



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Why Do I Do What I Don't Want to Do?

Guest(s): JP Pokluda

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Welcome back to another edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, thanking you for joining us for today's program here on this first day of February. Friends, often at the beginning of the year, we reflect on how we can improve ourselves and our lives. Remember that the most important part of our growth comes from our relationship with God. Today's program will be sure to motivate you and provide you with some practical tools to help you on your journey. Returning again today is our guest from yesterday's program, JP Pokluda, here to discuss this brand-new book that will be released on March 14th. It's entitled, *Why Do I Do What I Don't Want To Do?* This book can help you utilize principles that God has given to us to transform your life and become who you were meant to be. To tell us more about JP, let's join our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton right now and right here on Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Let me tell you a little bit more about JP. He, like many of us, took the longer way around to understanding the grace of the gospel. For Jonathan, it was in his mid-twenties when he was fully committed to the path of his spiritual journey. JP was formerly the leader of The Porch in Dallas, Texas. The Porch is a large weekly gathering that unites 20 and 30-year-olds in music fellowship and messages. JP feels a passion to encourage the growth of ministries with young people as without them, the church has no future. JP is married to his beautiful wife, Monica. They're partners in life and ministry. Together they have three children, Presley, Finley, and Weston. Welcome, JP, it's a delight to have you here on Family Talk. Dr. Dobson Sense his regards.

JP Pokluda: Dr. Clinton is such an honor to be with you, and I am so thankful for your ministry and the ministry of Dr. Dobson. I have benefited from that for years and years, and I know you talked about me not becoming a believer until my '20s, which is true. But I will tell you that the Lord, the Holy Spirit was planting seeds through this ministry, but also the ministry of Dr. Dobson, the legacy there.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Well, before we jump into today's broadcast and talk about the book, '*Why Do I Do What I Don't Want to Do*,' replacing deadly vices or habits or patterns with life giving virtues? JP, I wanted to introduce our audience a little bit more to you and the passion that God's put in your heart. My son, Zach, he loves your ministry and the calling that's on your life. He loves that you love today's generations. JP, take it back, everybody has a backstory. They've got backwater that fills in where they're at and what's driving their heart. JP, take us back to when you met Christ and what happened inside of you.

JP Pokluda:

Absolutely. So I was raised in a Christian home. My dad was Catholic, my mom was Lutheran, and they both faithfully attended church, went to separate churches. I didn't even know that was weird until I left home and I came back and got to revisit the gospel and grace with my father. My mom has always just really diligently pursued a relationship with Jesus. But when I was in college, I did what sadly a lot of college kids do is I just pursued the world with reckless abandon and I managed to cram in a lifetime of partying into two years here in Waco. I moved to Dallas. I was everything wrong with Dallas and a person. I wanted to be a millionaire before I was 30. I loved the club scene and the party scene and was trying to, I lived in a penthouse condo in uptown and drove a jaguar and had different watches for every day of the week.

And I was at a club on a Saturday night when I bumped into a friend that I knew from college and I just said, "What are you doing this weekend?" And she said, "Well, tomorrow I'm going to go try out this church." Then I said, "Great, pick me up. I like church. I'm interested in church." And I went and I was hungover. I sat in the back row, I smelt like smoke from the night before and I began to wrestle with what do I really believe about God, and who is He? And if I was born in India, I'd be Hindu. If I was born in China, I'd be Buddhist. If I was born in Iran, be Muslim. If I was born in Israel, I might be Jewish. And so what are the odds I'd be born to the right place to the right God?

And so, I started researching and as I began to research who was God, I kept tripping over the character of Jesus Christ in history. He was a carpenter in Nazareth. He was born in a town called Bethlehem, cities and towns that we wouldn't even know of except for He was born and lived there. And that was fascinating to me. And that really began an obsession. And as I started to look into the Scriptures, I tripped over Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace, you have been saved through faith. It's not of yourself, it's the gift of God, not by works so that no one can boast." And I had seen Jesus on the cross over a 1,000 times and I never realized that was for me. That was because of my addiction. That was because of my struggles, my alcoholism, my pornography, my sexual addiction, my worldly, my materialism, that He was paying a price for me and I believed upon Jesus.

And everything in my life changed and I was disciplined. I went to join that church. I said, "Hey, I want to become a member here." And in that membership class I said, "I need somebody to teach me the Bible." And this guy sat down with me and we started in Genesis 1 and we began to read through the Bible verse by

verse. And five years later, the Lord called me into ministry and I didn't know what I was going to do. I thought I'd raise money and give it away. And five days later at the church called and said, "Hey, we have a job we want you to consider." And so, that's a really long story short, but I went and I was a part of a ministry called The Porch, was about a hundred people and in a room and I would sometimes do announcements.

