



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Laying Up Treasure in Heaven – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

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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 Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, many of us spend a lifetime building up what we own here on Earth. We work hard, we save, we plan for the future. But many people never realize the way we handle our money right now actually shapes what waits for us in eternity. On today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we're going to revisit a conversation Dr. Dobson had with his good friend Bruce Wilkinson, a respected Christian teacher and author who has written more than 60 books translated into over 30 languages. In fact, his book, *The Prayer of Jabez*, became the fastest-selling book in history, with worldwide sales topping 20 million copies. Today, Dr. Wilkinson will unpack the message of one of his books called *The God Pocket* and challenges us with what Jesus really meant when He told us to lay up treasures in Heaven. It's a discussion that just might change the way you think about giving. So let's join Dr. James Dobson and his guest, Bruce Wilkinson, on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Here are just a few passages that will kind of get us started, and they come from only one of the four Gospels, the book of Luke. Listen to what Jesus had to say. "Jesus said to a crowd of His followers, 'But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.' And he said, 'Watch out. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. A man's life consists not of the abundance of his possessions. Jesus later visited the home of a prominent Pharisee who said to His host, "when you give a luncheon or a dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers, or your relatives, or your rich neighbors. If you do, they may invite you back, and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed." He spoke to a rich young ruler and commanded him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. And the man went away very sorrowfully because he was a man of great wealth. And by the way, Jesus allowed him to walk away. Finally, finally, Jesus turned to His disciples and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. Indeed, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Isn't it incredible how many times Jesus turned again to that subject and that issue, which leads us to our question for today and for our guest which is, why was this so much a part of Jesus'

teaching? Our guest today is a great friend, Dr. Bruce Wilkinson. I've worked with him in the studio many times through the years. He's a biblical scholar. He's the author of more than 60 books. He has written, of course, *The Prayer of Jabez* and *Secrets of the Vine* and *A Life God Rewards* and his book, which we're going to talk about today. guess where it's going. It's called *The God Pocket. He Owns It. You Carry it. Suddenly, Everything Changes*. Well, you heard what I just said about Jesus' attitude toward money. We have to ask why that was such a major theme for him. Why did He turn most of those statements into this warning? Beware of greed, beware of attitudes toward money that are not godly. What was He saying to us that relate to today?

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: You know, you can take that in two different directions, Jim. I'm going to take it in an unexpected direction. I've studied this topic more than any other topic I've ever studied. I've not written on this, but I've studied it for more than five years. I want to go back and connect something that we don't typically connect about money. Because in the parable or the dinner that Christ was at that you mentioned a minute ago in Luke, where he said, don't invite the rich people to the dinner. He was sitting at a dinner of rich people. And He was actually talking to everybody about what they had just done. And then He says, don't do that because they'll have you at their house and they'll repay you. And then He says, instead of that, invite the poor, the lame, the blind, and they can't repay you. So the big idea of that is repayment. Don't do it because they'll repay you. Do it to the people who can't repay you. And then Jesus says, you will be blessed.

Well, everybody's experienced that blessing when you give to somebody you know they can't pay you back. They don't know who you are even. But that's exactly what He's not talking about. That's the shocker. It's the rest of that verse that most people don't even know is there. He says, then you'll be blessed for you shall be repaid. You shall be repaid. And then here's the zinger at the resurrection of the just. Now, I want you to really...

Dr. James Dobson: That's not very satisfying to a guy who's figuring on having a little money now, is it?

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: That's right. But go a little bit here and connect this, Jim. Jesus is saying to a group of people, you're going to be blessed after you're dead if you give. He says, you shall be blessed at the resurrection, that means somebody died of the just, not the resurrection of the unjust. Which means Jesus is connecting something about money that we have lost track of. He's connecting that what I do with money here, hold on to this, affects my money on the other side. People don't really understand that the economy of Heaven is larger than the economy of earth. People think that when we die and go to Heaven that we sing hymns and we worship and we do. But that's all we think of. But Jesus is trying to connect something that we've lost track of. Because Jesus... Hold on to this. We're going to have quite a conversation. Jesus wants us to choose to be rich in eternity. And the way that you get rich in eternity is by what you do with your money here.

