



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Crises on Campus: A Christian Student Solution – Part 2

Guest(s): Morton Blackwell

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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, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, for Christian families, sending a son or daughter off to college can feel like handing them over to a culture determined to strip away the values you've taught them at home. Well, on today's Family Talk broadcast, we're continuing a conversation Dr. Dobson had with Morton Blackwell, founder and president of the Leadership Institute. For decades, Morton has worked to equip conservative students to stand firm on campuses dominated by the left, training young people to recognize when they're being manipulated and to hold on to their convictions with confidence. On the last Family Talk broadcast, Dr. Dobson and his guest Morton Blackwell explored the assaults on Christian belief in higher education. On today's program, they'll ask a pointed question, is there really any hope for the future of America's colleges? Let's rejoin that discussion right now on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Suppose you had a son or daughter who was 20 years of age. and ready to go to college, or maybe they're 18 or 19, ready to go to college, would you feel comfortable with them attending a liberal state university?

Morton Blackwell: I wouldn't want to take the risk. I mean, there are prestigious schools where if you go to the school and you get a degree, your economic circumstances may be bettered by that. But I know too many parents and too many grandparents who will say, "I sent my son off to Ohio State, and he came back unrecognizable. Everything that the family had taught him, he was a different person, and he didn't believe our principles anymore." I have grandkids, two of them. There are one of them 10 and one of them 12. And we're thinking about colleges. And the number of colleges that I would feel comfortable about my grandkids going to, maybe 10, maybe 10.

Dr. James Dobson: See, I feel exactly the same way. If you care about the moral values, and from my point of view, the Christian understanding, Scriptural understanding, if you care about that, you're going to put it totally at risk in a youngster who is too immature to recognize he or she is being manipulated. I would not run that risk. That's the way you put it. That's the way I feel about it.

Morton Blackwell: Well, however, you know and I know that most parents who share our views are not going to feel that strongly about it, and they're going to say, we'll send our kids to a more typical college. And what that means is on these campuses, the vast majority of the campuses that are dominated, and they are dominated by the left, there are nonetheless a lot of people who have reached young adulthood with their heads still screwed on right. And those people are the targets of the administration and the faculty and the other leftist student groups. And that's why I spend so much time and effort sending bright people who are conservative out to campus to find conservative students and help them form conservative student groups. Because if they think they're the only conservative on campus, then they are going to be tempted to no longer show any conservative characteristics. But if they are reinforced with a group of like-minded people, and they bring in good speakers, and they read the right books.

Dr. James Dobson: And get involved with your organization? Do you take a young person like that and begin to train them and give them...?

Morton Blackwell: We offer our youth leadership school, which was the first of the schools that the Leadership Institute ran. It's to train people who are interested in becoming organizers of students for some cause or candidate. That's our youth leadership school. And so we offer that. But we cooperate with all of these other groups, and some of them are pro-life groups, and some of them are Second Amendment groups, and some of them are free market-oriented groups. My role in life, I believe, is to find people who are already reasonably conservative, and they have been made conservative by their parents bringing up by their upbringing from the church, maybe a good uncle, maybe some kindly next-door neighbor has given them a reasonable philosophical background. Find those people and teach them how to be effective in politics so that they will not be captured by the left and so that they can organize in behalf of limited government and free enterprise.

Dr. James Dobson: So for those that feel completely outnumbered and overwhelmed and what's happening in the classroom is contrary to everything that they believe, but they haven't got the courage of their convictions, can go and find people of like mind within your organization.

Morton Blackwell: Exactly, exactly. And there have always been a cadre of conservatives at Harvard and at Yale and at Princeton. A famous group at Dartmouth created the Dartmouth Review. I think it's important that we not just abandon the colleges because they're dominated by the Left. We're going to realize that most students are going to go to a leftist-dominated college, so let's have a rescue mission, find those people, let them get to know each other, let them get trained properly in how to defend their principles of limited government and free enterprise.

Dr. James Dobson: Is there any hope of taking back the university system?

Morton Blackwell: It is a long-term process. There are exceptions. I mean, I live in northern Virginia, and we have there a big state university called George Mason University. My son got a degree in English, and he told me that in all of the English classes he took, he said every one of his professors, as he put it, was at least a socialist, meaning that they would be further left to communists. However, at George Mason University, they have a wonderful free market economics department, and they have, unprecedented for state university, a large and effective law school, which they just changed the name, and it's now the Antonin Scalia School of Law. And so there are oases for right-thinking people on these campuses.

Dr. James Dobson: So at the very least, parents who are helping their sons and daughters select the college experience, the school that they're going to go to, really need to invest themselves in that issue and learn something about the school and what its philosophy is. Some of them won't even let conservative, perhaps conservative Christian students in to those highly competitive programs.

Morton Blackwell: In Virginia, it became known among conservatives that if you wanted your child to be accepted at the University of Virginia, very prestigious school, you had to be sure that on the materials that you presented, there were no indications that your son or daughter was a conservative.

Dr. James Dobson: And when you consider where that money comes from for that university, that ought to be illegal if it's not.

