as it is actually a cookbook. It offers timeless lessons about blessing others through the ministry of hospitality. During the next half hour, you're going to hear some heartwarming stories about how opening your home can transform lives and create lasting memories. And speaking of memories, I would like to share one of my favorite Thanksgiving traditions with you before we get into today's broadcast because it involves food of course, but it also involves the movies.

Now, when Thanksgiving rolled around in the Marsh household, I was always biblically jealous of my friends who had aunts and uncles and cousins coming in to visit because both of my parents, my mom and my dad, were only children. So big family gatherings really weren't all that big for us. In fact, my grandmother, my mom's mother was still with us and my dad's mom and dad were with us for a few years before I grew up and they moved on to be with the Lord, but it was really just me and my siblings and my parents, and maybe a grandparent or two when we sat around the Marsh Thanksgiving table. We

would get together and the ladies would go into the kitchen and they would spend all morning and early afternoon cooking the meal while my dad and my brother and I, well, if we had a worship service that morning at church, we would go do that, but then we'd come back for Thanksgiving.

But if we didn't, we would watch a lot of football early on being on the Southern California pacific time zone. Then we would all get together around two or three in the afternoon and have a huge family meal. Now, if you're thinking that the Marsh men got off easy on Thanksgiving Day, we did and we didn't because after we ate, it was my dad and my brother and my turn to go into the kitchen. Only this time we had cleanup duty, and then after my mom was sitting exhausted in my dad's recliner, you knew she was really tired if she was sitting in dad's chair. My dad would look around and he'd ask, okay, who wants to go see a movie? And I never missed an opportunity to go to the movies with my dad. As an only child, he went to the movies a lot by himself when he was younger and even in his adult years. And so the family would go together. But on Thanksgiving Day, there was just something special about Dad saying, let's go ahead and let's go see a movie.

I remember one year we went back to go see *Back to the Future*, just the two of us, and it was a very, very special and very, very meaningful time for us. And now that my mom and dad are both in their early nineties, I still have fond memories of that day. So parents, grandparents, please take full advantage of every opportunity you have when the holidays roll around to be there for your kids, to be in that position for your grandkids, where you never know when going to a movie or throwing the football around in the park or just sitting around and telling stories. You never know what kind of impact that type of memory is going to have on the life of a young child. Okay, enough of me. Let's get into the Dobson family traditions. Now let's listen in as Dr. Dobson introduces his daughter Danae and his wife Shirley, as we revisit this classic edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk centered on the theme, welcome to our table.

Dr. James Dobson: I am so proud of you. You've now written 25 books starting with *Woof* in the early days. I still have people that come up to me on the street and say, my kids love the *Woof* books.

Danae Dobson: Which you inspired in our carpool years ago. And you used to tell us those stories.

Dr. James Dobson: About a dog.

Danae Dobson: About a dog named *Woof*. And then when I was 11, I decided to write my own *Woof* story and you helped me polish it up and we found a publisher that was willing to publish it and the rest is history.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you were the youngest publisher in the 25 year history of Word Publishing, and I am very proud of you. You've gone on to write many other books, some of 'em for teenagers and other things, but now you and your mom have written another book, which is really why we're here today. Tell us about *Welcome to Our Table*.

Danae Dobson: When I first came up with the idea to do a book on the topic of hospitality, I called mom to talk to her about it and I expected her to be really excited and oh, that's a great idea. Her response was "Danae, I don't have time. I have a year-long task with the National Day of Prayer, and I'm trying to help your dad start this new ministry and I just can't do it." So I twisted her arm hard enough and she agreed to do it.

Shirley Dobson: I think the book, not because we wrote it, but I wish I would've had this book when I was a young bride, and it's good for any ages, but if you really want to peek into the Dobson family, this is the book. We have our own recipes in this book, some that have been handed down from grandmothers. We have pictures of our family throughout it. We even have Jim Dobson in an apron cooking.

Danae Dobson: Frying chicken.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, if you just look at the pictures in the book, and they're great lithographs throughout this book. The pictures are really the fun part of the book. But if you look at the picture of me barbecuing and frying chicken and doing other things, you'll think that that's all I do is I stay home and cook every day.

Shirley Dobson: Speaking of Jim cooking, I have to tell you he really is a good cook. He only cooks a few things, but they're his signature dishes, but they're really good. The only thing is when he fries his chicken, there's canola oil popping all over the stove and he has flour all over the kitchen floor and on his clothes, but you've never eaten better chicken and all your life. And the recipe is right in the book as his mother taught him when he was a small child.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, my mother was a great cook and she passed a lot of that on to me. And honestly, I am a good fryer of chicken.

