



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Dr. James Dobson – His Family and Friends Pay Tribute – Part 2

Guest(s): Ryan Dobson, Speaker Mike Johnson, and Gary Bauer

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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 once again to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Tomorrow is the one-year anniversary of the passing of our beloved founder, Dr. James C. Dobson, Jr. And so on today's Family Talk program, we're continuing our two-day presentation of highlights from the memorial service that was held for Dr. Dobson on Saturday, October the 4th, 2025. On today's program, you're going to hear from Dr. Dobson's son, Ryan. You'll also hear a touching message from Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, as well as Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Policy and Culture Center. Gary worked alongside Dr. Dobson for more than four decades, dating all the way back to their time at the Ronald Reagan White House and continuing on to his role today as our senior VP of public policy and host of the Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast. These tributes paint a beautiful picture of a man who lived with unwavering integrity, a devoted husband, a loving father, and a faithful friend, but most importantly, a man who pointed everyone he ever met to Jesus Christ. Authenticity and integrity were the hallmarks of Dr. James Dobson's life. And now we're going to hear from Ryan Dobson. His tribute reminds us that Dr. Dobson wasn't just a public figure; he was a dad who showed up again and again in the moments that mattered the most. Here now is Ryan Dobson, remembering his father on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Ryan Dobson: How could I possibly encapsulate 55 years with my dad with words in a speech? There's no possible way, but I will try to pull the curtain back a little bit on the relationship I had with my dad. I think the most common question I've ever been asked in my life is what was it like having James Dobson as a dad? And my answer is, I don't know. I've got nothing to compare it to. What's it like having your dad? I knew he wrote books. I knew he traveled and he spoke to audiences, but that was his job. That was what he did. It wasn't who he was. I didn't know we were famous until the sixth grade. I was totally shocked. It still didn't change who he was.

Everybody got to see a piece of my dad. He got to see the piece at work or the piece on the film series, the pieces that he put in his books or his radio broadcasts. But to me, that wasn't my dad. My dad was the one that taught me

to shoot with a BB gun in the backyard. He was the one that took us on bike rides to Taco Lita. And when Danae could ride her bike, I would fall asleep in the seat on the back of his bike, and hikes in Wilderness Park. I remember my dad took me on my very first quail hunt. The very first time I got to carry a gun in the field and I was beside myself. I got to be amongst the men, hold a real gun, and finally a dog got on point to a hidden covey, a quail, and my dad said, "Ry, it's your turn." And I crept up holding my gun and finally that dog flushed the covey and the covey flew up and I went and I shot straight in the air. My dad laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed. We walked through hundreds and hundreds of fields together hunting quail and pheasant. I will never forget the hours we spoke and talked. One of the trips that stands out most, we were elk hunting outside of Herb's ranch in Jackson, Wyoming, and we got up about two o'clock in the morning and we got on horseback. We rode for hours and hours in silence and cold and we got to a place where we were going to set up and I overheard my dad whispering to the guide.

He said, "Make sure Ryan gets the first shot. Whatever you do, put him in line for the first shot." I was stunned. I was old enough to know how much a guided hunting experience cost, and he was making sure at his expense that I would get an elk. I didn't understand it then. It wasn't until years later when I had my own kids that seeing their joy far eclipses any experience I could ever have, and that is a real dad. My dad was calm in a crisis. I know that you think Herb and Roy are joking about my dad carrying a flashlight for grizzlies. That's not a joke. My dad was hunting bear in Canada. He was up in a tree stand with a guide and all of a sudden it shifted and the guide went, oh, and he looked back and said, "Oh my goodness, Doctor, this isn't hooked up right. This is going to fall. You got to get down." And so my dad being a safe hunter, went and unloaded all of his shells, threw them in a pocket, climbed down 18 feet. The guide climbed back up 18 feet. He's up there ratcheting the stand back up and my dad thinks, I ought to put a bullet in the gun. Throws one in, turns around and a bear walked out. He didn't do what I would've done or everybody here, which is this, bang. You just shoot. He looked at it and said, is that bear big enough or are my friends going to make fun of me when I get back tonight?

