



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Remembering Charlie Kirk: A Modern-Day Martyr for the Lord

Guest(s): Gary Bauer

Air Date: September 12, 2025

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 a very special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and Gary Bauer is with me in-studio today. Gary's in Washington D.C., I'm in Southern California and we are having a conversation about the events that took place on Wednesday, September 10th, which just rattled the nation as a dear friend of the James Dobson Family Institute, a good friend of Dr. Dobson himself, Charlie Kirk was gunned down in broad daylight at Utah Valley University. He was in the middle of doing what Charlie does so best. He puts up a tent at a college campus that has a sign that says, "prove me wrong," and then engages in debate with people who disagree with his biblical worldview. And Charlie has done this masterfully for a number of years, and Wednesday the 10th of September was the final opportunity for Charlie to do so. Gary, I know from your position as our senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute, you've seen some of the things that Charlie has been able to bring to light in the culture, but also, I know that there's a personal connection too. First of all, welcome to the broadcast and it's a very, very somber day for us here at JDFI.

Gary Bauer: Well, it is a somber day, Roger, and thank you for the introduction. I'll be completely honest because that's what we should do. I am heartbroken. When I first heard the report, I thought it can't be, and then of course it was clear that it was, but I'm also, and I got to pray about this, I'm angry. I am angry because this is not, it's not an isolated event. I was thinking last night as I was praying, what we have seen in recent months: two young Jews shot down in front of the Jewish Museum by a hater, the fire-bombing of the Teslas because people disagreed with Elon Musk, the attacks right now on federal immigration, police people physically attacking them, an executive shot in the back in New York because he worked at a healthcare company and his killer immediately raises hundreds of thousands of sub dollars and becomes a national hero, two assassination attempts on the president of the United States.

Trust me, there's been more that we will eventually hear about and then this terrible event. Our audience is overwhelmingly a Christian, and I really want Christians to understand this. A lot of the media is saying, well, Charlie Kirk was known for his defense of lower taxes and smaller government and deregulation.

That's not what Charlie Kirk was known for. Yes, he believed those things, but he was going on campuses and talking to America, America's young people, and he was delivering the message that Dr. Dobson devoted his life to. He was saying to young men and women, find the person you're going to love. Love them, marry them. And then he was saying, when you do that, have children, have as many children as you can. He was going on the campus and defending the sanctity of life. He was telling students, don't be deceived by this transgender ideology. There are men and women. That's all there is. Men and women. He was, he is a martyr for our faith. He is a martyr for the true meaning of our country, and I believe we actually are Roger, at a turning point, which was the name of his organization. We have some decisions to make.

Roger Marsh:

Yeah, we certainly do. And I want to share a quote. This is a note that was posted yesterday on our social media page, Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk on Facebook and also on Instagram as well. And it's currently been viewed by thousands of people, tens of thousands. It's a note from Dr. Bart Brock who's the president of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Bart wrote, "We joined with the world in mourning the news of Charlie Kirk's assassination. From the earliest days of his incredible work, Dr. Dobson and our institute were honored by his friendship. We stand with his family and TPUSA as they have been stripped of a loving husband, father and founder. We have all lost an unparalleled champion of righteousness in our culture." Signed Dr. Bart Brock who posted yesterday within minutes of the news of the assassination, which it's just so shocking. And Gary, just even that phrase, the idea, I mean you and I, both are parents. We're dads. We've got children who are of a certain age. I mean, Charlie was 31. He was just shy of his 32nd birthday. And I was talking to one of our colleagues here at JDPI who said, "Oh my gosh, I didn't realize Charlie was two years older than me." And we just sat there and let that sink in because he's a man. He was a grown man, married man, husband, father. Charlie was a throwback to what men used to look like in this culture.

Gary Bauer:

Yes.

Roger Marsh:

When you hit a certain age and whatever. You got married, you had a family, and you could hear him in his voice every time he was on campus pleading with these college students saying, do what's biblical, right and true. I mean, you know better. You don't have to be as confused as you are. He brought clarity and that brought people confusion in many cases. The fact that he was so clear about what God's Word says about men and women, about society on the whole. He was very clear.

Gary Bauer:

He was Roger. And look, we know in our society and in the divisions in our country, some of us like me and you, we lean right, point right. Other people, point left. Charlie pointed up. The focus of his life was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Roger Marsh:

Amen.

Gary Bauer: Just a few weeks ago, anytime he posted something on social media, it got a gazillion hits and often it was very insightful comments. He simply posted "Jesus is Lord."

