



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: An Everyday Heroes Discusses Grief, Loss, and Leaving a Dynamic Legacy – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Bart Brock

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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 to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Today we are honored to speak with another everyday hero who knows this ministry from the inside out. His name is Dr. Bart Brock, and he currently serves as the vice chair of our board of directors and the interim president of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Bart's journey is truly remarkable from global corporate executive managing billion dollar brands to answering God's call to Christian education and ministry. But what makes his story truly remarkable is how he navigated the deepest valley of his life, losing his beloved wife, Mary, after 36 years of marriage. In his book called *The Widower's Night: A Journey from Death to Life*, Bart vulnerably shares his path through grief and the biblical principles that ultimately brought healing. His testimony speaks to anyone facing loss, offering genuine hope and practical wisdom for the journey through grief toward restoration. Now let's join Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute and host of the Defending Faith Family and Freedom podcast for his moving discussion with Dr. Bart Brock on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Welcome to Family Talk to Broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Gary Bauer, senior vice president for public policy here at the Dobson Institute. I'm also the host of Defending Faith, Family and Freedom podcast. Check us out. We got another great show here on Family Talk because we're talking with another one of our everyday heroes. Today's guest is a man who has played a vital role in kingdom service for virtually his entire life. Dr. Bart Brock has the heart of an evangelist. In fact, when he and his wife, Mary, were first married, saving souls was their focus and passion. Later in life, Bart went to school to study business. He eventually earned an MBA from Emory University and that began really an impressive 20 year career and executive management. He spent more than a decade as a CFO and a COO for many well-known consumer brands.

Now you might be saying, well, what's that got to do with Family Talk and kingdom service? Well, hang on folks. At a critical point in Bart's life, he discovered what he now refers to as 30 minute counseling sessions. And these counseling sessions were part of the radio ministry of, you guessed it, Dr. James

Dobson. He eventually met Dr. Dobson in person and their friendship led Bart to make some career changes which have defined the rest of his life. He left a corporate world and ended up doing a whole lot of other things we're going to talk about today. Bart Brock has served on the lead accounting faculty for the School of Business and Technology and the College of Adult and Graduate Studies at Colorado Christian University right here in JDFI's, home state of Colorado. Now, Dr. Brock has published several articles and papers in the academic press, but he's also the author of a book that well, really, he had to live before he could write it.

The book is entitled *The Widower's Night: A Journey from Death to Life*, which is an incredible, powerful and moving account of the grief and suffering he endured when his wife, Mary, after 36 years of marriage, went home to be with the Lord and this happened after some surgery or during some surgery that they thought would be routine and instead there was this really life-changing event. We want to talk about that because everyone listening, you're going to go through that kind of night of the soul in your life. That's what happens on planet Earth. The people we love pass on and all the people who love us pass on. Bart is now since Mary's passing, found another love of his life, with his wife Jeanine, a wonderful friend of our ministry and a personal friend of mine, but he's continued to serve the Lord through various ministry projects. Bart it's your just tireless service behind the scenes for JDFI.

Dr. Bart Brock:

Well, Gary, thank you. It is such an honor to be here and when I think of when I first heard Dr. Dobson on the radio on my long work commutes, I never could have imagined that I would be here and first let me say every day is a good way to describe me, Hero maybe not so much, but every day definitely is there and as I understand how and think about how many times this ministry, Dr. Dobson's ministry over the years has redefined my life multiple times. And when I think about that, it just compels me to help this ministry be shared with so many others that are like I was right, that enable them to understand how to take biblical principles and apply them to daily life. And it's just an amazing honor that I'm even able to do that and I'm very honored to be here today.

Gary Bauer:

Well, the whole team appreciates what you're doing, Bart, and I think because of your work, this ministry is going to have great days ahead just like it's had great days under Dr. Dobson's leadership for many years. It's a favorite line, right. On interview programs. Let's begin at the beginning. Bart, tell us a little bit about growing up because I understand in some of our conversations you've been on fire for the Lord from a very early age. So tell us how you came to Jesus and what the early years of being a follower of Jesus Christ were like for you.

