



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Biblical Roots of American Freedom

Guest(s): Kirk Cameron

Air Date: October 18, 2024

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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: Welcome to another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, joined for this segment by Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy for the Dr. James Dobson Policy Center, and today we're going to get into a conversation about what it means for us as Christians to not just sit idly by, but to actually kind of take up our cross, take up our flag, take up our constitution, and follow the Lord into the public square. Gary, welcome back to the broadcast.
- Gary Bauer: Hey, thank you Roger. Always great to be with you and boy, this is a really timely subject given the moment we're in America.
- Roger Marsh: Absolutely. The guest we're going to feature today here on the program, this is part of our Countdown to Decision 2024 video series, which you can find at drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. We recently had a conversation with actor, author, and I guess you'd call him activist too, Kirk Cameron, and people know him as Buck Williams in the *Left Behind* movies and Mike Seaver in *Growing Pains*, but he's become quite an outspoken advocate for Christians in the public square, and recently he's even written some children's books about why it's important for us as parents to kind of take up that mantle. Gary, I know that does your heart good seeing someone acting this way.
- Gary Bauer: Well, boy, does it ever Roger. As you probably recall, I was undersecretary of Education under the Reagan administration for a number of years, and one of our big issues that Bill Bennett and President Reagan and myself were pushing was this idea that children needed to be educated for freedom. And that is a particularly important point in a country like the United States that's built on the idea of ordered liberty under God, that only a virtuous people can remain free, and our children need to know their history. They need to know how our faith interlinks with the founding of America, and that's what Kirk Cameron's doing, not only with the books that he's written for children, but because he got up one morning and he realized that the public square was being taken over by

really bad forces and he began this effort to recover ground in America's libraries of all places.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, it's interesting when we started to see this increase in the amount of, so-called drag queen story hours, which became very much the cause to celeb for a lot of people on the left, and it was amazing how many pastors, how many parents, grandparents would go to these events to find out what was going on, why our kids being drawn into them and they would be blocked from the event or they'd be arrested for trespassing or creating a public disturbance. And so Kirk's approach to say, first of all, I'm going to write a book, a children's book. Secondly, we're going to have kind of a pastor story hour, if you will, going into the same public libraries that were basically saying drag queen story hour is okay. And for them to tell him, no, I'm sorry, this is too much of a disruption, separation of the church and state. There's no way. I mean, he had to fight legally to find libraries that would allow him to come in and read these books. It's just, it's a microcosm of what's happening culturally in America today.

Gary Bauer: It really is Roger. And he talks about the fact that he called these libraries that had done these drag queen reading hours and to simply say, "Well, I'd like to do a reading hour too." And the response was, "No, we represent an inclusive community and you're not allowed."

Roger Marsh: And you're not included. Right. Oh my goodness. I mean, it's somewhat laughable at this point, but the fact that Kirk did take this stand and has encouraged Christians to say, look, when it comes to election 2024, this is more than just saying we're going to stand up to evil, but we're going to bring biblical values to the public square. And that's what he's done. And it's one of many videos that you'll find on our website at drjamesdobbson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. Riley Games is there, Eric Metaxas is there, Dr. Del Tackett, Kirk Cameron and more. All of these videos are available free. They're full length interviews that go anywhere from a half hour to 45 minutes, and then also the shorter reels that are available too. We're going to hear just an excerpt of what Kirk Cameron shared with our team, Joseph Backholm and Alison Centofante. And Gary, I know that Kirk's passion really inspires you and it should inspire all of us to not only just say, I'm standing up against evil, but I'm going to bring the biblical worldview to the public square too.

Gary Bauer: That's exactly right, Roger. He's showing what a Christian citizen is like, and we need millions more of him.

Roger Marsh: Okay, well, let's get into this now and hear a little bit of Kirk Cameron in our Countdown to Decision 2024 video series here on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Kirk Cameron: None of us want to think that America could ever be toppled and taken over by another country, a group of people with a different ideology. I mean, why would you want to get rid of liberty and justice for all and freedom, religious freedom, political freedom? Well, there's a lot of people who would like to get rid of that.

Just read *The Communist Manifesto*. Just read *Rules for Radicals*. Just look at the rest of the world, right? Look at Venezuela, look at China. Look at all these other places. What we have here in this country is very unique, and it's only existing because we have a biblical root that has produced this sweet fruit of liberty and justice. And what we have done is we've neglected that root in our country and we've bought into some bad thinking that has resulted in a vacuum, and darkness has rushed in to these vacant places in the leadership positions in our homes, we have absent parents, we have distracted dads.

