



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Prayer, Peace, and the Presence of God

Guest(s): Dr. Dave Butts

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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.
- Dr. Dave Butts: When Jesus looks you in the eye and He said like He did the disciples in the Gospel of John and He said, "My peace-
- Dr. James Dobson: I give unto you.
- Dr. Dave Butts: ... "I give to you. It's not as the world gives." See, the world's looking for just the absence of hostility.
- Roger Marsh: Well, that was the voice of the late Dave Butts Dr. and Mrs. Dobson's close friend and colleague. Today on Family Talk, he is also our featured guest and we are so glad you've joined us for a very special program. As a way to honor the legacy of Dave Butts, we want to dedicate this program to his memory and remember how he served God with his life's work. I'm Roger Marsh, and before we begin, let me tell you a little bit about who Dave Butts was. Dave was the co-founder of Harvest Prayer Ministries. He also served as the president of Gospel Revivals Incorporated, and was the board chairman of several organizations including the National Day of Prayer Task Force, America's National Prayer Committee and America Praise. Dave received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Lincoln Christian College and a bachelor's as well as master's degree from Indiana State University. In 2014, he received a Doctorate of Philosophy and Theology from Atlantic Coast Theological Seminary. Dave Butts was also the author of several books, including *Revolution On Our Knees*, *Vertical With Jesus*, *Pray Like A King*, and *Prayer, Peace And The Presence Of God*.
- In 2022, Dave went home to be with the Lord. He is survived by his wife, Kim, their two grown sons and several grandchildren. According to the Dobsons, Dave loved people. He loved the Lord and he lived for Him daily. He was a strong leader and a godly man. He was also known as a peacemaker who knew how to navigate situations in a unifying way. Dave's contributions to the National Day of Prayer Task Force were enormous, and he was someone Shirley Dobson relied on heavily when she then served as chairperson of the NDP Task Force as well.

In 2018, Dr. Dobson sat down with Dave Butts to discuss his book, *Prayer, Peace And The Presence Of God*. They also discussed his cancer journey. It was in 2017 that Dave was diagnosed with stage four B cell mantle, which is a rare form of lymphoma. Just one year later, at the time of this recording, Dave was pronounced cancer free, a true miracle thanks to lots of prayer. Now, as it is with so many other things, God's grace and redemptive spirit really have their own timing, and while Dave was blessed with several more quality years on earth, his ultimate gift was being called home to his Lord and Savior four years after he was declared cancer-free. Though we all have struggles here on earth, we can be confident of God's sovereignty. Ultimately, he will make his own decision on our behalf. As Christians, we can expect troubles to occur, but remember the words of Jesus in John 16:33. "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world." Today we are honoring Dave Butts for the life that he lived and we can almost hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." He has indeed achieved the crown of righteousness to which we all aspire. So here now is our own Dr. James Dobson and his dear friend Dave Butts on the special edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm really excited for you to hear this program, especially folks out there who have been struggling physically or emotionally. You're going to be blessed by what you're going to hear today. We're going to focus on the power of prayer and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. Of course, that's from Philippians 4:7. And our guest today has been through some very difficult times in the last year, and he's learned some things about prayer and peace in this period of time that has, I am sure, changed him and his relationship with the Lord, and you're going to see why. His name is Dave Butts, and he is a prayer warrior. He has authored five books and six devotionals, and one of them we're here to talk about today is new. It really represents his journey in the last year. It's called *Prayer, Peace, And The Presence Of God: A 30-Day Journey to Experience the Shalom of Jesus*, and we're going to be talking about that. Dave, Shirley and I have been praying for you through this dark time. Describe for me this journey that you've been on. You got the diagnosis out of the blue, didn't you?

Dr. Dave Butts: It really did come as a surprise. We knew something was going on in the fall of 2016. I was not feeling good and we couldn't figure out what it was. The doctor initially thought that I had some pneumonia, and then they thought maybe it was some heart issues and they kept testing and different things. And they did some tests and it took a few weeks actually before it came back.

Dr. James Dobson: What medical center were you at?

Dr. Dave Butts: Actually, I had my own doctor at first and then Union Hospital in Terre Haute, and then community hospital in Indianapolis and then MD Anderson in Houston, and then back to community hospital in-

Dr. James Dobson: You've been through a lot of them.

Dr. Dave Butts: And so many people who have medical issues know what that's like. You sometimes bounce around till you find where you need to be to get the care that you need.

Dr. James Dobson: What was it like going into the hospital knowing something's wrong but not knowing what, and then walking out with the words ringing in your ears that you may have a life-threatening disorder and in fact did?