Dr. Bart Brock:

Well, absolutely. I grew up right in the middle of Georgia and I like to call it the buckle of the Bible belt. You were surrounded, especially in those years in the sixties and seventies and literally just across the street, directly across the street was the pastor of the church. And somehow my mom, and now she was a single parent when that just didn't happen. And as a single parent, she found a way to send me to a Christian school. And one thing I knew early in my grade school life

is if I were sick, I might miss math class, I might miss spelling, but if I ever miss Bible class, I had to go down the street where the Bible teacher lived and make up that class. You did not miss Bible class at all.

Gary Bauer: It's a bad thing when a teacher's in the neighborhood because it's a very reasonable request to get down there and get that lesson that you miss. What an amazing blessing though, Bart, that you had a mother that was able, which I'm sure she had to make sacrifices to get you into a Christian school and be able to pay for that and all the rest of it. So as Dr. Dobson has talked about, mothers and fathers are children's most important teachers, and when you get that kind of a start, it really does matter, doesn't it?

Dr. Bart Brock: Absolutely. It matters. It gets in your genes, so to speak.

Gary Bauer: I mentioned in the introduction this wonderful book, it's a challenging read because it's so personal, Bart, when you write about what you went through. But let's talk a little bit about how you first met Mary, the love of your life for those years.

Dr. Bart Brock: Yeah, well, fast forward a few years, everything was about church. That was just what life was. And Mary, my wife later, she was with a family of evangelists and as they would maybe come through town, they would have a little radio show. So radio was a big part even early on, and she was the one that would sing the intro to the service. And I'm at home, I was about 15 years old, I'm at home, I heard her singing on the radio and I knew I had to find where that tent was.

Gary Bauer: Wow.

Dr. Bart Brock: And I went down that night and life for me changed. For me, it was love at first sight for her. It took a while, but it was an amazing thing. And when we actually were married and I was only 18 years old when we were married, she was really the belle of the ball. And I'm the geeky teenager that just can barely stay on two feet. So it was, oh my goodness, an amazing thing and definitely something that God sent.

Gary Bauer: Wow. When did you feel that the Lord might be calling you to a different kind of ministry in the business world?

Dr. Bart Brock: Well, Gary, I've talked about some of the wonderful things and they were wonderful. There was also, I can see now this, you hear a comment, actually Paul writes about it in Romans, I think it's in Romans chapter 10, where he starts talking about the system that was in place with the synagogues, the Pharisees, the Sadducees. And he said they have a zeal for God, but without any knowledge. And that's pretty much where we were. We had a zeal for God, we had a passion for God, but we didn't have a lot of knowledge. But one thing I did know is that you have to have money to eat. And as we were going on so many of these things and we were traveling and going so many different churches that

sometimes you may not have appointments, and if you don't have appointments, then you don't have offerings.

And it's strange how God used that very time. I talk about it sometimes and tell people that even when I didn't ask Him to do it, God was leading my steps. Even when I didn't want Him to do it, He was leading my steps. And people may think, well, that's strange. You're doing all of this work and you're in the ministry, but you can be in the ministry and have head knowledge, but not have heart knowledge and not have that real understanding. And about that time in life, those realities started to come in and I realized, okay, I've got to do something. And it was a hard thing to do because many people, especially back in that day would think that you were totally backslidden if you left the ministry to go and do something in studying that was really not that well regarded at the time. So to do something like that, there was a lot of pressure there, but it was God Himself that was leading me and connecting me with certain people. And we made the choice, and it was another sacrifice that I was going to go to school. And after I did that again, God just kept working each step for me, leading me even when I didn't want it.