We have mothers who no longer see parenting their children as their sacred privilege. We have dads who are sitting on a couch watching video games and watching porn rather than being an example for their children and disciplining the young men in this country. We see leadership abandoning fidelity to Scripture in the pulpits of our churches and in our seminaries. All that stuff is being colored the color of the rainbow religion rather than Christianity and diversity, equity and inclusion is gutting our governments and our corporations. So when we allow that kind of thing to happen on our watch, what do we think is going to happen? We've severed the root of Christianity. I think there's still some of it left, but if we don't nourish and repair that, the fruit shrivels up, the branches end up falling off and the whole tree's going to topple. So what do we do about it?

There's a lot we can do about it, and that's what we're here to talk about today. There's a couple of ideas that come to mind. One is I think some parents and grandparents are just not aware of what's actually happening behind closed doors and even what's happening out in the open because A, they're not on social media, they're not watching what's going on. B, the legacy news media outlets are not showing you what's going on. So there's cover up of that kind of thing. And also I think in your heart of hearts, many parents and grandparents just don't want to believe that things are getting as bad as it is, and so there's a bit of willful ignorance going on.

I'll give you a personal example from my life experience. I wrote a children's book a couple Christmases ago called *As You Grow*. It's about a little acorn that grows into a great big oak tree and it learns how to grow the sweet fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. This is the fruit of the spirit. Well, I wanted to read it in a public library to some children as a story hour like so many others have been doing, and I was denied by over 50 public woke libraries that had previously held drag queen story hours for children in those public libraries. And they told me that I was not welcomed there because our values did not align. Their communities were inclusive and therefore I wouldn't be welcomed there. They told me that they were looking for authors of a particular color of skin, and I didn't match.

You think this is exaggeration? No, it's really not. I went on news stations all over and told them, I put them on blast publicly and said, what you're doing is unconstitutional. This is viewpoint discrimination of the worst kind. It's religious discrimination. And they probably hadn't even read my book.

And when I told them I was prepared to assert my constitutional rights in court, they acquiesced. They sent me a link to submit an application for a reading room, which by the way, they made us pay for rather than allowing us to come for free like they did with the drag queens, and they wouldn't even put it on their calendars, many of them. And when we showed up to Indianapolis Public Library, we were greeted by over 3000 parents and grandparents and children waving American flags, singing God bless America, and praying to Jesus, thanking God for His blessing and protection, and then read books of virtue to all of these precious little ones. And people are doing what's right in their own eyes. Good has become evil. Evil has become good to them, and this has all happened on our watch, so we better wake up.

We better understand that California has Child Protective Services right now removing children from Christians homes because they say it's not safe for these children who need to be able to transition from boy to girl without their parents' knowledge in a new home because these parents are unfit because of their Christian values. This stuff is real. This is happening all over the place. I would say that I started out with this metaphor of a tree, right? It's the deep root of Christianity that is down deep into the soil of the Bible that has produced such a healthy tree called the United States of America with all of its liberty and all of its fruit. November 5th is really about who do we want to be the gardener who will make sure that the fence is repaired so that all of the wolves don't come in and eat all the fruit, and lumberjacks don't come in and cut down the tree, but the guy who's at the executive branch cannot ultimately ensure the health of the tree.

That's something that we have to do. We've got to nourish the root. We're the ones who are cultivating the soil. We're the ones who have to pull out the weeds. We're the ones who have to make sure there's enough water and sunshine for our children to grow up to be the future moms and dads of this country. We're the ones who are in charge of creating the culture of the garden. That's the only hope that we have. Not that the government is going to fix this stuff for us. That's not their job. Their job is to protect from evil. But if we don't do our job, there's going to be nothing protect, only something to replace, and that will easily happen if moms and dads and grandparents don't step up and fulfill our sacred responsibility. We love heroes like Braveheart. That's why we love William Wilberforce is because these guys leaned in to the promises of God.

They drew confidence and strength from that, and they did the hard things. If they didn't do that, if the pilgrims and our founding fathers didn't do those things, nobody wants to go to war. Nobody wants to have to deal with the ugly nasties and shed blood, but this is the work that's required when good men and women do nothing. When we sit back and enjoy the shade of trees planted by others without contending for future generations, and we've got to do that. Our problems and challenges are common with every other nation on the planet. Why? Because people are selfish. The heart of man is wicked and deceitful above all things, the book of Jeremiah tells us. And yet, America's

accomplishments have been unique in all of the world. We have formed a kind of government here in this country that people would've died for, killed for to be able to be a part of it.

