



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** God's Direction in My Life – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Bob Vernon

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**Dr. James Dobson:** You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

**Roger Marsh:** Well, hello there. I'm Roger Marsh and welcome to another edition of Family Talk. The listener supported broadcast ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We want to thank you for making us a part of your day. We know you have a lot of options and a lot of choices to make with your time, so the time that you invest with us means a lot to us. We value your attention, and we truly appreciate your appreciation for our content.

That said, today we're bringing you the conclusion of a powerful presentation by our ministry friend, Bob Vernon. The topic, God's direction in our lives, that core truth, God's hand and guidance of our decisions, discernments, the paths we choose, well, it's an ever present promise, and it is a very real gift from our creator. Sometimes you just have to be still and listen for it. Bob Vernon is a retired police officer, who served within the Los Angeles Police Department for over 38 years.

He began his career as a foot patrol officer in the mid 1950s and climbed the ranks until he retired in 1992, as the assistant chief of police. Bob is the founder of the Pointman Leadership Institute, an international training group that presents seminars on leadership and ethics to police and other governmental and private organizations. Bob is also the author of several books, including *L.A. Justice: Lessons From the Firestorm* and *Character: The Foundation of Leadership*. Bob and his wife, Esther have two grown children and several grandchildren. Here now is Bob Vernon and the second half of a classic presentation that we're calling "God's Direction in My Life," right here on Family Talk.

**Bob Vernon:** Let me just give you a couple recent opportunities that I've had, because of my position. Was asked to come back to Chicago just a few weeks ago for a couple's club dinner and it was held at the very fashionable Winnetka Women's Club in Winnetka, right near the Percy mansion. We went there and just before I got up to speak, this guy who organized it came up and he said, "Bob," he said, "I thought I'd just tell you this. I've never seen as many millionaires and presidents

of corporations gathered under one roof in my life." He says, "There's 250 men out there and most of them are millionaires." I said, "Thanks a lot. I just came to speak."

I was privileged to be able to speak to these men as a deputy chief from the Los Angeles Police Department and of course I was invited to speak to them about social issues of today. I addressed those problems. I talk very specifically about some of those problems and gave them some very, what I think are practical answers, but I also gave them my reasons for those practical answers.

I concluded by telling them my personal relationship with God and telling them that I think the basic answer to all of these issues are found in a proper relationship with God and following His commands and His way of living. That night, 50 of those top presidents and vice presidents of corporations came forward and registered a first time commitment to Jesus Christ. I say to God, "Why me, Lord? Thank you." Well, let me conclude by giving you the three point verse message that led me along the way, and that makes my life worth living and that makes life an exciting adventure for me every day. It's found in Proverbs three, five and six. Proverbs three, five and six.

You'll notice, as you look in that verse that there are three prerequisites and then a promise and the three prerequisites go like this. Number one, trust in the Lord with all your heart. Okay, let's talk about that for just a minute. Trust in the Lord, with all your heart. That's the first prerequisite to being placed in a position of being guided by God. You see the promise is, "And He shall direct your paths." You see that at the end of the verse, of verse four? But the first prerequisite is number one trust in the Lord with all your heart.

I imagine most of you sitting here tonight think, "Well, you know, at least I've got that one going for me," but let's talk about that for a minute. You know, that's more than simple intellectual ascent or simple belief. I think that the reason a lot of people today do not feel a presence of God in their life, do not really know Him personally, is that they haven't taken that belief to the point of commitment. They haven't trusted in the Lord with all their heart.

Most Americans believe in God, you get in conversation with the average American... I was talking with one of my colleagues at work just Friday and he was a little bit depressed about life after death. He said, "I don't believe there's any." I said, "Well, do you believe in God?" "Well, of course I... Yes, I believe in God." He sincerely believes in God, but he told me, he said, "But I wish I had the faith that you have." He said, "I don't have it." I said, "Well, you could, it's just a matter of your will, of taking that step of faith." He said, "Well, I can't for some reason yet," he said, "My wife wants me to, but not yet. For some reason I can't."