Dr. James Dobson: That's really striking.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: It is.

Dr. James Dobson: You think we're going to carry jingling change in our pockets in Heaven?

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Well, let me just go a little bit further with you on this. I'm sure our listeners, Jim, are at the edge of their seat like, where's Jim and Bruce going to go with this? I want to just stay with the Bible for a minute. It's obvious from that passage in Luke 14 that Jesus is saying there is a connection. When you give some of your money to people who can't repay you, that God is going to repay you. But He's going to repay you, Jim, here's the shocker, after you're in eternity. At the resurrection of the dead. So what we don't understand is we don't understand Jesus talked about money so much because it's going to influence our eternity so drastically.

Let me go a little bit further with this. When He was talking to the rich young ruler who wanted to be mature and complete, and Jesus said, okay, if you want to be, then here's how you do it. "Go take what you have and go sell it. Give to the poor." Now listen to what He said next, "And then you will have treasure in Heaven," which means the young ruler didn't have treasure in Heaven. Then He says, "Then come follow me." We do not believe that Christ is literal when He talks about treasure. We spiritualize those words. But let me show you there's no biblical basis to spiritualize them. When Christ says those verses, every pastor has preached at least twice a year, you know, "Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth."

Dr. James Dobson: "Where moth and rust doth corrupt."

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: There you go. But lay up treasure. What are the next two words? For yourself. Listen to that sentence. Lay up treasure for yourself in Heaven. Now, the shocking part about that, it sounds like it's a suggestion by Jesus. But as you know, He spoke in Greek, and I know a little bit of Greek, and that's an imperative. It's a command. This is a shocking thing. Jesus says, "I command you, don't accumulate your wealth on earth, but I command you," listen to this, "I command you to accumulate your own wealth in Heaven." Now, that concept is repeated in Luke. That was in Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. And in Luke, Jesus talks about if you do this, you'll have money bags. And it's a Greek word which means your wallet. So for us to say when Jesus says don't lay up treasures on earth, we know what He means.

You know, Jesus was so provocative that when people heard Him, it says in the Scriptures over and over, the people were astonished because He taught them material they'd never heard of or thought about. The concept of Jesus saying to the rich young ruler that you need to sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven is shocking. And the disciples hear it and say, we've already given away a lot of our stuff. Are we going to have treasure in Heaven? And He says, absolutely you are. In fact, anybody who gives a house or

land, which is your asset for my name's sake, will have treasure in Heaven. Heaven is very different the way than people think about it.

Dr. James Dobson: Bruce, what you are saying to us will sound to a lot of people as salvation by works. The rich young ruler was not told, "Believe on me and you shall have eternal life." He said, "Sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have eternal life." That sounds like works. But I know you don't believe that. I know you believe that it's salvation by faith.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: And faith only in Christ. There's a confusion between the role of faith and the role of works. If you're a liberal, you say, don't tell me about what you believe. Tell me about what you do. And when an evangelical says to a liberal, it makes no eternal difference how you live, the liberal says you're crazy. And biblically speaking, Jim, both groups are wrong. You got to pull those apart. If Christ is talking about something you have to do, He can't be talking about salvation because salvation is only by faith in Christ and what Christ did. If Jesus is talking about works, He can't be referring to getting into Heaven. So when Jesus talks about giving away your money, He's revealing something about a linkage, Jim, that's lost in the world today, and it's all through the Bible. But it's lost. Men are preaching this. Nobody seems to be teaching about this.

Dr. James Dobson: And that is that the way you live your life matters.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: It matters after you're dead.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Not to get into heaven. But that's when Jesus says, if you live for me, when I come back the second time, I'm going to let you rule 10 cities. What a consequence. What a consequence that is. And what Jesus is saying there is, while I'm on earth, all the money I have isn't mine. It's all His. And He's giving it to me to pay attention how I'll treat the money that's His. Because He said to me, I want you to use this money, watch this now, ultimately to prepare for your eternity. How do you use My money on earth? Whether you give to the poor, whether you give to the church, whether you give to somebody who's really in need. That's what I'm telling you you have to do. You have to be unselfish. And then I will transfer that money to Heaven in your name.