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Gary Bauer: He just posted and all over the country, this was interesting because when he first went onto the campuses, he tended to talk about secular things that were being debated in our country, but I've been with him a couple of times when he said that the oddest thing happened. We're told all these kids have abandoned Christianity and Christ, but he said, when I would open it up to questions, some of the first questions were about God and they were seeking questions. So he said, I started making that a bigger emphasis because it even surprised me. And in recent years, that is often dominated the debates he was having with the students. And there have been times after an appearance by Charlie on a campus where there would be a mass baptism.

Christian groups on the campus following up his visit would invite students that heard for the first time, maybe the message of salvation will baptize you. And there's been baptism services that have been held on the commons of major universities, in the fountains, et cetera. Sometimes hundreds and hundreds of people in recent months.

Roger Marsh: It's amazing to see how the faith component took over at Turning Point, not that Turning Point was never based on godly values and principles, but I think as Charlie grew in his stature, he grew in his faith, he became very good friends. I know here in Southern California last night as we're recording this, Pastor Jack Hibbs earlier this week, took his Wednesday night Bible study and turned it into not only a memorial service for Charlie because they were very, very close, but also the fact that he turned it into a "Okay, you're probably asking, you're probably wondering the question, is Charlie in Heaven? Yes, he is. How did he get there?" And besides the obvious, I mean it was a gunshot to the neck, which was just one of the most gruesome things you've ever seen. And the social media treatment of Charlie Kirk's assassination is just horrific in some cases where some of the memes, I'm sure you've seen some horrible ones too, Gary, of people just mocking the fact that his head tilted to the left right before he passed.

It said, "Well, look, Charlie Kirk finally took a left position on guns." There was just horrible things to say, but it created such a wonderful, powerful opportunity for us. I know you and I were talking here before we started our recording about the many times that Charlie was with Dr. Dobson. The fact that many people looked at Charlie Kirk today and said, I'm sure that James Dobson looks at him like a son or a grandson because he's following in those footsteps. And I know you worked very closely with Charlie and saw a lot of those parallels too.

Gary Bauer: Yes, you're absolutely right. And we had our gathering at the James Dobson Family Institute a week or so ago, and one of the things I talked about and many

of us talked about was what's going on in the country, it's not a normal debate. We have normal debates in our country all the time, and the winner of the debate, whoever wins, it doesn't change the country that much. It's all been within the context of some shared values. This is a different time. And when you see somebody celebrating his death or mocking his death, a major commentator on TV yesterday said, "Well, basically he got what he deserved." I mean, some of the things he said. He was fired by the way, overnight.

Roger Marsh: Thank the Lord.

Gary Bauer: This Dowd guy. Yeah, absolutely. But there was a lot of that look and the House of Representatives in the aftermath.

When Charlie was shot, the Speaker of the House led a moment of silence, and then another member of Congress said, "I ask unanimous consent that we have a verbal prayer" and the left side of the house, the Democrat side of the house erupted screaming no. And they couldn't do it. They could not have a verbal prayer. Look, I've heard it from my kids. Our son had dinner with Charlie Kirk just two weeks ago, and he and Charlie were planning together to take hundreds of young Americans to the Middle East in a few months to help them understand the clash of good and evil that's going on there. Zach is devastated by this. If you have children or grandchildren, teens to twenties and thirties, if they've been paying attention, they're devastated. And this is a time to talk with them because I think the people that killed Charlie Kirk want us afraid. They want us to slink away. They want us to say, "Well, I can't get involved in politics. That would kill him again." To honor his life, this ought to be a wake-up call that each of our families, all of us and the church has to wake up in America or we are going to lose this country.

Roger Marsh: Today on a very special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, I'm Roger Marsh, joined by Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute. Gary is also the host of the outstanding podcast, Defending Faith, family, and Freedom, and you can link up to that and get every episode at drjamesdobson.org. Gary, you said something earlier I want to circle back around to because it's haunting and chilling what you said in describing saying, hey, look, if we just shrink away after Charlie Kirk's assassination, he'd be killed all over again. But you also mentioned the righteous indignation that a lot of Christians are feeling right now. And I know the Left would also love nothing more than from someone who is a Charlie Kirk supporter to try to retaliate, to take up arms, if you will. And even though that's a very natural tendency, talk about why it's so important for us to recognize the anger, recognize the grief, obviously that's just washing over everyone, but at the same time, to not fight fire with fire, but rather to unleash more of what Charlie Kirk was bringing to not just college campuses, but wherever we go. I mean our own circle of influence.