There is a difference between belief and trust. I remember the situation where we had to raid the Panther headquarters at 41st and central. We organized a group of men and we knew that we had to get six men to take with them, what

we call the key to the city. The key to the city is a battering ram about that long and about that big around made out of solid lead. Can you imagine how heavy it is? That's why we need six men to carry it. It's that big, around and that long. It has three handles on each site. The reason we call it the key to the city is that it opens any door.

We had to get six men to take that battering ram and we felt certain we would have to use a battering ram and have them, if in case we did have to force entry. We knew that the front door had sandbags behind it with automatic weapons. We had warrants of arrests commanding us to go there. The superior court commanding Los Angeles Police Department to serve these warrants. We went with a group of men. Six men took this battering ram and we're standing by in case they needed it. Of course we very legally let them know we were there. We said, "Police officers, we have warrants for your arrest, open in the name of the law," and all that kind of good stuff, you know. I did it all legal and proper and we were met instead of an open door, a pipe bomb came out of the second story window and exploded right alongside the officer with a bullhorn that was giving the command.

He picked up a little shrapnel and moved to one side. Then we brought up the men with the battering ram. Now, these men knew that there was an automatic weapon on the other side of that front door. They knew that, but they had put on bulletproof vests under their coveralls. There was what we call a SWAT team and they had these bulletproof vests. Now, I've seen those bulletproof vests demonstrated at our academy. I believe them. I believe in them. But these men trusted them and you see there's a big difference. You can stand and very impersonally, watch someone fire a gun at that bulletproof shield against the embankment at the academy, against the sand embankment right there and you can see the bullet ricochet off. You can go up and examine it and say, "You know, it didn't penetrate. Hey, that's great." You can believe, but to really trust one of those you'd have to do something like these six men did.

They put them on and they went through a door that they knew had an automatic weapon on the other side. They knew they would take some gunfire. Now that is trust. That's also a lot of courage. These six men took the battering ram, they hit the door, the door went down and sure enough, you can see it in the photos we took it, an automatic weapon opened up on them. The first two guys took a burst of gunfire. They had on the bulletproof vest, so they didn't get hit in a vital area, but it knocked their legs out from under them. The other men went to the side and tried to pull him out of the way and as they were pulling them out of the way, a third officer was hit with a burst of gunfire. Three officers wounded.

One officer had a piece of bone, about three inches literally knocked out of his leg by the automatic machine gun. We had to retire him because he never was right after that. But you see these officers demonstrated their faith in this life saving device and it's that way with God. A vast majority of Americans believe in God, thinking people believe in God. I was talking with Ken Poor, a friend of

mine. He said, "I said, I just had a conversation with the guy." He says, "I don't believe in God." Ken says, "Great." The guy looked at him kind of surprised. He was standing. Ken is kind of a car nut. In fact, he used to be a used car salesman and he was standing next to this Dodge Charger and he says, "By the way, you see that charger?" The guy said, "Yeah." Ken said, "Guess where it came from?" The guy said, "I don't know." He said it just oozed up out of the pavement.

That guy said, "Come on." He said, "What do you mean? Come on?" The guy says, "Well, you know everybody knows that comes from Detroit." Ken said, "Right on, everybody knows that a car demands one thing, that there's somewhere is a car maker and people in the world and the universe tells us one thing. Somewhere there's a people maker and a world maker and a universe maker." He said, "That's why I said, congratulations when you said, 'I don't believe in God,' because," he said, "You know what? You have a lot more faith than I do, think of that for a minute. To have faith that everything came from nothing and that intelligence came from non-intelligent matter. That takes a lot of faith. The big question is, do you have faith or not? The question is who do you have faith in?" Most people believe in God, but how many have taken it to the point of commitment?

Second prerequisite, number two, lean not unto your own understanding. Don't depend on yourself to figure things out for your life. You know, I was going to figure it all out. "God, I'll go to the Air Force. I'll let them train me. I'll become a jungle pilot. I'll do all these things and God, I've got it all planned that you just kind of endorse it if you will and I'll carry on with my business." God said, "That's not what I got planned." I'm glad that He let me know what He wanted me to do, because now that I know more about myself, now that I've lived with myself a few years more, I know that I'm in the job that I really enjoy the most. "Commit your way to the Lord and He'll give you the desires of your heart," the Word of God says.