Gary Bauer:

What you just said is so important, Bart, because I know I got quite a few more years on me than you do. And I can look back and I can see things in my life that at the time I thought, well, what's the purpose of this? Or this isn't significant. But in retrospect for me, it seemed to fit into what a plan was for my own life that ended up with the opportunity to do a lot of things. I always love it when others see the same things as they look back. So you got an incredibly impressive education in the business arena, and you're doing all these things with your career and working for these companies, helping them become more efficient in what they were doing, which is something that you're bringing to us too, and it's greatly appreciated. But again, then it seems like there was another pooling here. When did you start hearing Dr. Dobson on the radio and beginning to think of him as sort of a counselor for you and Mary? And then when did you meet him personally, which must have been quite an amazing thing after just hearing this voice.

Dr. Bart Brock:

Well, it was amazing, and I'll go back a few years. So after I went to school, so I went to school later. I didn't start school until I was about 25 years old in the university. Went part-time, had to work, go part-time and do all of that struggle. So I entered the workforce a little later. I was affected and that's why I realized what happens to kids now when they go into universities in spite of being raised in the buckle of the Bible belt, in spite of the pastor living across the street in spite of Sunday school lessons, in spite of being able to quote Scripture, it really had not sunk deep in my heart.

And so what happened, I like so many others, began to accept ideas that just weren't biblical and start to accept teachings that were not biblical. And as I progressed in my career, all of a sudden there were finances that were never there before. I was raised by a single parent back in the sixties and seventies. You didn't have a lot of resources. And being in the ministry, especially at that

time, there weren't a lot of resources. Suddenly now I'm a CPA, I'm going through business and I start to get pulled away. And so those are those times, everything's not always bright and rosy on this path as we know. But this is where I say God still continued to work. He still continued to lead. He still had mercy for me, but there was a time when I was really, really broken and wondered was our marriage going to survive? What had started so well was now hitting a really, really bad time. And it wasn't a short period. It went on for a number of years. Now my wife, of course, much more holy than I ever was, but she was always cheering me on, but it didn't matter. There were still struggles there and would it work? And so I always had a long commute to work and I say God knew I was very hardheaded because I got to hear Dr. Dobson on the way to work and then I got to hear him on the way home from work because I would work relatively long hours and I had a long commute.

And gradually I started to hearing those things and it started connecting for me not just that head knowledge, but here was a guy that was in education that was and is a Ph.D. talking to me in language now that I could accept and respect because he was coming from the level of academia, but he was still connecting the Bible principles. And so he started to bring that back together for me and really open my eyes and open my heart into how these biblical principles could work in business because I worked in some hard businesses and it wasn't always nice. It wasn't Christian ministries.

Gary Bauer: I was going to say not a lot of turning the other cheek, right? The business world can be really cutthroat.

Dr. Bart Brock: No, it can be really cutthroat and if you get into that it really can pull you in. And so it was because of his ministry that God really started, like I said, redefined me again, redefined me into somebody that could take that biblical training that was so well rooted and thank God my mom sacrificed to bring that to me, but to bring that biblical training that was so well rooted into and combine it with the work world. So that's really when I got to know him by the radio counseling as I call it.

Gary Bauer: Yes. And then you had an opportunity, was it years later to meet him personally or?

Dr. Bart Brock: Yes, it was a few years later, and I don't know if every listener will know, but Dr. Dobson has always, he sees fundraising as an anthem to him. He looks at what he calls friendraising, and that's what his process is, is build friends, build friends for the ministry. And I became one of those friends. I got a call from him one day just pretty much out of the blue. I get a call to thank me for a gift that we had made, and then he got to know me and we would talk occasionally. And so I really got to know him that way on the phone in later years. I was transferred many times in corporate life throughout the country, and one of those times was in Colorado. So when he found out I was in Colorado, he said, well, you have to come and have dinner. And so Mary and I went to have dinner with him and just fell in love with him all over again.