He let that bear walk towards him. They can't see very well, so he stood perfectly still and that bear's doing this as it's getting closer and closer and finally he said, well, I guess if it gets that much closer, I'm going to have to shoot it. It got within 10 feet of him before he took that bear. He was fearless. He was also not a snowplow parent. I got to hand it to my dad. He let me crash. He let the actions of my life and the consequences of those actions teach me some of the hardest lessons I learned. I was reckless growing up. I got my first set of stitches at three from running across the backyard with my eyes closed. I got 13 stitches over my left eye. That was the first of about 50 trips to the ER. I was a very reckless kid.

I was also a very sick kid, and I'm telling you; my dad never complained one time. I was in the ER all the time. He never scolded me for injuring myself. He never tried to suppress that streak in me. He knew that was my temperament.

He never made me feel weak or small for being sick, and he was there every time. I wish that's the part that you could see. I wish you could see the true dad, the comforter, the one that was there every single time. When Laura's mom suddenly passed away, I was halfway into the drive to California. I didn't know what to do, so I called my dad.

I didn't know if I should drive back to Colorado Springs and try to get a flight or drive to Salt Lake or just keep driving. I didn't know what to do and he said, "I think you should keep driving." I said, "Okay, I'm going to keep driving." And I took off driving. My parents beat me to California. That's the kind of parents they are. Laura said she looked up and my parents were there. I hadn't even arrived yet. When we were early married, I was out of town when Laura went into a miscarriage. My dad was first on the scene. He drove her to the ER; he held her hand. He stood with her, he stayed with her every step of the way. He took command of that ER. He wanted to ensure she would never spend one second alone when I was out of town. He was there for the good times too.

The night Lincoln was born, my mom and dad were speaking in Nashville and the second he was born, the nurses put him in my arms and he was just screaming his head off and I called my dad. This is the theme of my life: I called my dad. Security handed him the phone, and he goes, "Who is this? Who's crying? What's going on? Who is this?" I said, "Dad, you're grandpa." And he goes, "What? Who's crying?" I said, "Dad, it's Lincoln. You're a grandpa." And all I heard was shouting in the background, "I'm a grandpa. I'm a grandpa." I'm told he was literally walking on stage when they handed him the phone. He handed the phone back to Joe, walked out on stage and said, "I just found out I'm a grandpa." And the whole crowd went crazy and he said, "So I'm going to have to cut this short. You guys have a great night," and he walked off stage.

The first photo I have with Lincoln and my parents, my dad is in a full suit and tie. My mom's in a business suit because they didn't go home. They flew straight to the airport and drove straight to the hospital to be there for us. He was over the moon when he found out Luci was coming. My parents used to dress up and take my kids trick or treating with us. One year early on, Laura's chasing Lincoln. My dad and mom were dressed up as chefs: hats, jackets, pot with a spoon in it and an electric beater. You should see the looks on my neighbor's faces when they're looking at themselves as they're handing candy out going, "Is that James Dobson dressed like a chef, holding a ladybug?" and he's saying, "It's nice to meet you."

He was just a dad and a grandpa. I will say this, for 55 years I've seen my dad driven. There was never a time in my life where he did not have a project, a book or something he was deeply passionate about and working on. A couple of years ago, I asked him how he was feeling and he said, "Ryan, there is so much left to do and I have so little time to accomplish it." That was my dad. I will say this. For the last three weeks of his life, I got to see a different man.

I got to see him at peace. We played the Gaithers for him every morning. He loved it. We read the Psalms, he was happy. The kids got to come and say goodbye. He was thrilled to see them. He constantly said how proud of them he was. It felt like he was finally at rest. I would do a disservice that I didn't talk about what my dad cared about most in life. He would often say, my goal is to introduce people to Jesus. My vehicle is the family. And he knew Jesus was the answer to everything and he wanted everyone to know it. Last year, Laura got diagnosed with cancer for the fourth time. After the surgery, she developed an antibiotic resistant staph infection that wouldn't go away. We were in the hospital for nine months, six ER trips, 20 nights in the hospital, 120 doctor's visits. It took a toll on all of us and my dad knew it.

I remember he called me one night and there was passion in his voice and there was so much care and so much concern, and he didn't know how to say it, and he finally got it out. He was so afraid I was going to become bitter at God that after watching my wife suffer for this long, I just couldn't take it one more second and I would become bitter and angry with God and he was pleading with me. I was so hurt and I was grieving so much, but in that moment, I was grateful to say, "Oh, Dad. I reached the end of my rope months ago. I let go. I got nothing but God." I have relied solely on him for every second of my life and I could hear the relief in his voice because he had done his job. He modeled the behavior that says, turn to Jesus in every situation. That was his legacy and I am proud to carry it on. God bless you all and thank you for being here today.