I was working with a partner that we worked the felony car together for several years and we rolled on an emergency call one afternoon, where a woman had been very viciously beaten and robbed and raped. She needed ambulance care immediately. As we pulled up, another radio car pulled up and we were in a plain clothes car, but it was one of those kind where everybody knows who you are, with the aerials and all that. As we pulled up, the other officers pulled up and they said, "Look, we'll get her to the hospital. Why don't you guys take off? The guy went that way around the corner." We said, "All right." We took off down the street. It's another one of those deals where people were pointing and all that. It ended up about three blocks away in a motel.

We went up to the motel owner and identified myself and I said, "We're looking for a guy that fits this description." I had it all written out. She said, "Well, we have two, we have one over number two and one over number 38," that both of them fit that description. I said, "Well, okay, thank you very much." I went back, told my partner. He said, "Well, let's hit two first." I said, "All right." We went to the front door and I looked in the front door and we were going to deploy

around the house, where my partner went in the back door. But before we could get that far, the front door was open and he saw us and he was standing in the kitchenette portion of the motel. We could see everything, but his hands and he was the guy.

Before he could get a chance to get his gun or anything, I just unbuttoned my coat and I pulled my gun from my shoulder holster and I pulled out my badge in this hand. I stepped into the living room and I said, "Police officer, freeze." Usually, when you do that with a .357 Magnum, usually they just freeze. But this guy, instead of freezing, he's... You got to get the picture now. He's standing in the doorway and couldn't see his hands and as soon as I said, "Police officers, freeze." He just moved after something. All I could see was his foot. Then I could see his weight shifting back and I knew he was coming back.

Of course you figured out probably the same thing I did. He got his gun, he's coming back after me. I went into a crouch position, combat position, and I began to put pressure on the trigger. I was going to fire, as soon as he came around the side of the door. My partner in the meanwhile had slipped in behind me and he could see more of the guy than I could. He had a better angle and he saw me with my gun out. Of course, he had his gun out too. But I heard him yell, just as I began to put pressure on a trigger, "Bob, hold it," and within that fraction of a second I had a decision to make. Follow my own intellect, follow everything that I knew was right, through my training and everything. I knew this guy was armed. I knew he was after his gun. He's coming back. He's going to shoot me and my partner's telling me not to shoot.

Well, thank God I didn't shoot, because you see this wasn't even the man. He was up in apartment 38. We later arrested him by the way, so don't worry, ladies. He's all taken care of, but this man was not the man. He fit the description, but he was standing in his kitchenette peeling a potato. When a strange man with a gun stepped into his room, pointed a gun at him, it kind of frightened him and that potato ladies, you know how it is. Sometimes the starch substance kind of gets all over it when you're peeling it and he kind of flinched and it shot out his hand like a bar of soap.

He went after that potato as a reflex, because you see later, I ask him. I said, "Why in the world did you make a quick," what we call in police jargon a, "furtive movement, after that potato, when you knew I told you to freeze?" He said, "Officer, I didn't even think." He said, "Man, that potato went," and he said, "My body went after it, before I even thought about it."

Well, the principle there is, and what I'm trying to illustrate, and what I think the word of God is saying here, is God is in a position to see more of the situation than we can. He says, "Lean not unto your own understanding. Trust Him." Everything may look reasonable to you to take some action, but if He says no through His Word, and of course, to know His guidance, in order to lean on His understanding, you're going to have to know this word. You got a good break coming to this church. You'll know this word. The more you know this word, the

more you get to know God, the more you'll know what His guidance really is. Listen carefully now. Watch this. Once in a while, in fact, quite often you'll find that your own rationale and this guidance from this word will conflict.

It'll be different, just like my intellect and Nick's telling me to hold it. There was a conflict there. He's telling me not to shoot, everything I know tells me to shoot. But the rationale here is lean not unto your understanding. God can see more of the situation than you can. He's in a better position. He's the creator of the universe. It may not make sense at the time, but you'll thank God later on. I like that.