Dr. Dave Butts: Well, I have to back up some for this answer to make sense, otherwise it sounds like, "What in the world are you talking about, Dave?" It was late spring of 2016, the Lord led me to begin a study scripturally of peace. For some reason I was just taken by that, and I began to study. And the more I studied, the more I began to teach. The more I began to teach, the more I sensed I need to write some things on this. And so I began to really immerse myself in the Word of God on that issue of peace, and this was all through the fall of 2016. I'm not feeling very good, but I'm studying peace. And my wife was with me on this. We're really studying. We know that come January we're going to go away and write, and that's often what we do and both of us do some writing. And I know you do the same thing.

Dr. James Dobson: I do.

Dr. Dave Butts: You always get away to write.

Dr. James Dobson: I do.

Dr. Dave Butts: And so we've been studying just literally immersing ourselves in peace. At the same time we're doing that something's going on physically. And so they did some tests and I'd had different heart issues, things they were checking. Nope, it wasn't that. They finally did these tests, but they said, "Now it'll be a while. You go ahead and go." Because I had to go out for some meetings with the National Prayer Committee in California. I had a good place to write while I was out there. And so I jumped into writing and they was going, I had a first few days of this book of the devotional going and then came the call. And the doctor said, "Dave, I'm sorry to tell you, but you have stage four lymphoma, and we think it's a rare form." At that time they didn't know for sure.

Kim and I, I have to tell you, we took two days to just stop and research this disease, see what we were dealing with. But I will tell you, even through that time, we did not have fear. And you know me and I'm just Dave. There's nothing special here. What was happening though is because we had spent almost a year studying Scripture regarding peace, there was a peace of God that was guarding our hearts. And all through this, I had six weeks in the hospital in and out in all sorts of nasty chemo, but there was never any fear. And what I would say to anyone is that's not because of Dave, it's because of Jesus and it's because of His Word. And the fact is that when we focus on the gift of Jesus to us, "My peace I give to you," we can face anything in the peace of Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, Dave, that's a spiritually, politically correct thing to say. Is that really, really true that in the midst of the storm that very well could take your life, you had peace?

Dr. Dave Butts: Here's what's interesting is I was writing this book and I wanted people to believe that, but I will tell you this, and I do not believe for a minute that God ever gives anyone cancer. But God used this awful disease to give validity to this message because you see, you're right. It's a politically or Christian correct answer, but I will tell you this, and my wife would tell you this, we've never shed a single tear over cancer. We've shed a lot of tears over the love of Christian friends who came alongside us and loved us, but never ever a tear over cancer. Here's what it is; it's a supernatural gift. When Jesus looks you in the eye and He said like He did the disciples in Gospel of John, and He said, "My peace-

Dr. James Dobson: I give unto you.

Dr. Dave Butts: ... "I give to you. It is not as the world gives." See, the world's looking for just the absence of hostility. That's all they're looking for when it comes to peace. But the peace of Jesus, it's interesting. He put His name in a sense on this, "My peace." This is now the peace of Christ. It's different. It's qualitatively different, substantively different. And He says, "I'm going to give this to you." I said, I want everyone to hear this. This is for every follower of Jesus, every follower of Jesus. And it's not enough to simply read that once and nod. You have to receive that gift. You have to pray it into being. You spend time in God's Word. And see in my case it was cancer, stage four life-threatening cancer. But I would say it's the same if your family's falling apart. I would say it's the same if your finances are a wreck. It's the same if you are someone who simply gets anxious over North Korea or Iran, or you don't even know why. There're a lot of people just get fearful and anxious and they don't even know why. But the truth of the matter is there is a supernatural gift that Jesus gives us.

Dr. James Dobson: Dave, that is so inspirational and it's very relevant today because of who's listening. I don't know their names. I will never know them. They're out there by the hundreds of thousands or millions, and I wish that I could put an arm around them today. I can't. But through this program, we can offer courage and encouragement and hope, not that they're necessarily going to be healed. A lot of people have died in the year that you have been convalescing.

Dr. Dave Butts: Oh my goodness, absolutely. Kim and I are a part of a Facebook care group for people who have mantle cell lymphoma, and there are several thousand people on that. And every now and then, one of the caregivers there said, "I just lost my dad," or "My husband just passed away," or "My wife did." People who have had this and they've struggled through it and they lost that battle. It isn't the issue, remember, of healing that brings peace. It ultimately-

Dr. James Dobson: It's-

Dr. Dave Butts: ... the presence of Jesus. Yeah. See, that's what brings peace. That's reason the book, we call it *Prayer, Peace And The Presence Of God*, because it's the presence of God that brings peace. In that little book, every little chapter has one verse that has a passage about peace except for one chapter. One chapter has a verse that doesn't have the word peace in that verse, and it's from Psalm 23, because I love and it meant so much to me going through this. I love how David said, "Even if you're walking through the valley of the shadow of death, there's no room for fear." See, I have to tell you, when you have stage four cancer and the doctor looks at the PET scan and it just shows your whole chest block with cancer and he looks at you and says, "Dave, you got to hurry."