That's why so many people are rushing into this country. That's why everybody wants to be here because there's unique opportunities. There's religious liberty, there's educational opportunities, economic liberty, all of that stuff is important. If a nation doesn't have the economics to provide for its own defense, it's easily toppled. And so we've got to be concerned about the economy. We've got to be concerned about education because the future of America lies in the hearts and minds of our children. We've got to be concerned about political leadership and we've got to be concerned about church leadership. And even more than that, the integrity of moms and dads in our families. Freedom is not something that everybody should have. Freedom gives way too much opportunity for evil to creep in. Do you want to go down to your local prison and give everybody freedom? No. Do you give your kids unmitigated freedom to do whatever they want in the house with all their little friends? No, you don't because freedom is power.

The only people who are able to handle freedom, AKA power to do stuff that they want to do are people who have character. That's what Lord of the Rings was all about. Right. The power of the rings was so powerful that nobody could handle it and they would turn evil except Frodo. He had the opportunity because of his heart and he could be trusted, but ultimately he knew we would corrupt everybody. And so freedom is a dangerous thing. And our founders told us that our form of government is suited only for a religious and moral people. It is completely unacceptable for any other kind. We have Noah Webster who told us that, "Without the principles of Christianity our freedom is done." Our prosperity and opportunity is a thing of the past, and it really ought to be because look what's happening.

If we give freedom to say that men can be women and give birth, if we teach our children, they don't have to ask their parents and the government doesn't need to tell their parents, and we'll even make them pay for child mutilation, gender transition surgeries, and we're going to celebrate all of that stuff. If we're going to plunder people's property in the name of giving everybody a fair shake, this is insanity. And so I would say that freedom in America is a biblical idea. It comes from the ancient Hebrew Republic before the kings in Old Covenant Israel, but it absolutely required the people making a covenant with God and a covenant with one another to obey his laws from the heart. And if they did that, they would reduce crime, humanity would flourish, and they could elect their own leaders who would keep evil in check.

And when they strayed away from that model and they wanted somebody in the government to protect them and make them like all the other nations, things went down the toilet. And that's exactly what our founders modeled this country after. As long as we have faith, as long as we have moral integrity, God will be on our side. But as we look for government to be our provider and

protector rather than God, we are finding ourselves going down the rat hole of moral sewage and political corruption, economic collapse, and it's not looking good. But I think the silver lining is that that's always been the time when the people of God have woken up and they said, "what have we done? We got to turn back to God. Oh God, rend the Heavens, tear apart the clouds and send your mercy. Lord, bring life to these dry bones. Revive us again."

I'm hoping for a great awakening and that we can be a part of it in our lifetime. Just ask the most famous atheist living in the world right now, Richard Dawkins, when he was asked recently in an interview, if he could live in any kind of country in the world, what kind of country would he as an atheist like to live in? You know what he said, a Christian country. "I'd like to live in a Christian nation," he says, "Because essentially I feel most comfortable in a Christian ethos where people are kind to one another where you have liberties and you have freedoms." He says, "I'd rather like Christmas carols, and I like the pretty cathedrals. He says, "I don't want to live in a Muslim country. Ultimately, that ideology leads to the oppression of women and a lack of freedom and bondage and butchering." He's like, "That's the worst."

And the problem is, of course, we understand that for Richard Dawkins, an atheist to say, I like cathedrals and Christmas carols. But then be happy that church attendance is declining, is like saying, I like food, but I'm glad America's farms are closing. So Christian ideology making its way like a beautiful fragrance through every room in our nation, families, communities, schools, libraries, in the halls of Congress, is what made us so unique in the first place. George Washington understood that, Abraham Lincoln understood that, the pilgrims said that, Ronald Reagan said, "Remember the pilgrims and what they stood for." This is actually what every atheist wants, what every Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim wants. They want to live in a culture that is all about the sweet fruit without embracing the root, and it cannot be done. This isn't about peddling fear.

Much of the news tends to do that. They want to peddle fear because it gets you to watch the news and they can sell advertisements and it's for ratings and all of that. But God tells us this in His Word. If we don't seek God first, if we don't seek his kingdom, if we are not diligently teaching God's Words to our kids, it's not going to go well for us. These bad things are happening everywhere. We've got to stop cursing the darkness. We've got to stop sitting on our couch watching Fox News and crying in our Chick-fil-A soup and consoling ourselves with an end times theology that says, "well, this is how it's supposed to be. It's the end times, and so therefore it's going to inevitably get bad. Beam me up, Lord. Let's get us out of here." I think that's very misplaced. I think that's terrible strategy. And if our founding fathers and pilgrim mothers and fathers had that strategy, you and I wouldn't be having this conversation right now.