Roger Marsh:

Oh, truly powerful words from James Ryan Dobson, the son of Dr. James C. Dobson, Jr. His tribute captures the essence of his father, a man who was driven by purpose, yet always made time for what mattered most and maybe more importantly, who mattered most. Next up on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, let's hear from Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, who credits Dr. Dobson's ministry with shaping his own life and the lives of countless others.

Mike Johnson:

Hi friends. This is Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson. I so wish that I could be there with you in person to join in honoring the immeasurable life and legacy of Dr. James Dobson. Dr. Dobson was a personal hero of mine as he was to so many of us. A singular figure in my life and in the lives of so many other people that I know. I was extraordinarily fortunate to have been a recipient and benefactor of his ministry from as long as I can remember. From the time I was a young boy, my parents would read his books to me and my siblings and they used his insights as a model to help guide our upbringing and shape us into the men and women that we are today. That was carried forward to my young adulthood when I had the opportunity to actually work under Dr. Dobson. I was one of the first attorneys at ADF and it was such a great blessing in my life to do that. He has been an inspiration to me throughout my career, and I can tell you so many of my colleagues in Congress would say the same thing if they were there with you tonight. Dr. Dobson was a pioneer who did more for our causes than arguably anyone else in generations. For more than five decades, he was one of the most important Christian leaders in our country, and that voice goes

on through eternity. He started to Focus on the Family in 1977, which birthed the family policy councils around the country, which have had such a huge impact. And he was a founding member of ADF, of course, which provided the legal and intellectual muscle to advance our causes in the public policy arena. And he spread the gospel to millions of people spanning multiple continents and multiple generations. His footprint, his impact and his legacy just simply cannot be overstated. And I know we all understand that. I will miss Dr. Dobson's wisdom and his friendship, but his legacy and his impact and his example will live on well beyond any of us. I send my love and prayers to Ms. Shirley and the Dobson children and thank all of you for coming together to memorialize someone who meant so much to so many people. God bless you.

Roger Marsh:

That was Speaker of the House Mike Johnson expressing gratitude for Dr. James Dobson's immeasurable impact on faith, family, and freedom in America. You're listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. We're sharing with you some of the audio highlights of Dr. Dobson's private family memorial service, which took place on October the 4th. By the way, if you'd like to watch all of the video as well as listen to the audio from that service, go to drjamesdobson.org and click the link on the banner at the top of the broadcast page. Our final tribute on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk comes from Gary Bauer. Gary served alongside Dr. Dobson for 35 years plus and currently handles our public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Let's hear now from Gary Bauer remembering his friend Jim Dobson on today's edition of Family Talk.

Gary Bauer:

I'm Gary Bauer. I've worked with or for Jim for probably 35 years and am currently handling public policy for the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm honored to be here today with all of you and particularly Shirley with you and your family as we celebrate Jim's life. I miss him. I can't imagine what you're feeling. I'm going to try to get some loose ends that maybe others didn't mention. So the first thing I want to say was that Jim was an encourager, always an encourager. I had an opportunity on a number of occasions to go around the country giving speeches with him to the same events. And after I would speak, Jim would say to me later, "Gary, that was the best speech I have ever heard you give." Wow. I mean, that was fantastic. But after the 20th speech, which after each one he said to me "Gary, that was the best speech you've ever given" I finally caught on. Every speech couldn't have been the best one. He was just trying to encourage me and I encouraged him to keep doing it. It felt great.

There's something else that I remember about Jim that's not going to be mentioned all the time. He wrote these great monthly letters. They were unbelievable. He was also a patriot, of course. He loved God and he loved America. I guess today he's a Christian nationalist, but we live in strange times. So Jim would periodically write about America and he would do it really well. He had a couple of those letters, I think I might still have them, where he would write about Constitution Hall in 1776. The Founders are there. They're putting together this country, this unbelievable experiment in liberty under God. And when you were reading about it, you didn't think you were peeking through the

window. You felt like you were on the floor when Dr. Dobson was describing this. You felt like you could say, "Mr. Jefferson, I have a suggestion." It was an amazing talent.