Dr. James Dobson: So you got an account up there.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: You do. Because that's how He says, I will repay you. And the Greek word repay in the New Testament is apodidómi. It means to give back.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, a lot of people are going to get mad at us for saying this.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Do you know why? Because they don't believe how I live makes any difference to my life and forever. That's why. And all of a sudden there is, oh, my goodness. Remember, the Bible says God will wipe away your tears and people

don't know why He's wiping them away. He's wiping them away right at the judgment seat of Christ. When Christ, one by one, it says our life will become manifest, means everybody will see it in Heaven. And everything that we've done from the time we're saved to the point we die is all brought before Him. And He evaluates and judges and says, These things are not rewardable. And these things are rewardable. And there'll be many people, Jim, that are in Heaven that have a little bit that's rewardable. And that's where the massive amount of tears are shed. That's where you realize, I blew it. I'm in Heaven. I'm with Christ. But my life could have been very different than this. And the way that you can send money ahead for yourself is by giving it away here to that which I said is important to me as God. And if you do, I then take that money and I put it in your account for yourself that nobody can steal from you. It's in your name. He wants you and me and all of our listeners to understand that Heaven isn't just a choir.

Dr. James Dobson: All right. What does that say to the people who are listening to us now and they're just trying to hang on. They're not a rich young ruler. How do we live our lives to be in accordance with not only that parable, but all these things that Jesus said? What is the underlying theme he is saying to those who have money and those who don't?

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: A lot of people have lost their work. A lot of people are not making what they used to make. A lot of people's houses are underneath the water. And they're saying, I don't have a lot of money to give. Well, Heaven runs its banking system very different than we run it on earth. And Jesus is talking about this when He sees this old lady, the widow, comes in and throws a few pennies into the treasury at the temple. And Jesus says, she's given, now listen to this, she's given more money, listen to that, more, that's amount, than all those rich people who gave put together. It's not how much you give. It's how much you give of what you have. Therefore, to be honest with you, the person who has a little bit of money, can earn more money for themselves in Heaven easier than a person who has great wealth.

Here's a verse that just is mind-boggling. It's in the Old Testament. It's in Proverbs chapter 19, verse 17. It says this, "He who has compassion on the poor," and that means give money to the poor, "lends to the Lord." It doesn't say gives to the Lord. You lend to the Lord. And the rest of the verse is even more mind-boggling. It is God wants to make sure we hear Him. And he says, and "I will repay what he has given."

Dr. James Dobson: He also says, "Inasmuch as you give unto the least of these, my brothers, you give it unto Me."

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: It's a loan to the Lord.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: And the loan is repaid. But the shocking part of it is the bulk of the repayment isn't on earth.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, *God Pocket*. What's the meaning of the title?

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Well, the meaning of the title is this. Once you understand that God wants to find people that love to partner with Him and to be sent on a mission that God actually initiates from Heaven. This isn't just seeing somebody who doesn't have money and giving it to them. It's actually partnering deeper than that with God. So the God pocket is either a pocket in your wallet or in your purse, or after a number of years, I just made a literal little leather God pocket or a really nice kind of vinyl little pouch. And there's a number of steps that you follow. You determine how much money you want to partner with God. It's not the money you give to your church. It's some of your own personal money. And so you may decide to take \$5 or \$10 or \$20 or whatever it is. It makes no difference. It's whatever you want to. Don't be praying. How much did I put in it? Just put in what you want. Then take that money, number two, and devote it to God. Say, God, I'm hereby giving You this money right now. It's no longer mine. So I'm not going to debate anymore if I see a person in need that you nudge me because it's now your money. It's interesting. You have an offering that you give right then. The third part of it is you take it and you deposit it specifically in a God pocket. And then you put it in your pocket or purse. And then you, fourth step is a good one. You say to God, okay.