Dr. James Dobson: Was that the case?

Dr. Dave Butts: That was the case when I was down at MD Anderson, which really has a great specialist in this particular type of cancer. Only 3% of lymphoma patients have mantle cell lymphoma. It's very, very difficult to treat because it's different for everyone, which makes it just frustrating for doctors trying to figure out how to handle this. And he said, "Dave, you got to hurry." See, that's the valley of the shadow of death. But David, King David said, "Even if you're there, don't be afraid." And the reason is because someone's there with you. You're not walking to the valley by yourself. And the wonderful thing is Scripture says, this person who's walking with you through the valley has a rod and a staff. It's a symbol of a king and a shepherd, and that's Jesus. I felt closer to Jesus and have continued to through this cancer that at any other time in my life. And Dr, I feel like I was born in the church nursery. I've just always known Jesus. But it was in the midst of this dark time that you so sense His presence. And the Lord and I had a lot of conversations about healing or not healing, and I have to be honest, there was some times, especially early on when I was facing some of that nasty chemo and I said, "Lord, I'd really just like to go home and be with you."

Dr. James Dobson: Did you really?

Dave Butts: Oh my, yes. I just said, "Lord, I love my family and I hate to leave them, but this is costing money and this is hard and it's hard on them. Lord, I would just like to go and be with you." And I had a couple of weeks where I would get up in the middle of the night, two or three in the morning and just walk around the house worshiping and praying. And through that time I just said, "Lord, I would like to come home." And it was interesting, about two or three weeks into that, and I don't hear any voices, but I just had this strong sense from the Lord. He said, "Look, Dave, when I'm ready for you, I'll come get you. Until then you're there." And I said, "Okay." Everything changed.

Dr. James Dobson: In a way this has been a validation of your life, hasn't it? Because I said, you're a prayer warrior. I don't say that about many people, but you really are. You've devoted your life to prayer. And here was a time when it was all on the line. You can't fake it when you're facing what you were facing. And yet here you are a year later, you look fantastic. I know everybody tells you that. But there was a time when you and I crossed paths at a conference, and I reached out my hand

to shake your hand and you said, "I'm sorry, I can't do that." Why did you say that to me?

Dr. Dave Butts: Oh, because I was in chemo and my immune system was so low that shaking the hands could have killed me.

Dr. James Dobson: No kidding.

Dr. Dave Butts: I could have caught something. And again, the thing there is you can become fearful. Now, we wanted to be practical. We wanted to make sure we did smart things, but we did not want to give into fear. One of the most common commands in Scripture, "Don't be afraid. Fear not."

Dr. James Dobson: That's one of the toughest to live up to, though.

Dr. Dave Butts: It is. See, that's why Jesus said-

Dr. James Dobson: And they scare us. They really do. They scare Christians.

Dr. Dave Butts: Yeah, but that's the reason why Jesus said, "Here, have some peace. I want to give you something. It's something nobody else can give you. It's not as the world gives. I'm the only one that can give you this. Here, have some peace." Don't you love it?

Dr. James Dobson: I do love it. And He has walked with me through some valleys of the shadow. Again, you have been an inspiration to Shirley and me and to so many other people because before you got sick, you were already leaning on the Lord. You were already calling on Him, you were already praying for other people, and I appreciate the life that you've lived, Dave.

Dr. Dave Butts: Well, I thank you for that. But I tell you, there's an interesting kind of a side story to this. I've spent the last 25 years just doing nothing but teaching on prayer. I tell people I have a great job. I talk to God and I talk to people about talking to God. That's pretty much my job. So you never in your wildest imagination figured that somehow that would turn around and benefit yourself. So I had taught so many people about prayer. Now suddenly I found myself the recipient of thousands of prayers of people who prayed for me. And what an encouragement. I'll tell you what, I was in that hospital bed, I was in this sort of thing, I had to go in for a week at a time. Often with chemo, you go in and you go to a cancer center and sit there for a couple hours in a chair and they drip poison into you called chemo, and then you go home and come back in a couple days or a week later.

And mine was at a point they couldn't do that. They put me in for a solid week and gave me everything that my body could handle for a week. Sent me home for two weeks to recover, then back for another week. And I did that from February through June, and came out of that fine. But what I realized, because I

kept hearing whether it was email or Facebook or letters, there were thousands of people out there praying. There were people, I would get letters from pastors in India saying, "Brother Dave, our congregations are praying for you." One of the first things, I just got the cancer diagnosis and three days later I had an email from a group of missionaries in Papua New Guinea who were praying for me.