And as I was thinking about those letters, and those were basically written during the prime of his life when he had a lot of time to do this, and he took a lot of time. But I would like one more letter with the postmark of Heaven. I would love to get a firsthand description from Jim right now on what he's experiencing. We know what it's supposed to be, and I have no doubt that's what it is, but he would be able to describe it after seeing it firsthand. And of course, Jim has seen Jesus. Jim has seen Jesus. Everybody in the Bible that saw Jesus saw a different Jesus. Mary looked down in her lap and saw her little baby who an angel told her would be a king with a kingdom that would never end. The Pharisees looked at Jesus and they saw a threat, a blasphemer.

The disciples walked with Him all those years they thought they were walking with the greatest rabbi that ever lived. And that's true, but He was even bigger than that. Many of them didn't get it until the very end. And even then, there were a couple of bumps in the road. The Roman Empire, they thought He was an insurrectionist. Well, He was a resurrectionist. The Roman empire is gone. Jesus lives, crowds in Jerusalem welcomed Him as the king that they were waiting for the earthly king. And then not long after some of the same people would treat Him like a common criminal. And even on the cross with a thief on both sides, one mocked Him and the other one asked for His mercy. Now we're going to see Jesus too. And when we do, we'll see Jim and we will see all who we loved and all who loved us as long as they loved Christ too. What a reunion that is going to be. But while we wait for that day, we can honor Jim who put Christ at the center of everything he did: his family, his radio shows, those letters, his books, his speeches. We can honor him by pledging with all of our strength and all of our love. We will fight to defend faith, family, and freedom. God bless all of you. God bless Jim, and let's wait for that grand reunion. Thank you very much.

Roger Marsh:

Well, amen to that. You know, Gary Bauer's words remind us of the hope we have in Jesus Christ, the promise of a grand reunion with those we love. That hope sustained Dr. James Dobson throughout his life and his ministry, and it continues to sustain the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute even to this day. You've been listening to part two of our special presentation honoring the life of Dr. James Dobson, featuring eulogies from his memorial service back in October of 2025. On today's program, we heard from Dr. Dobson's son, Ryan Dobson, along with Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, and our senior vice president of public policy here at the JDFI, Gary Bauer. Now, you can hear this broadcast again or go back to listen to Part 1 as well as Part 2 when you go to drjamesdobson.org. And if it's easier to remember, just go to jdfi.org.

You know, Dr. James Dobson spent more than 50 years pouring into families, and he understood that the work of raising the next generation is some of the

most important work any of us will ever do. That's why I want to tell you about a newly revised resource drawn directly from his best-selling book called *Bringing Up Boys*. If you are raising boys right now, you know how challenging it could be. Dr. Dobson knew that, and you heard Ryan Dobson in his eulogy for his father make mention of that fact. Boys are, more often than not anyway, tougher to raise than their sisters, and there's something especially demanding about guiding a boy through childhood in through adolescence. This freshly updated 10-day email series, based on the *Bringing Up Boys* book, is designed to inform and equip you to lead your sons wisely, even through the toughest trials of life. It's Dr. James Dobson's timeless wisdom, preserved and passed on for the next generation, and it's exactly the kind of legacy he hoped to leave behind. Now, to sign up to start receiving the Bringing Up Boys 10-day email series, go to jdfi.org and search for that title, Bringing Up Boys. Again, go to drjamesdobson.org or jdfi.org to start receiving the free 10-day email series based on *Bringing Up Boys*.

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 spending some time with us today. Be sure to join us 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.

Here's today's Dr. Dobson Minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Giving your children monetary rewards for good grades can be effective at times, but in many instances it may not be necessary. Ongoing research by the Center for the Study of Family, Children, and Youth at Stanford University is finding that what does help students achieve in school is not necessarily rewards or prizes. It's parents. When mom or dad offer regular encouragement and praise for a job well done and meaningful assistance, grades tend to go up. It's that simple. What about when you're having a hard time finding anything to praise? When your child brings home a report card full of C's or maybe a few D's, can you find something positive about it? Well, let her know that you're confident that she has the ability to do well and that it's up to her to ask you for assistance in doing better. Then give her the resources and encouragement to succeed.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit drdobsonminute.org.