Dr. James Dobson: Show me where to give.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: That's right. Show me where. I'll just relax. I'm not going to try to give your money away. I won't borrow Your money. And then you watch, Jim, how God will nudge you. And that's the word I use in the book. It's called a God nudge. It's an inner push that everybody's experienced. I've done this to many churches. And I said, "How many of you that God has nudged you to go help somebody and because you didn't really know what to say or do, you didn't do it?" Everybody laughs and everybody raises their hand. I said, "But do you understand what God was doing? He was inviting you to an amazing experience that He's initiating and He picked you. He picked you. I want to partner with you." And when that nudge comes, you walk over. Then you deliver the God pocket.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Let me describe what you're holding. It's about twice the size of a book of matches, maybe a little more than that. And it is very attractively printed. And it says "The God Pocket. He Owns It. You carry it." It's big enough to carry if you're a man in your front pocket or in the woman's purse. And once you put the money in there, it's no longer yours. It is as well as given. And you're just looking for the Lord to show you which person to give it to. And then you're watching.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: You are. Now, I taught this to a pastor, and he said, "This doesn't really work." I said, "Why don't you try it? Just try it. You've got to say to God, 'okay, send me. I want to do this.'" So he... He writes me an email. He says, "I was at one of my

kids' birthday. And there was kids everywhere at the restaurant." And he said, "I need a breather for two minutes." So he said, "I decided to walk out and just take a breather outside." And he said, "For the funniest reason, I got up out of my chair and said to my wife, 'I'm just going to step out for a minute.'" And he said, "I said to God, 'OK, God, I want the God pocket thing.'" So he walks out and he's standing there. And he notices a man standing on the curb, just standing there with a sports jacket on. And he got a nudge. So He walks over to him and says, "Hi, how you doing?" "Fine." And Steve says, "I have something for you." "You have something for me?" "Yes." And he picks out his God pocket and he hands him this little pouch. And the guy, "Look at this. What is this?" And he opens it up and finds his money and yells out loud, "How did you know?" And Steve says, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "I don't have a car. I don't have any money. I have on the other side of town an interview for a job. And I was standing here begging God to give me the taxi money to go. You walk out and you give me the money for the taxi."

Dr. James Dobson: And there's no greater thrill than being on the giving end of that transaction.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: You ever had a moment where you just feel like He smiled at you? He didn't say anything, but you know, He said, I saw that.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: I saw it. It is a great thing to do.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: It is. In today's economy, if believers in Christ all across the country would say, you know what, let's partner with God on a regular basis, whether it's \$5 or \$10, it's not to have much money. Just imagine if a church started doing this and kids started doing this. We have these little God pockets in packets of 100 for churches and small groups and Christian schools and for families.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you've given our listeners a lot to think about. Some of them want to argue with you, but our time is gone for today. Bruce, I always love having you come because you're just almost certain to say something that rocks my mind and makes me think. So I appreciate you, and we'll pick it up next time.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Money on earth, but treasure in Heaven. Bruce Wilkinson has given us a lot to wrestle with today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, reminding us that what we hold loosely in this life can echo into eternity. Now, if you'd like to revisit the conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, or if you'd like to learn more about the book called *The God Pocket*, just visit jdfi.org. We also encourage you to share this broadcast with a friend who needs to hear it as well. And be sure to tune in again next time when our conversation will continue here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

You know, speaking of money, the message we heard for today fits this moment perfectly. We've been talking about giving in a way that lasts. And right now, your generosity can go even further. Throughout the month of July, we have a special matching grant in effect that means that every gift you make to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute will be matched dollar for dollar. It's our \$250,000 matching gift that's in place in honor of America's 250th anniversary. It literally doubles the size and impact of your support all through July 31st or if the match is met sooner than that, that'll be the final day. A \$50 gift becomes a \$100 gift. \$100 gift becomes \$200. You get the idea. As the only organization Dr. James Dobson entrusted to carry out his legacy and expand his work to new generations and geographies, we depend on listeners like you to keep these conversations on the air. Your gift of any amount helps us strengthen marriages, equip parents, and share the hope of Christ with families all across America and literally all over the world. So make your gift count twice today. You can speak with a member of our constituent care team when you dial 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Now, if you'd prefer, you can send your support through the U.S. Postal Service. Our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949. Once again, our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. But if it's easier, just use those initials JDFI for short. P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. Keep in mind, you can always give a gift securely online when you go to drjamesdobson.org or jdfi.org.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. So glad you tuned in today. And from all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks for your prayers and your continued support. Be sure to tune in again next time as Dr. James Dobson continues his conversation with Dr. Bruce Wilkinson discussing laying up treasure in Heaven. That's coming up 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.