Danae Dobson: We even have pictures with the steps of individual steps listed on the pages.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, this book also has many stories in it. It's not just about photographs of the Dobsons doing their thing, but there's a lot of stories that relate to the times of the year to the celebrations and holidays, and I think that's really neat. Share some of the stories that are in the book.

Shirley Dobson: Well, hospitality means a lot to me because I came from a very dysfunctional family. My father had a severe drinking problem and we never had friends or people from our church over because we never knew when my dad would come home and embarrass us all. And so when I was a sophomore in college, one of

my girlfriends invited me home for the weekend and it really changed my life. I remember waking up on a Saturday morning to this wonderful aroma of home cooked breakfast. Her mother fixed scrambled eggs and bacon and rolls, and it just smelled wonderful. And the home was so loving and so together and it really made a big impression on me. But what made the bigger impression was that the family prayed together before the meal. I had never seen that done. Prayer was just not something that we did in our family and we never prayed before meals. And then we enjoyed the meal. And then afterwards he took out the Bible, he read Scriptures, he talked about the Scriptures, and then he asked each one of us if we would kneel by our chairs, and he prayed for each one of us. And that was such a unique blessing to me because I'd never seen it done. And I thought to myself that very day, if I'm ever blessed to have a husband and children, I want to replicate that in my home. And we have.

Dr. James Dobson: You never know what people who are in your home are going to pick up from watching how you live. I think we need to give credit where credits do. That was the Wooten family and we went on later to know them and love them. But you just think that that father took the time, he's probably busy like everybody else, to pause and to talk to you all about the Scripture and then to ask you to pray in that little setting. And it had a profound impact on your life. Danae, let me get your take on it. I know that you love to have people come into your home and you have said in this book that your mother taught you to appreciate hospitality and to participating in it, didn't she?

Danae Dobson: Yes, she did. You know, the saying, a lot more is caught than taught. And growing up in an atmosphere where I saw my mom hosting women's Bible studies and having people over for meals and hosting my high school youth group on Sunday nights, I know that one of the main reasons why I like to do those things is because of the example that she set. So thank you mom for being a wonderful role model. To me.

Shirley Dobson: It was a pleasure, Danae.

Dr. James Dobson: As a matter of fact, let's go to the heart of the book because the Scriptures tell us that it's God's will that we have people in our homes. The Scripture mentions hospitality and surely that's what drew you to this project, this writing project.

Shirley Dobson: Absolutely. In fact, in Romans 12:13, it says, "Share with the Lord's people who are in need, practice hospitality." And then again in 1 Peter 4:9, "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." And there are many other Scriptures, but one reason that I wanted to do this book with Danae is because hospitality is a lost art. People don't have you into their homes anymore. You meet at a restaurant and you sit at the restaurant and you visit, but there's something magical that happens when you are invited into someone's home and you see the warmth of their home, even if it's for refreshments such as a cup of coffee and a cookie or a piece of pie. There's something that happens there. The Lord's blessing is there.

Danae Dobson: And as my friend pastor Steve Wingfield says, “Jesus used the table talk method throughout his ministry and it resulted in life-changing decisions.” So something significant occurs when we break bread together and we experience love and communion around the table.

Shirley Dobson: I think what we're trying to get across to our listeners is that your home is not just a house, it's actually a place of ministry. It needs to be a safe place where people can come in and like you said, Danae find love and find stability and find the Lord.

Dr. James Dobson: So it's a tool for evangelism.

Shirley Dobson: Absolutely.

Danae Dobson: It's a sanctuary.

Shirley Dobson: All of us could serve a cup of tea and some cookies, but there's so many hurting people out there that just needed somebody to listen to them or somebody to put an arm around them. And especially in this day and age where we live, there are people that are in a lot of pain and right on our street. They're not going to tell us, but sometimes when you have them into your home, they'll open up those wounds and let you know.

Dr. James Dobson: Danae, what about men and hospitality? I mean, is this just something for women? I'm sure that the book is intended for women, but what about the men?

Danae Dobson: Interesting you'd asked me that because at Bible study I was explaining to the group that my mom and I were working on a hospitality book for women. And one of the guys spoke up and said, “What about men who like to practice hospitality?” And this particular gentleman is single. He likes to have people over. He likes to plan events. And so yes, men have a responsibility too. Scripture gives us all a command to practice hospitality. It's not just for women.