Morton Blackwell: Well, it is awful, and things have to be done, in some cases, by the state government. The case in Tennessee, if you started the program talking about, it was state legislators who got this information and got pressure, and almost immediately they proceeded to defund this rotten leftist program and spent some of the money on bumper stickers reading, "In God We Trust."

Dr. James Dobson: You have a program that's had a major impact. It's called Campus Reform, but I haven't seen a description of exactly how that works. What is Campus Reform?

Morton Blackwell: Campus Reform is a campus news website, which is sourced by conservative students on college campus who see abuses and bias going on around them, and they report it to us, and we put it on the website. Five stories or so every day go on our website, and anybody can do it. You just go to the website campusreform.org. There is a place on the landing page of that website where if you wish to be alerted to one story every day of the horrible things that are going on on campus. Just give us the email there, and we'll give you that feed as long as you want that feed.

Dr. James Dobson: Can you make it specific to a particular university or campus or state?

Morton Blackwell: Well, there are like 2,700 four-year colleges in America, and there's no way to cover all of that on a single website. We do have available on the website, you

can go back and look at stories hundreds of them that have come in over the years and I think you can search that for a particular college.

Dr. James Dobson: So you have some archives that...

Morton Blackwell: The archives are opened.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you list the universities that you approve of that you feel are doing the best job.

Morton Blackwell: Well, we don't have such a list. I mean, you could sit down and come up with a list pretty quickly. You know, Hillsdale, Grove City, Liberty. They're not really that many of them. And for many schools, if you have a particular course of study, if you can identify departments where there are good conservative faculty, then you can go to that school.

Dr. James Dobson: Morton, tell me if you're hopeful about the future.

Morton Blackwell: Well, those of us who favor traditional values and strong defense and the free market system are in many ways today more embattled than ever. But on the other hand, we have more resources and leadership than we ever had before. It is not a steady downward trend with things always getting worse. I got active in the Goldwater campaign long ago, and at that time, conservatives could communicate with each other through the filter of a left-wing media. Where the newspapers and the networks and the news magazines would give everybody their news about the public policy process. And think of what we have today. We have the internet that we can talk to each other on without any filter. We have talk radio. We have programs like you. And imagine, was there anybody back in the 1960s with the outreach that you today have, Dr. Dobson? I don't remember anybody.

Dr. James Dobson: No, and it really rankled me. When I was riding back and forth to the university in the car in the morning and at night, and I would listen to what kind of passed for talk radio then, I wanted to bite the steering wheel. I mean there was nothing that represented my point of view and nothing there was nobody there was no Rush Limbaugh there was no Hannity there was none of those programs existed.

Morton Blackwell: Exactly so we have the means of communication now that we didn't have before and so that is something we should think about and not get upset or despondent. Who would have thought that in the 1960s or 1970s that it would be possible to elect Ronald Reagan president of the United States? A lot of people thought that the Soviet was going to absorb the whole world. And then suddenly conservatives got active at the grassroots and elected Ronald Reagan. The economy turned around, and it was communism that was thrown into the dustbin of history.

Dr. James Dobson: I read something that you wrote. I can't quote it, but let me express the idea of it. That when you supported Barry Goldwater, for president and he got crushed by Lyndon Johnson, you realized it's not enough to be right.

Morton Blackwell: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: You've got to know something about the process and how to get there.

Morton Blackwell: I think If you are committed to your principles, then you owe it to your philosophy to study how to win. Don't expect to win just because you think you can prove that you're right. You have to learn how to organize and communicate and raise funds and recruit candidates and manage campaigns and be good candidates, learn how to communicate online, et cetera. And all of that is what I have been focusing on, teaching people the skills and techniques to win. And I am so fortunate that I've been able to find literally tens of thousands of conservatives who are willing to financially support what I'm doing. And the end result now is 197,000 people that we trained and almost 2,000 conservative clubs that we work with. I have 33 members of the Congress who are graduates of my training, 400 plus state legislators serving now. So are we going to win or not? I don't know. But the Lord did not demand that we win. He demanded that we try.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell me why you put such emphasis on winning politically. There's a reason behind that. Explain it.

Morton Blackwell: The winner in a political contest, I believe, is determined not by whether or not you can prove yourself correct. But the winner is determined by the number and the effectiveness of the activists on the respective sides. If one side has a greater number of effective activists over a long period of time, that side is going to win. I think that's one reason why the communists had success for a long time, because conservatives were satisfied that we were right and could prove that we were right, the communists were studying how to win, how to organize, how to communicate, how to raise funds, how to get people of your viewpoint in jobs in the public policy process.

Dr. James Dobson: And those are things you teach through the Leadership Institute.