And the guy that was leading that left and they asked me to teach one day and I taught the Scriptures and I had just faithful people sit me down and teach me how to teach the Scriptures. And that ministry grew to 750 and then 1500 and then 3000 and then 18 campuses around the country and hundreds of thousands of people watching weekly. And then I actually became the pastor then of that church. And so, I did that for a number of years, had the privilege and honor just to serve God there. And then we moved four years ago to a church in Waco, Harris Creek. And so, we've been here for four years and I get to lead and serve with these people.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tell us about Monica, your bride.

JP Pokluda: Yeah. Well, other than Jesus, she's the best thing that ever happened to me. I know I'm supposed to say that, but if anybody knows her, they just given me a hearty amen to that because she's just really kind. She does an amazing job of caring, just keeping the home in order. And people say, "Does she work?" And I say she does work, but just not outside the home. She does a lot of work. And so, she's partnering with me and discipling our kids and we've been married 18 years now and she's amazing.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, you have a lot of faith in today's generations.

JP Pokluda: I do.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You have a love for them.

JP Pokluda: Absolutely.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP. A lot of the conversations that go over the airwaves are about how lost that group is, that they're searching frantically. Obviously there's something wired deep down in them and you've spent majority of your life so far ministering to that population.

JP Pokluda: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, what do you see in them? Talk to us out there is families about our kids, maybe some listening right now too, have a wayward son or daughter and they're just wondering, God help us.

JP Pokluda:

Yeah. There is a desire in them to do something bigger than themselves that the enemy has misplaced and exaggerated narcissism in their lives, magnified, multiplied narcissism in their life. But that's not a new problem. The number one question the disciples ask Jesus, and you can turn through the gospels, you'll see it nine times in there, "Which of us is the greatest? Who is the greatest? Who can sit Your right and Your left and Your kingdom?" Generation A wanted to be great and you get to generation Y and generation Z, and you see us still struggling with these same questions. How can we be great? How can we be great? When you sit down with them and you give them a vision of what true greatness is out of Mark 10, "For the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many."

And they begin to realize like, wow, real greatness, real leadership, true greatness comes through humility and service in the name of Jesus Christ. And you say, "Hey, don't just come and serve for an hour, but give your life to this." I have seen them respond really well to that. But there's a challenge with the generation that's asking that of them is we have to model it. We have to be the ones, ones that are sharing the gospel everywhere we go. We're not letting money grip our heart too tightly. We are living with the eternity in mind. We are doing the things that Scripture calls us to so that we can then call them to, because they're going to sniff out that hypocrisy really very fast.

And I think there's just this loss of a pursuit of holiness right now, which is why I did write the book. *Why Do I Do What I Don't Want to Do* is it really is calling us all, every generation, whether it's Gen Y, gen Z or boomers, wherever we're at in that to a life of holiness, which God says, "Be holy because I am holy." And I think that has been lost on the generation. I think we deal a lot with don't do this, don't do this, don't do this. But what does it look like to pursue holiness, the holiness that God has called us to.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

JP, I know in the faith walk, the spiritual walk, it's often a battle. A lot of people listening would say, it's a battle. Whether it's pain or maybe just struggles with sin, vices. I remember being taught 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If any man being Christ, he is a new creation. Behold the old is gone and the newest come." JP, and there's a lot of those out there who think that when they come to Christ, a life should be easy, that I should be able to leave the luggage. Often that stuff though stays with us. And I know you and a lot of your teaching, you guys come straight at the real issues. You take it all head on. Topics like this, I mean, are just like, let's get after it. Let's talk about how we break free.

And I've always believed that Paul said, really, "There's and there's freedom," but it's for freedom that Christ has come to set us free. The problem is getting there. JP, I think that's the heart of how you started out in this book. You go to the apostle Paul in Roman 7, Paul said, what, "The things I wouldn't do I do and the things I would do, I don't, therefore daily, I've got a record and yield my life to Christ." Take us down that road JP, start talking to us about how to move beyond.

JP Pokluda:

That battle in Romans 7, and we see it even played out, it continues to play out in Romans 8, "Who's going to drive the spirit of the flesh? Who are we going to let drive?" And there's real challenges to not having the Holy Spirit and mainly your eternal destination. But even as you navigate life without hope, there's a real challenge to that. But once you have the Holy Spirit, you've got a giant target on your back now. The enemy hates you and he's after you and he hates your ministry and he hates your children. He hates your marriage. He hates your spouse. He hates your spouse and your marriage long before you even meet them. And so, he is trying to disqualify you in every way he can. So in a lot of ways, when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, when we have the Holy Spirit in our lives working actively, we now are a bigger target of where someone's just trying to take us out.