Dr. James Dobson: And I like the idea of the men and women doing it together. You have another family over to come and the man has a role to play there and so does the woman. I can tell you that it is a fact. Children love for their parents to have other families in, especially families with kids. And we're so isolated from each other today. Everybody's whack whacking on the computer, and we don't take the time to just be together. And I mentioned in my book *Bringing Up Boys* that it was not uncommon when I was a child to hear a rap, rap, rap on the screen door and there would be somebody there that didn't have an appointment, that hadn't placed that moment into their calendars, and yet they dropped by for a visit. My mother would invite 'em to come in. She usually had some kind of pie in the refrigerator and she would put a coffee pot on the stove. People seemed to love it and I loved it as a kid to have visitors that way. Shirley because you grew up in a home without a lot of hospitality. There weren't a lot of traditions

either and traditions give meaning and to families. It is a way of saying this is who we are, this is what we do. And traditions are things that are done routinely once a year usually or things that occur at the time of a season. Share at least one of our traditions from the childhood years of our children.

Shirley Dobson: Well, one of our favorite traditions is at Christmastime. In fact, on Christmas Eve after dinner, we gather in the living room with our family. And if we have friends there, they join us and everyone is given a votive candle. It's not lit. That represents Jesus who is the light of the world. We always choose someone to be the candlelighter, it's usually Ryan. Ryan lights the first candle and that person shares a blessing of the previous year and something they would like the Lord to do in their life the following year. For instance, maybe build a closer relationship with someone that you have maybe had a tense relationship with, or maybe you want to have a closer walk with the Lord. You want him to do something special in your life. Whatever it is, they share. And then that person turns to the next person and lights their candle.

And then after the next person has shared, they turn and light the next person's candle until we have gone all the way around the circle. And the amazing thing is that the presence of the Lord always comes and there are tears. People open their hearts and they share intimate things. And it's like the Lord said, "I see you. I see you trying to honor Me because Christmas is such a chaotic time with wrapping and baking and shopping," and Jesus just gets left out and after all, it's His special day, it's His birthday. And so I wanted to make it a point to honor Him in our family and that He didn't get forgotten on His special day.

Dr. James Dobson: And that has become a tradition.

Danae Dobson: In fact, I even implemented that in my own life. There have been years in the past where I hosted a Christmas candlelight ceremony for my own friends and it was a very significant time of sharing.

Dr. James Dobson: We're almost out of time, but Shirley, would you, kind as a way of putting a ribbon on this talk about having Mamie come to our house at Christmas time. That meant a lot to me and it meant even more to her.

Shirley Dobson: Well, it goes along with Romans 12:13, "Share with the Lord's people who are in need." We have a very close family. And Jim, if you remember, your folks really didn't want outsiders at Christmastime, on Christmas day. They wanted that.

Dr. James Dobson: That's my mother. Yeah, she didn't.

Shirley Dobson: Just wanted it to be family part of their family.

Danae Dobson: Part of their generation.

- Shirley Dobson: We became acquainted with an 80-year-old lady at our church. She was a former missionary. And just talking with her, I found out that she had nowhere to go on Christmas Eve. So I came home and I talked to our family and I said, we really need to have her over. And at first the kids were against it. They said, oh, it's our family Christmas and blah, blah, blah. But then they gave in.
- Danae Dobson: We thought it would delay the presents.
- Dr. James Dobson: Now we're getting to the heart of it.
- Shirley Dobson: But anyway, her name was Mamie Hendricks and we had her over and we thought we were going to give to her, but in the long run, she gave so much more to us. She brought her scrapbooks over. Probably no one had wanted to see them for years, but she went through 'em page by page. Everyone had a story on it of her work in the mission fields.
- Dr. James Dobson: And she was a widow and her husband was a missionary. So that was an era that was long gone and nobody had asked about it.
- Shirley Dobson: Right. And the kids got involved in it and she was really quite a fascinating lady and had quite a ministry. But when she left, she said that that was one of the happiest nights of her life and made me tear up because I didn't realize it meant so much to her, but it did. And when she left, we realized that we got far more than we gave to her. And I just want to encourage our listeners out there to... the Lord says He has a tender heart for the orphans and for the widows, so look around in your church and make sure on those special days or any days that you include widows in your hospitality.
- Dr. James Dobson: What made that so successful is that we didn't talk about ourselves at all. We focused on Mamie. We all sat, the kids too sat looking at these pictures. They had been missionaries in the Virgin Islands and they had all these photographs of their church and her husband fishing and doing all those things. And she loved being able to talk about those things. We sat there for a couple of hours and it was very meaningful to us, believe it or not. Danae and Shirley, this is a very good book. *Welcome to our Table: Sharing Favorite Recipes, Inspirational Stories and Heartwarming Gatherings with Family and Friends.*
- Danae Dobson: One of my favorite chapters in the book is titled "Seasoned Hostesses." And this is a chapter that centers around three women whom I interviewed, and they have all been through adversities of biblical proportion and yet they have held onto their faith and they continue to serve even in the midst of their trials and their stories are just so touching and so amazing. And I thought it was a great way to end the book. Plus they shared some of their own hospitality tips after years of experience.
- Dr. James Dobson: Danae and Shirley, thank you for coming to be our guests. It's really good to have you here. Both of have been on Family Talk before and will be here again