Morton Blackwell: Absolutely. It's hard because a lot of people who are deeply committed philosophically conservative think it's beneath their dignity to study mere technique. Because the same techniques that you would use to design a piece of literature for a conservative group could be used by a left-wing group. And so that doesn't excite conservatives. But if you teach people what the real nature of politics is, that the winner is determined by the number and effectiveness of the activists on each side. The number of activists on a given side is determined by the organizational technology that that side uses. And that if you organize and train people, and you have more activists on your side, eventually you're going to win. Teaching philosophically committed people that they have a moral obligation to study how to win is less difficult than you might expect.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me tell you what concerns me probably more than anything else, and that's that the people who are most committed to values to rightness and wrongness are conservative Christians. And often those people feel that somehow, it's immoral or not right or anti-biblical or scriptural or what have you to be involved in politics. And they brag about it. They love to say, "Well, as you know, we're not political." We're really talking about right and wrong. We're really talking about the future of this country. I mean, what if the Founding Fathers took that approach? Abraham Lincoln says the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. He didn't say of, by, and for everybody except conservative Christians. He said we all have a right to address the government, and certainly to vote. Well, and half the Christians don't even bother to register or vote.

Morton Blackwell: I don't think that the Lord wants us to be so concerned with heavenly things that we're no earthly good.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, as you can see, that's a hot button for me there.

Morton Blackwell: I shudder to think what the country would be like were it not for the work you have done, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you, sir. Well, I appreciate so much what you stand for and the influence you've had on my life. And you're not ready to give up, are you? You're not ready to retire.

Morton Blackwell: Retirement is not in my vocabulary. As long as I am in good physical and mental health, I plan to do it. And I have to tell you; it is immensely exciting. When you find young people who are reasonably conservative, and you bring them in and you teach them how to win. And then they say, "I learned more at your seminar than I did at four years of college about how to affect government." And you realize that you've launched them perhaps on a lifetime of fighting for conservative principles. And when you train as many people as I have, I can't keep track of those people any more than you can keep track of the millions of people whose lives you have influenced but you get plenty of comment back. People will tell you as I told you before we went on something that you did helped my family greatly and you would never have noted if I hadn't told you about that this morning. So you know that not only is there enough evidence to show that what you're doing is worthwhile, you know that there's a whole lot out there, a whole lot more that you'll never, ever really be able to fully measure. But it's there.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I find out about it when I go out in public.

Morton Blackwell: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: And people stop me to tell me; you helped raise my children.

Morton Blackwell: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's my legacy if I've got one.

Morton Blackwell: It's a great one.

Dr. James Dobson: And you have a great legacy, too, sir. And keep up the good work. Now, how can people find your organization, and how can they support you and help you?

Morton Blackwell: Well, they can go to the website, leadershipinstitute.org, where we describe our programs. And if people are interested in contributing, they can contribute on that website. I would encourage everybody, if you're not familiar with the Leadership Institute's campus news website, Campus Reform, go online and call up Campus Reform. We run about five stories of leftist outrages on campus every day. And there's a place on the page for Campus Reform for people to sign in, and we'll send you every day a new story about leftist abuses and bias on campus.

Dr. James Dobson: It's that prevalent.

Morton Blackwell: We have an abundance.

Dr. James Dobson: You don't have trouble finding those stories.

Morton Blackwell: For some long time, we were sending out to friendly news media one story a day about leftist outrages on campus. There were so many of them that we began now in our feed. We sent four or five different stories out to the media so they can use one that maybe other news media aren't using. It's just awful. Shining sunlight on what they're doing is not only exciting, but it's rewarding. And very often they are forced to go into retreat when what they do is exposed.

Dr. James Dobson: I appreciate you being here. I love talking to you starting in 1983. We began a conversation that we carried on today. Thanks for coming and being here.

Morton Blackwell: Thank you so much for having me.

Roger Marsh: You know, it's really sobering to realize that the campuses meant to shape our children's futures are so often working to actually unravel their faith instead. But as Morton Blackwell reminded us on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, no student stands alone when they're surrounded by others who share their convictions. You've been listening to Family Talk and this compelling two-day conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and his guest, Morton Blackwell, founder and president of the Leadership Institute. If you'd like to hear this program again or to share it with a parent or grandparent who needs this encouragement, just visit jdfi.org. And if you are in the thick of it right now, raising young children and hoping that they will follow the footsteps of faith as they move into their young adult years, let me point you to two resources built exactly for this season. The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute offers a free 10-day email series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book, *Bringing Up Boys*, and another based on *Bringing Up Girls*. Now, *Bringing Up Boys* will help you lead

your sons wisely through today's cultural challenges. And the separate 10-day series drawn from *Bringing Up Girls* is created just for them. Both are practical, biblical, and delivered right to your inbox. So to sign up for either one or to sign up for both, simply go to JDFI.org and search for those titles, *Bringing Up Boys* and *Bringing Up Girls*. Again, you'll find the information for each of those free 10-day emails when you go to jdfi.org.

These digital resources, as well as the daily broadcast that you enjoy, are made possible because friends like you choose to stand with us here in ministry. Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we're working to preserve and promote the family and the biblical principles upon which it is built, to introduce as many people as possible to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to defend the sanctity of human life and religious freedom all across the nation. Today, we invite you to partner with us with a gift of any amount, especially during these summer months. Your tax-deductible donation goes a long way. Your generosity keeps trusted biblical wisdom on the air for families who need it, and you can give a gift securely online when you visit us at drjamesdobson.org or jdfi.org. If you'd prefer, you can speak with a member of our constituent care team when you call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Or if you prefer, you can write to us. Our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. 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, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for being with us today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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