And there's no shortage of vices that we can trip into that the New Testament warns us against the things like pride and apathy, complacency, envy, things like lust, things like materialism. And so, this is the book is I think a lot of pastors in my position are concerned that somebody's one-day going to write an expose on them. This is my expose, this is my tell all, I've left nothing to question. And it is really how I've navigated things like lust. I talked about my pornography addiction in my BC or before Christ days, but I can. I'd also talk about what does it look like for me to walk in an extremely sexualized culture and try to keep my eyes on Jesus and continue to pursue Him? What does it look like when I love things? I love trinkets and treasures. I love stuff and status.

And how do I continue to see all of the resources that God would entrust to me as His resources? And how do I steward those according to the heart of God and continue to pursue the path of righteousness, which is really a surrendering. If we have the Holy Spirit, then He's there to help us. And so, it really is this daily surrendering, this daily presenting my body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. No longer conforming to the patterns of this world, but continually being transformed by the renewing of my mind, setting my mind on the things above. And so, that is the principles and the pathways that this book out outlines. And I think it is just a 101 on the mortification of the flesh, the mortification of sin, the killing of sin in our lives.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

And it really comes down to the battlefield for the mind.

JP Pokluda:

Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

It's not about the thoughts per se, it's the thoughts that we attach to, that we give place to in our mind. Amen. If we allow that to ruminate in there, Jonathan, it's hard to let that stuff go. It's hard to move to a different place. It's hard to break free from those patterns that we allow to take place in our life. What I love about your book on *Why Do I Do What I Don't Want to Do* is you take on the tough issues. Moms and dads listen to this pride. You counter it with humility, anger with forgiveness, greed with generosity, apathy with diligence, lust with self-control. What I love too is you're going into some modern issues,

Jonathan, busyness, you need rest, drunkenness, sobriety, cynicism, optimism. Let's go to anger just for a moment.

JP Pokluda: Sure.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan. And how you go into the Word of God, help us understand what anger is. We live in a day and time when people are angry.

JP Pokluda: Yeah. James says, "Be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to become angry for a person's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires." So if I'm okay giving full vent to my anger, I am not experiencing, there's something that God has for me that I'm not experiencing, that I don't have, there's a goodness that I'm not entering into because I'm comfortable with my anger. And specifically, that chapter deals with unforgiveness too. I'm surprised by how many people claim the title of Christian, but they're completely okay walking around with just being totally embittered to a coworker, to a dad, an uncle, a family member, something in their past that they want to go with and leave it undealt. And I'm a pastor, I want to go really slow here because I know that there is just unimaginable pain in the hearts of your listeners that have been put there through a circumstance or a situation.

If you go through life with that unchecked, you're just going to pass that on, that anger, on a relay baton to a child, to someone else in your life, a roommate, someone that's been around you a lot. And I'm saying there is a better way. I was a very angry person. I was a person who fought a lot. I mean, with my fist, not just my words, I would just escalate things so fast. I'm a big presence. I'm 6'7", 260 pounds. And so I would use my size to intimidate people and to try to get my way. And through the teachings of Jesus Christ, I've just learned something better and something more joyful and something more at peace. And you're right, you can go on a website right now and you can search any day and find out what Americans were outraged about because it is, we are outraged.

We are so angry. And it is impacting not just our mental health, but our physical health. It's literally killing us. And Jesus offers us something better. And that is that word, that word forgiveness. If we can embrace that, understand what that is like to live at peace with one another, to Ephesians 4:3, "Be diligent at preserving the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace." That's what we've been called to Jesus when he prayed for us, there's in the Scriptures, He prayed for us. He prayed that we would live in unity. And so, I don't want to give up on that vision that our Lord and Savior casted for us, that we could dwell at imperfect peace and in unity with one another. It is available to us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In this journey, you take us to places that challenge our hearts and move us into proximity with the Lord. You told a beautiful story in the chapter on anchor and forgiveness of Allie and a bag of rocks that she had. Do you mind sharing that story on the broadcast today? I thought it was just incredible.

JP Pokluda:

Not at all. We were going to Brazil to the Amazon on a mission trip, and I was leading the trip and I was very specific that you know what? We could take the bags and we were checking bags and you had to be under a 50 pound weight limit. And we get up there and there's probably 20 young adults that are about to board this airplane, and we're checking in and just the chaos that is that. And her bag gets up there and it's 54 pounds. And I'm disappointed. I'm like, "Allie, what? Come on. We talked about this." And she's a little embarrassed. And she opens the suitcase and she starts moving things around, trying to figure out what she can remove. And she pulls out a literal bag of rocks and I'm just dumbfounded. I'm like, "We're going to Brazil. They've got rocks. They don't need your rocks. Why are you taking rocks to Brazil?"