Gary Bauer: We are called to be Christ-like. And of course more violence would not be the answer. I know Dr. Dobson was worried about this. We all have to pray because

we may be headed toward something we don't want to talk about because the forces that are unleashed in our society are regularly engaging in violence as I ran through a little while ago, and at some point, we have to pray about what the reaction to that will be, but it's important at this moment. Look, this killer who came for one reason to that college, that university, it was to kill one man. He could have kept firing and killed dozens and dozens of students. This was a trained assassin. We don't know if he was working for a foreign interest. We don't know whether he was inspired by domestic political elements, but he killed the man he wanted to kill.

And so we need to remember that we're warriors for Christ. We need to keep speaking the truth. Look, we don't need anybody skipping all the other steps and going to violence. Church, wake up and just be Christian citizens. Vote for crying out loud. You don't have to think about anything else more dramatic than that. I saw a couple of people that have been in this battle staying on this theme. One woman yesterday, Sage Steele, said that she had heard from three of her children and they said, "Mom, get out of this. It's too dangerous. We don't want you being killed." And she said, "I told them no, I can't do that because that's what the killer and the forces behind him want." And I would say to the church in America, Roger, every Sunday all around the world, Christians are murdered on the way to church while they're in church and when they leave church and the church grows all around the world.

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Gary Bauer: If we let something like this make us into cowards, that would be a sin. I would not want to stand before the throne of Christ and have to explain why I was a coward. In Revelation, it outlines who will be thrown into the fiery lake.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Gary Bauer: And there's a list of everybody you would expect the number one thing on the list will be the cowards. Don't be a coward.

Roger Marsh: Yeah. Now is the time to stand firm in your faith. And at the gathering event you were just describing where your talk was so powerful and it was so riveting, and we heard from speakers like Pastor Amanchukwu who really had a call to action for the church to stand up. I had a few moments with Pastor Jack Hibbs who offered a beautiful memorial earlier this week for Charlie Kirk. They were dear friends, kind of a father and son type of relationship, and we were discussing what it means. Part of the reason why Pastor Jack is a big fan of what's happening here at JDFI and Charlie Kirk spoke at our gathering the year before. He spoken a couple of times for us, and they said the same thing. It's not that Charlie was doing anything radical or revolutionary. He wasn't calling for boycotts and tariffs and this, that, and the other thing. He was just living out his faith. He was standing up for what is biblical right and true. And in doing so, look at how the Left reacts. Look at the fact that somebody looked at a guy who's a husband, his wife Erika, a gorgeous young family with their son and their

daughter, and these are children who are under three years of age. The idea that they would look at something like that, that's what we say is that's God's gold standard.

That's Plan A. And Charlie was living it. And basically what happened as a result of that is the enemy was so filled with fear and anger that they tried to eliminate that from the landscape. And some people are rejoicing, but I think even I saw even some of the left-leaning senators, Cory Booker, people like Jimmy Kimmel were saying, "Hey, you know what? You don't have to agree with the guy, but in all honesty, we really shouldn't be celebrating anything like this. This is a tragic day." Gary, where do we go from here? What do you see? I mean, as we are just passing the 9/11 anniversary for the 24th time and America has been rocked to the core with an assassination of a young millennial, a Gen Z leader who crossed all different demographics, all different ethnicities. I mean, Charlie had fans everywhere. What do we do now?

Gary Bauer: Well, hopefully a million new Charlie Kirk's have been raised up in the wake of this and will be raised up what men meant for evil God can turn into good.

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Gary Bauer: I would urge everybody just to double down on everything. Double down on prayer, double down on worship, double down on saving your children and your grandchildren, double down on your level of activity. Periodically, we are born into serious times. The revolutionary generation, it was very uncomfortable. I can't even think of what that all meant to people. They thought of themselves as British, and now there was this thing out there they had to decide, right? The horrible debate over slavery. Can one man own another man? What? Of course not. So you had to stand up. Whether we like it or not, this is one of those moments, Roger, the whole country, everything we believe the freedom of religion, the freedom of assembly, as Charlie just demonstrated in this horror, the freedom of speech. There are powerful forces trying to erase all that. And so I hope what's ahead is that the Church of Jesus Christ rises up as a bold and strong voice in America, just like the voice of the founding fathers, all of whom, by the way, we're about the age of Charlie Kirk in their thirties. If young people hear this message today, cry, mourn, but don't you dare walk away. We need you. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ and believe in the founding values of this country, you are our only hope to save America once again.