Finally, in the last prerequisite, "In all your ways, acknowledge Him." Of course, that's the opposite of ignoring Him. You come to Him and you bring Him in on the plan. You tell Him when you've got a decision, you let Him in on it. You say, "Now, Lord, I don't know what school I'm going to go to and I really need your guidance." You bring Him in on it.

You know, sometime I have to utter very quick prayers in law enforcement. I was down at USC at the beginning of the summer session here several years ago. I was a young sergeant and they have a tradition. The first real hot day, they wet everybody and they wet one another on frat row, on 28th Street right there. This was several years ago and I got a radio call to meet one of my units, one of the radio car officers and they were there.

They said, "Oh, something terrible is going on." I said, "What's that?" They said, "Well, you know, the kids wet each other every year?" I said, "Yeah." "Well, this year they're not only wetting one another, but they're wetting anybody that drives down that street. This just happens to be a lady that was going to the USC clinic there and she's pregnant and they threw this five gallon can of water in the, right in the window. It got all over. Her husband swerved, being frightened, had a slight collision with the car. They had to rush her to a hospital she's giving birth right now. We hope that the baby's okay, but this has got to stop. This is causing problems."

I said, "Oh boy, we got to stop it. Huh." I knew there were hundreds of kids out there. I called every unit that was clear. I think there were about seven units clear. I had them all meet me there. We were around the corner. I took one officer with me, the biggest baddest officer I could find. Now, I think... I said, "You're going to watch over me and you're going to get on that radio if I need help. Okay?" He said, "Yes, sir."

We got in the car together and I said, "The rest of you guys, when we asked for you come around fast." But I began praying, not out loud. I didn't want everybody to think I was a nut, but just right there in my mind, I just started saying, "God, I'm going to need wisdom on this one and lay it on me, Lord. I need it." Just as I was rounding the corner, a plan came into my mind. Well, the first plan, the first part of plan was don't go in there with a big armed force of guys with helmets and night sticks and all that. Probably have a big

confrontation. I took one officer, that was part of the plan. I rounded the corner and as I was rounding the corner, the second part of the plan came into the view.

Look, these guys are having fun. Right? Right? Why not make it kind of funny? Don't come on too serious. Come on humorous. I rounded the corner and you could hear all these cat calls and, "Woo, here comes the pigs and the fuzz," and all that. I got out and they all came up and they had all this water and they're ready to wet me. I said, "Okay." I said, "I know, it's my turn to get wet, but before I get wet, I'd like to talk to, take me to your leader. I come in peace." You know, I held up my hand, being funny, instead of saying, "All right, you guys."

I said, "Take me to your leader," and so they did. They walked me over to a guy and they got a guy and they put him up with a towel around his head, like a turban. They said, "This is our leader." I walked up and he said, "What would you like to say?" I said, "I'd like to say a few words, before you pronounce sentence upon me." Man, they really thought that was funny. I said... I had to shout; I didn't have a microphone. I said, "You know that this street is your street," and a big cheer went up. There are about 300 of them out there. A big cheer went up. I said, "The Los Angeles Police Department knows this is your street," and a bigger cheer went up.

I said, "But these poor citizens don't know what isn't your street." "Boo," you know, big boo. Then I said, "Seriously, gentlemen," and I went into the story of what happened with the lady that was pregnant coming into the clinic and suddenly everything became very quiet. I said, "You've had some fun, but you've just caused a problem and I'm going to ask you to go back into your houses and stop the fun." I got off the platform and I walked back to the car, expecting any moment, a big blast of water to hit me, but you know, it never did. I got back in the car and I still expected something to happen. I was afraid to look back. We drove off and I looked in the rear view mirror and as I looked in the rear view mirror, all I could see were people going back into fraternity houses.

I said, "Thanks, Lord." It was a good plan." You see, He says, "In all your ways, acknowledge Him." Take that moment to bring Him in on the plan and say, "Lord, I need your help." You know, the Lord loves to hear people say help, to admit that they need Him. He loves that. The promises, now here's the whole real message tonight. If you fulfill these three prerequisites, God will literally guide your paths. The creator of the universe, now that's exciting. People today, as psychologists, as business leaders, as governmental leaders across this nation are saying people are living harder and enjoying it less.