They came out of something much worse than right now. They came out of England where the king had declared himself, essentially God on earth in charge

of the church. The economy was in the toilet. They had no liberties to speak of. And these everyday people got on a boat, sailed across the Atlantic Ocean with nothing but some Bibles and some chickens, and built the greatest nation on earth. They had it bad. They didn't have the tuck tail and run idea. They had the 500-year plan, and they said, the gospel has victory written all over it, and they forged a path in the wilderness. And we're enjoying that today. Can't we see a great awakening of ideas and hearts filled with love for God and people that we give it everything that we've got? I say that we have to.

Chuck Colson said this once. He said, "Our hope is not in who governs us. It's not in the laws that we make as a nation. Our hope is in the power of God, working in the hearts of people. That is our hope in this country, and that is our hope in life." And I believe that with all of my heart. I think November 5th is extremely important. My hope and my mission is not just a save America mission. I hope America does not go over the falls and get destroyed, but there is a bigger mission than that. And that is the absolute victory of the kingdom of God advancing across the earth like a tsunami wave that nothing can stop. And it has been on the move for 2,000 years since Christ rose from the dead and the spirit of God was unleashed onto the world through His people. There's never been a more world changing force in the history of the world than the self-governing Christian, armed with the Word of God, the only weapon powerful enough to subdue men the passions of their hearts and the institutions.

And when somebody grabs a hold of that Bible, applies it to themselves first and then to their family and to the extended spheres of culture, he is not dominated by history and tyranny. He shapes history and defeats tyranny and promotes liberty. So that's where our hope is. And I saw that an event that I attended called See You At The Library where 30,000 moms and dads and grandparents gathered at public libraries to sing, to pray, and to read books of virtue to their children. This is a wildfire that's spreading across the country, and I think these are the beginning rumblings of revival.

Roger Marsh:

Well, a powerful exhortation there from Kirk Cameron today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, joined in studio by Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Policy Center. And as we are listening to what Kirk was sharing, Gary, very, very inspiring words, but a reminder too of how this happens on a local level. I think oftentimes we kind of focus on, well, we got presidential candidates, and as long as we get that right, everything's going to work. But that whole down ticket mentality really needs to be something that we in the body of Christ will maintain.

Gary Bauer:

Roger, there's no question about it. I mean this right that we have, the right to vote is so extraordinarily important, and up until the American experiment was not widely allowed around the world, we are the country that set out with this notion that liberty comes from God, not from some king or government or dictator or whatever. This is a precious thing we have here. We were blessed by God when He allowed us to be born here, and I think Kirk's message of being a

Christian citizen, don't let this erode. We would stand up a course of a foreign enemy was trying to take away our liberty.

Roger Marsh:

Right.

Gary Bauer:

Well, we've got to likewise fight against those within the country that are chipping away at our constitutional rights, the freedom of religion, the freedom of assembly, all the other rights that we kind of just take for granted, and each one of us can do something. We can most importantly vote. But then as Kirk has pointed out, we can also do things like requesting a reading hour at the local library.

Roger Marsh:

Exactly. Yes.

Gary Bauer:

There's a lot that can be done.

Roger Marsh:

Yeah, certainly is. And your colleague, Dr. Owen Strachan, who's the senior director of the Dobson Culture Center here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, has written an e-book called *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage The Public Square*. And you can get that download absolutely free. All you have to do is go to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024, and you can request that e-book that's *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage the Public Square*, and it's drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. Well, Gary Bauer, the senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Gary, it's always a pleasure. Thanks for being in the studio with us today for this conversation.

Gary Bauer:

Always great to be with you, Roger. Keep up the great work.

Roger Marsh:

Thank you. And as Gary mentioned, those resources, once again, they're available. Anything election related, if you're looking for a voter guide because you live in a swing state, if you want to watch these videos, if you want to see the outstanding writing that we've done in terms of Dr. Dobson's newsletter and blogs from Dr. Owen Strachan, you'll find all of it at our special website, drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. That's drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. And now for Dr. James Dobson, Gary Bauer and all of us here at the JDFI, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening. Join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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