Gary Bauer: At this point, you're still working for a major corporation, I believe. That's my recollection and it had been taken over and you were at a point where you could really get a huge position in this new merge company, but again, you felt a different calling as far as where God was leading you. Talk to us about that a little bit.

Dr. Bart Brock: You know, a tough time. And I talk about redefining moments and they have happened. They absolutely have happened. And Dr. Dobson has been at the pivotal point of so many of those. And in this case, it was an organization over a billion dollars in sales annually in 120 countries, 18 different currencies. I'm an accountant, so I still remember all the numbers and I was just all over the world most of the time. And it is no joke that I would sometimes wake up and not realize what country I was in, much less what city because I just jumped from country to country as I was handling financial matters, accounting matters, dealing with governments, foreign governments and things like that. So it was a huge pinnacle at that point. And I was in my early fifties at the time, and suddenly the company is sold and I had great opportunity to continue there, but something just wasn't right in my spirit. And I was able to contact Dr. Dobson and he said, well, come and have dinner with me.

And so I did and I sat with him and he didn't give me the answers. He's a good psychologist that way. He didn't give me the answers, but he led me back to the biblical principles. And some of them were, what is God speaking to your heart? Pay attention to the circumstances. He often says that, pay attention to the circumstances because God works in those circumstances. And like we were just saying a few moments ago, I can look back and see so many times the circumstances I didn't understand I didn't want, and God worked through them. And most of all, what does your wife think about it?

Gary Bauer: Oh boy.

Dr. Bart Brock: And the amazing thing. So that was really hard. Well, after that meeting, I went back and it still took a lot of prayer, but my wife and I made the decision then to leave corporate at what was the top of my career. Well, I've shared with some of the team there how that trust in God happens. And it's not like I'm some big hero of it. It was the pressure, the compelling of God because I went for a job that paid only 10% of what I was making at corporate and went to a Christian university. Now, I had earned a doctorate a few years before in organization development, which is all about how organizations function and change and things like that. And I was using it and thought that someday I would retire and that's what I would do is teach in university. But He called me to a Christian university and somehow, we made it. And I explained to people that was a huge deal at that time in my career to drop lose 90% of my income. But you know, Gary, I never missed a dime.

Gary Bauer: My goodness. Bart, I've got so many more things I want to ask you. The time is going so fast. Could you possibly come back for a second show so we can delve a little bit deeper into your book and then also the ministry?

Dr. Bart Brock: Absolutely. I would love to Gary.

Gary Bauer: Fantastic.

Roger Marsh: Dr. Bart Brock's extraordinary journey reminds us that God uses every season, even our darkest nights to shape us for His purposes. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a moving conversation featuring Dr. Bart Brock discussing faith, calling, and finding hope in the midst of profound loss. Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you'd like to share Dr. Brock's inspiring testimony with someone else who's walking through grief right now, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. There, you'll also find information about Dr. Bart Brock's book called *The Widower's Night: A Journey From Death to Life*. You'll find all that information and more at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, Dr. Bart Brock's remarkable testimony is one of many hundreds, in fact, that we have received over the years describing how the work of Dr. James Dobson and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has impacted their lives. How about you? Do you have a story to share with us? It's our 15th anniversary, and we would love to just inundate Dr. Dobson's email box with as many of these stories as we possibly can. You can go online to drjamesdobson.org and follow the prompts there. You can either write out your 15 year remembrance, you can also call it in, or you can record a video if you'd like to upload it right there on our website at drjamesdobson.org.

And in a culture that increasingly challenges traditional values, Family Talk is broadcasting truth that transforms lives and honors God's design for family. When you support the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute with your prayers and your financial gifts, you help preserve biblical principles that strengthen marriages and families all across America. To make a secure donation, go to drjamesdobson.org or phone in your tax deductible contribution to 877-732-6825.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of Dr. James Dobson and all of us here at the JDFI, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to tune in again next time for part two of Gary Bauer's powerful conversation with Dr. Bart Brock. That's coming up right here on the next 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.