One of the reasons is, that they don't have any purpose, any real reason for being here on planet earth. Let me tell you something, when you can feel, and sense, and know that you literally are doing what the very creator of this universe wants you to do, you don't get depressed. It's exciting. When you're in God's will. There's just really nothing like it. Oh, you have problems. Certainly.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say, when you join God's forever family, all the problems cease, but He gets you through the problems, victoriously.

I'm going to ask you to bow your heads. As we conclude tonight, I feel compelled to offer an opportunity for anyone who has really never taken their belief to the point of commitment, to join the family tonight. I'm going to do it a little differently tonight. You know, you don't have to sign anything to join His family. You don't have to go through any ecclesiastical exercise of any type. You can take that initial step of faith, that first prerequisite, trusting in the Lord with all your heart. You can take it right where you sit. You can take that great leap of faith, right in the privacy of your own heart.

I'm going to ask, that all over this auditorium, those that are here tonight, that are in the position of perhaps always believing in God or at least having a sneaking suspicion He's there, but never taking that to the point of commitment. We're going to give you that opportunity tonight, to take this first step toward really recognizing and realizing God's will and great plan for your life. All it takes, on the authority of God's Word, is for you to invite Him into your life. The Bible says in John 1:12, "But as many as received him, speaking of Jesus Christ, to them gave you power to become the sons of God."

You don't have to join this church. You don't have to go through anything else, really, except what the Bible says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God. For by grace, are you saved, through faith and that not of yourselves." It is the gift of God. It's a step of faith. Another verse, "But God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Jesus Christ died for us."

All it takes is that step that I took and I remember the day, I remember the moment, I remember kneeling in the basement of a church and saying to God these three things, and this is what I encourage you to say, right where you sit. Number one, "God, I admit that I'm a sinner." You know, that wasn't too hard for me. I knew I was a sinner. I think you do too.

Secondly, "I believe that Jesus Christ, your son died for me." Thirdly, "Right now I receive Him into my life. I ask Jesus Christ to come into my life and take over this life. I commit my life to Him. I take my belief to the point of commitment." Let me suggest to you, right where you sit, that you go through these three basic steps and utter that first prayer to God. Number one, right now, tell Him that, you know you're a sinner. Okay? Number two, tell Him that you believe that Jesus Christ, His son, died for you. Number three, invite Him into your life. Take that belief to the point of commitment, express your faith, your trust in Him by turning your life over to Him.

Roger Marsh:

You've been listening to Family Talk and that was some laser focused, crystal clear instruction from former LA assistant chief of police and leadership training expert, Bob Vernon. Now, if you prayed that prayer with Bob and surrendered

your life to Christ, let me be the first to say welcome to the family. You just made the best decision of all time and we are excited for you.

In fact, we would love to hear from you and to pray with you as well. Please give us a call right now at (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. A member of our staff will be happy to take your call and we'll be able to provide you with advice for next steps, as you begin your walk with the Lord. Again, that number is (877) 732-6825. If you missed any part of Bob, Vernon's powerful and convicting two part presentation, be sure to visit us online at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk) and you'll be able to stream the entire program there.

Again, that's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk) and finally, over the past couple of years, Bob has had some health issues in retirement and I know that he and his family would surely covet your prayers for this great man of faith, integrity, and character. Speaking of prayer, please remember that Dr. Dobson's wife, Shirley continues to recover from her recent hip surgery and she is growing stronger every day. The Dobsons, of course, certainly appreciate your prayers, but especially right now, as Shirley is on the road to recovery.

Heavenly Father, we come before you now, lifting up Shirley Dobson, Bob Vernon, and every member of the Family Talk family, who are going through medical challenges right now, we know that you're a God who hears our prayer. We know that you're a God who heals our wounds, and you're a God who gives us hope in difficult circumstances, for the Dobsons, for the Vernons and everyone in the Family Talk family, who are going through these challenging times right now. Father, we lift up our prayer, asking for healing and encouragement. In Jesus name, amen. Well that brings us to the end of our time together today. I'm Roger Marsh. Thank you for listening to Family Talk and be sure to join us again next time, right here, for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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