Roger Marsh: Gary Bauer is with me today here on this special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. We're remembering the life and legacy of Charlie Kirk, and it's still very, very raw. It's still very, very tender to see a young husband and father, a man of great Christian faith who loves this nation and everything that America was founded to be assassinated in cold blood and broad daylight on the campus of Utah Valley University on Wednesday, September the 10th. And when you go to drjamesdobson.org, you'll see a couple of reflections that we have posted. Gary's thoughts, thoughts from Dr. Bart Brock, our president here at the JDFI. We also encourage you remember of

course, that there's a beautiful picture of Dr. Dobson and Charlie Kirk on the header, if you will, on the JPEG there on the landing page. And you look at Doctor Looking very fondly at Charlie that was from the gathering a couple of years ago, and they're having a dialogue, having a discussion.

It was just a beautiful exchange every time they did have the opportunity to be together. And your support of the James Dobson Family Institute makes events like that possible, makes broadcast like this possible. We can't stress enough that as Dr. Dobson now has gone home to be with the Lord, we are continuing to fight the good fight of faith in the culture, just to live biblically. And you can give a gift in support of that when you go to drjamesdobson.org, drjamesdobson.org. You can also call a member of one of our constituent care team members who are standing by to take your call at 877-732-6825. And you can also put a note in the mail if you'd like to send us something through the U.S. Postal Service, it will get here. That is the James Dobson Family Institute or Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, however you want to address it. P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the zip code is 80949.

Gary, I know that you and I've talked a lot about how much Doctor appreciated Charlie, and one of the things that really struck me is that just three weeks after doctor went home to be with the Lord, he may have been after St. Peter, may have been the first person to greet Charlie with a big hug, and I could just hear him just saying, "Charlie, I've surprised you're here. I'm glad you're here, but I'm so proud of you." I went home after the news and everything, and my son, Jake, is staying with us right now, and he's 31 years old, the same age as Charlie. They almost have the same birthday. And I just gave him a hug and I just said, "Son, I can't imagine what it must be like for Charlie's parents to have to plan something like this now for their son."

But I just said, as they are proud of their son, I just gave Jake a hug and I said, "I'm so proud of you, and I pray that your faith will continue to shine." And I know you feel that way about Zach, and I'm just having a little paternal moment here where all of his fathers and sons can look at a guy like Charlie Kirk and say, America's a better place now because Charlie, 17-year-old Charlie started Turning Point USA, and he wasn't just some crazy high school kid, wise beyond his years and take the final few moments. You mentioned Zach's friendship and relationship with him. How is this striking you today, Gary, just personally?

Gary Bauer:

Oh, I mean, it's devastating. Look, I've been into battle for a long, long time. I was in the Reagan administration when the word came that there was an attempt to kill Ronald Reagan. And we didn't know for the rest of that day whether that attempt failed or not. There's been so much violence in our country over the years, and now of course, so much of it is politically motivated. And Roger, I have to say, it's almost universally coming from the Left, which is not surprising because so much of the Left does not have a basis in a belief in God. So we're seeing it over and over and over again. By the way, Robert Kennedy said yesterday, "Once again, a bullet has silenced the most eloquent truth teller of an era." And of course, this is a man that lost his father and his

uncle and knows what it feels like for somebody you respect and admire and love to be assassinated. That's just what we had happened. I'm praying for America. Any thought I ever had of walking away from the fight, I'll go till I drop. It's got to be, this has to be a turning point, A turning point for the church, a turning point for citizenship, a turning point for restoring the family, restoring faith. We've got to rise to the occasion now, not slink away in fear.

Roger Marsh: As I hear those words, Gary, and I'm motivated by them, and I can see Dr. Dobson and Charlie Kirk arm in arm in Heaven encouraging us on to do the same, to keep fighting the good fight until the Lord returns. And I'm so grateful that you were able to come on a short moment's notice here to have a conversation with us. Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute, regular co-host here on the Family Talk broadcast, and also the host of the Defending Faith, family and Freedom podcast, which is available wherever you get your favorite podcast. Gary, somber day for us, but a hopeful day as we're turning a corner in the culture war. Thank you so much for being with us today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Thank you, Roger, and God bless everybody and never, never give up.

President Donald Trump: My great fellow Americans. I am filled with grief and anger at the heinous assassination of Charlie Kirk on a college campus in Utah. Charlie inspired millions and all who knew him are united in shock and horror. Charlie was a patriot who devoted his life to the cause of open debate and the country that he loved so much, the United States of America. They ask all Americans to commit themselves to the American values for which Charlie Kirk lived and died. The values of free speech, citizenship, the rule of law, and the patriotic devotion and love of God. Charlie was the best of America, and the monster who attacked him was attacking our whole country. An assassin tried to silence him with a bullet, but he failed because together we will ensure that his voice, his message, and his legacy will live on for countless generation to come. May God bless his memory. May God watch over his family and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

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