in the future but Danae, welcome to Colorado Springs. We're going to get you to stay. We're not going to allow you to go home.

Danae Dobson: And you know what I'm going to get you to do? Fry me some of that chicken.

Dr. James Dobson: Alright? It's a deal. It's a deal.

Danae Dobson: I mean it.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. Blessings to you guys. I love you both more than you can know and we'll talk again.

Shirley Dobson: Thank you, Jim.

Danae Dobson: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Those sentimental tender words from Dr. Dobson ring a bit more poignantly today here on the day before Thanksgiving 2025. This will be the first Thanksgiving holiday in the Dobson household that Dr. James Dobson has not been joining them at the table, but we know those memories will live on for Lincoln and Luci, his two grandchildren, for his son Ryan and Ryan's wife, Laura, and then daughter Danae, and of course Dr. Dobson's widow, Shirley Dobson. You know the simple act of inviting someone into your home can become a profound ministry. Creating moments where people feel truly seen and valued and loved. I'm Roger Marsh, and on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we've been revisiting a classic conversation that Dr. Dobson recorded with his wife Shirley and daughter Danae. They were talking about Shirley and Danae's book called *Welcome to Our Table*, and that is the theme of today's broadcast here on Family Talk.

As you prepare to gather with loved ones for tomorrow's Thanksgiving celebration. I hope you'll remember the words of Hebrews chapter 13, verse two. The writer of Hebrews writes, "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers for by doing so, some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." Your home truly is a place of ministry. It's a place where broken hearts can find healing and where weary souls can discover hope. Now, if you missed any portion of today's program or if you want to share it with someone that you love, I encourage you to go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk if for no other reason just to hear Doctor talking about the holidays with Shirley and Danae. This year in particular, it means so much more. Once you're on our website, you'll also find information about how you can order a copy of Shirley and Danae's book called *Welcome to Our Table*. You'll find that information and more when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

And for more classic wisdom from Dr. Dobson, I want to encourage you to sign up for one of our free email series. This one that I'm recommending today is called "Raising Kids with Love and Limits." It's a 10-day series based on Dr.

Dobson's best-selling book, *The New Strong-Willed Child*. And since Danae was on the program today, I've heard her say more than once that she believes that the strong-willed child was actually written about her. Well, whether your children are sweet and compliant or independent and defiant, this series offers practical wisdom to help you lead them well. So to sign up for your free email series, "Raising Kids With Love and Limits," go to drjamesdobson.org and just search for that title, *Raising Kids With Love and Limits*. That's drjamesdobson.org.

Programs like the one you heard today exist because friends like you believe in strengthening families through biblical principles. The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute still works every day to promote marriage, to support parents, to defend the sanctity of life, and to introduce people to the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when you partner with us, you're helping broadcast messages of hope and truth to millions of families. Now, if you've benefited from the programs you hear here on Family Talk, I have a special reminder for you. Thanks to the efforts of some generous friends of our ministry, the Dr. James Dobson Memorial Matching Grant has been established. You can give a gift securely online, over the phone or through the mail, and know that every dollar you donate between now and December 31st will be doubled up to \$6 million. Now we've had lots of great gifts of \$100 \$200 or more coming our way. We've had several gifts that are in the 10 and \$20,000 range. If you feel led to continue the work of Dr. James Dobson through a donation of that size, please don't hesitate to give us a call.

Our constituent care team is standing by at 877-732-6825. If you'd like to give securely online, go to drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Or if you'd like to send your donation through the U.S. Postal Service and maybe include a Christmas card for the Dobson family as well, I encourage you to write to us. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. And from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, may your Thanksgiving celebration be filled with gratitude, laughter, and the warmth of loved ones gathered around your table. Join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

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