I didn't want to embarrass her. And so, later on we were able to talk and she told me, "Hey, I'm going through this Bible study and I have to carry these rocks around with me until I'm able to forgive these people." Now, Allie had a radical life transformation, in her past, was divorce, in her past, was an abortion, in her past was a lot of things that marks the life of someone who's not following Jesus, doesn't know Jesus. Now, she came into a relationship with Jesus, and there were some real hurts there. And so that trip, what as you fast forward now make a long story short, and it is in the book, but we're there, we're sharing the gospel. Allie takes her rocks, and at some point just in that week away, she understood how much grace God had shown her through Jesus as she's sharing it with these other people.

And I see her silhouette as just the magical moment. The sun is sitting behind her. She's on the top of the boat. We've gone down the Amazon River now for days, and she's on the top of the boat and she just starts throwing those rocks in the Amazon River. And just one by one, she says, "I forgive you." And she says, the person's name says, I forgive you, and chunks the rocks into the river. And then she comes down off that boat and she finds me on the shore and she says, "Hey, would you baptize me in this water right here?"

And right there, she gets baptized in front of her peers and we praise Jesus. And she's just a different person. It's not that the Holy Spirit and had not already changed Allie. It's that she was in her Christian journey early on, still carrying around the bitterness of unforgiveness. And God says, "Repeatedly, you'll forgive others as I have forgiven you. Unless you forgive others, you do not understand the forgiveness that you've received from me." And so, something happened there where she understood the grace of God and she was able to extend it to others.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

There's something about the grace of God in the life of a person who yearns for freedom.

JP Pokluda:

Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, I know you believe this and I believe it in Him. We can move in that way. It's for freedom that Christ has come to set us free. Kiss the Son and you'll be free indeed.

JP Pokluda: Free indeed.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And like Paul said daily, "I've got to reckon and yield my life to Christ." What an amazing interview. JP, I want to give you the closing word here on those who are listening, who are in a struggle. Maybe they have a loved one who's in a battle and they're discouraged. Maybe again, they're filled with shame. Maybe there's some even hopelessness going on. What do you say to him?

JP Pokluda: Yeah. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are in the battle. And one of the clearest promises of Jesus is in this world, you will have trouble. And so, I want to start by just letting you know you're not home yet. And there is a day where he's going to wipe away every tear. There's a place that's free of cancer and free from death and disease and heartbreak and pain and sorrow and mourning and loss. And we are restored to all things good in the kingdom of God. And that is in front of us, and we are moving toward that. We're closer to it every single day. But here in this life, I want you to know that there is real freedom, that you can be fully known, that you can imagine a life where you don't care who knows what. And you don't even need to be careful because as you think, well, they might abuse that situation or use that story against me.

You can actually lay at night in bed at peace knowing that God is in charge of what humans do with things. He controls the hearts of kings like water courses. He directs them wherever he pleases. He is in charge of your reputation. He's in charge of what others think about you. And so, it's okay if someone knows everything about you. And if that person is abiding in the Holy Spirit and if they are a follower of Jesus, a brother or sister in Christ, they're going to love you fully even in the midst of that. And I hope that I would have the opportunity to do that, or that you would find somebody around you that does a church that is healthy and teaches the Bible that you can plug into where you can be fully known there and fully loved there.

And I want you to know that God knows everything about you. He's not ashamed. It says in the Scripture, "He's no longer counting your sins against you if you have trusted in the death and the resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of those sins they were paid for." And so, if God's not holding your sins against you, why would you hold your sins against you? And so, walk in that freedom that that Christ offers that we talked about.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a gift from our God. JP, it's been such a delight to have you on the broadcast today. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, their family, the entire team at the James Dobson Family Institute. We salute you and pray that God would continue to raise you up and help you be bold and courageous and strong for such a time as this. Thank you for joining us.

JP Pokluda: Thank you so much, my friend. I'm so honored. I appreciate you.

Roger Marsh: Wow, what practical advice. The Holy Spirit does work in our lives and with some focused intention and practice, we will keep moving closer to God and to a better life. As Jesus says in John 15:5, "I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing." Today's guest here on Family Talk was JP Pokluda, and that was his conversation with our own co-host, Dr. Tim Clinton. JP's newest book comes out on March 14th. It's titled, '*Why Do I Do What I Don't Want To Do?*' That's coming up in just a few weeks, and what a great book it is, indeed. You may even want to pre-order his book after hearing today's inspiring conversation. If so, just go to our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org and you can find more details.

That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Well, I hope that you are invigorated to make steps toward positive change in your own life, and here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we want to support you. Feel free to reach out to us with your prayer requests and your comments. Let us know how we're doing and how we've inspired you with this program. We are a listener supported broadcast outreach, and we want to know how we can serve you better. Remember, you can reach us by phone when you call 877-732-6825. That's 877 - 732-6825. And of course, you can always reach out online as well. Go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at Family Talk, have a wonderful and blessed rest of your day.

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