Dr. James Dobson: We've got two and a half minutes left and I want to focus directly on that patient out there that's struggling. The name of your book, it's a booklet, but it's just a beautiful booklet, *Prayer, Peace and The Presence Of God: A 30-Day Journey To Experience The Shalom Of Jesus*. Talk as best you can to those in the various walks of life. Some are dying, some just got the diagnosis. Some are reeling with the awareness that they're not going to be able to live out a normal lifetime. And some have children who are sick. Talk to those people regardless of where they are, and not all of them have spent a lifetime praying like you have.

Dr. Dave Butts: And I get that they've not all spent a life in prayer, but if you belong to Jesus, he has something for you. And I just want to say today, it's for you. It's for absolutely everyone who follows Jesus, "My peace I give to you." And He said, "Don't be afraid." And He did say this, "In this world, you're going to have tribulation," and-

Dr. James Dobson: He didn't pull any punches about that.

Dr. Dave Butts: Oh absolutely. You're going to have tough times. I fully expect to have some more tough times if it's not this cancer, if the Lord carries, something someday we'll take this life. That's something that happens. We often look to the Christian life to be somehow something that just smooths everything out and makes it nice. But Jesus said, "In this world, you're going to have tribulation." And this is someone who was about to go to the cross when He said that.

Dr. James Dobson: And He was talking to disciples, most of whom would be executed. I think all but two of them.

Dave Butts: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: And-

Dr. Dave Butts: So we need to understand that what Jesus offers us though is this astonishing gift. And I'm here to tell you, in the midst of the toughest times of life, Jesus said, "I will be with you. I will give you my peace." It may not change the outer circumstance. It might not somehow handle your finances. It may not bring physical healing. It may not suddenly, but it will give you peace. And this is a peace that is beyond all understanding. I remember when I was a kid, we sang a little song about the peace that passes understanding-

Dr. James Dobson: Understanding.

Dr. Dave Butts: And you know what I know about that now? I know I don't understand it. I know I don't understand that. I can't intellectually explain to you why I can have stage four cancer and not be fearful. I don't understand that-

Dr. James Dobson: Tell me-

Dr. Dave Butts: ... but I know it's true.

Dr. James Dobson: ... two questions real quick. One is, you are back on the road. You're obviously here. You are speaking, you're writing, you're serving the Lord and on a move, aren't you?

Dr. Dave Butts: Absolutely. I love it.

Dr. James Dobson: You're not sitting on a wheelchair someplace or on a front porch. You are still carrying through with the mission and the message the Lord gave you. And now I want to know about your family. How are they holding up and how did they hold up?

Dr. Dave Butts: Astonishingly well. Of course, my wife who've been studying this with me, our two sons, our grandkids, I think what happened is they looked at Kim and I and they said, "Oh, if they can handle it, then we can too." And they did it great. I sent them all copies of the book.

Dr. James Dobson: I bet you did.

Dr. Dave Butts: I wanted them to walk through this with us, and this is the only book I've ever written from a hospital bed. I hope it's the only one I have to.

Dr. James Dobson: Dave, Shirley and I love you and love Kim and love your family and your mission, what you've done for the cause of Christ. There's no way to put an understanding of that because you've devoted your whole life to it. Thank you for coming and being with us. And peace, my brother.

Dave Butts: Thank you. Peace be with you.

Roger Marsh: What an encouraging testimony from Dr. Dave Butts today here on Family Talk, as we've been enjoying his conversation with Dr. James Dobson on the theme of Prayer, Peace And The Presence Of God. Now, as I mentioned at the start of the broadcast, Dr. Dave Butts's journey with cancer ended here in this life in 2022, but of course his memory lives on, and of course we'll see him one day when we're all with the Lord together. The book, *Prayer, Peace And The Presence Of God, A 30-Day Journey To Experience The Shalom Of Jesus* is available in our resource center. Go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk for more information on how you can secure a copy. As Dr. Butts mentioned, only book he's ever written from a hospital bed and one that he distributed to all his kids and grandkids to get their buy-in on this. Again, for the book, *Prayer, Peace And The Presence Of*

God, A 30-Day Journey To Experience The Shalom Of Jesus by Dr. David Butts. Go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

And keep in mind we've just a few more opportunities left to share with you about our brand new 10-day email series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book and award-winning book, *Bringing Up Girls*. Go to drjamesdobson.org and you can start receiving these 10 daily emails from Dr. Dobson, and the team here at the JDFI with nuggets of Scripture and encouragement, also, principles that Dr. writes about in the book, *Bringing Up Girls*. And a special news section dealing with the whole LGBTQ transgender issue written by Dr. Owen Strachan, the senior director of the new Dobson Culture Center. Again, you can start receiving that free 10-day email series on bringing up girls when you go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. If it's easier, call our constituent care resource team on the phone at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for joining us today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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