



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Fathers and Sons: Getting Back to the Basics - Part 2

Guest(s): Dr. Tim Clinton

Air Date: June 17, 2021

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

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: Hello everyone, and welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and Family Talk is the listener supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We're so glad you've joined us today as we're sharing the conclusion of a very special program with you just in time for Father's Day weekend. You're about to hear a conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and Dr. Tim Clinton on the subject of fatherhood. Yesterday, they talked about some of the father-son trips that they've taken with their boys. Today, they'll continue to reminisce, but this time about the lasting impact that their fathers had on them just by being present in their lives.

Dr. James Dobson is the founder and the president of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. He's the author of more than 70 books dedicated to the preservation of the family. Dr. Dobson earned his PhD from the University of Southern California in 1967 in the field of child development. He is married to Shirley and they have two grown children, daughter Danae and son Ryan, who by the way is married to Laura. The Dobson's also have two grandchildren.

Dr. Tim Clinton is president of the American Association of Christian Counselors and cohost of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. He's the author of more than 30 books, including *The Struggle is Real: How to Care for Mental Health Needs in the Church*. He served at Liberty University for over 30 years. He had numerous leadership and academic positions, including executive director of the James C. Dobson Center for Child Development and Marriage and Family. He is married to Julie. They have two children and one grandchild. Now this conversation was recorded back in 2018, so there will be a couple of references that sound dated even today, but bear in mind that the principles that we're sharing here are still very relevant in 2021. Let's listen now as Dr. Dobson and Dr. Clinton talk about the importance of dads on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Dr. Tim Clinton, it's good to have you again here today. You live in Lynchburg, Virginia, and yet you come to see us and we do work on this ministry. But you and I were having a fascinating discussion, what people heard

yesterday, about the relationship between fathers and sons and how to build that camaraderie and build the bond and how a man teaches a boy how to think like a man and be like a man. And my son, Ryan, and my grandson and I went hunting last year. And we were in a blind and of course, Lincoln was 10 years old then, and of course he wasn't carrying a gun. So I wondered how long he could sit in that blind while we waited for deer to come up. And he brought a screen. He was playing video games at that time that we were waiting.

Ryan and I began talking about my background and I began telling him stories about my youth, about college, about Shirley and me getting married, about things that had happened, funny stories and meaningful stories. And he's over there working on his screen, on his computer. And when it was all over, Ryan said, "I just recorded that whole thing." He was recording me. I talked for 45 minutes I'm sure. And Lincoln got up and came over and hugged me, and he said, "I was listening to everything you said," and I wouldn't take anything for that. A lot of my highs and lows, and my values, and the things that I believe, my love for the Lord, all of it's on that tape and it's preserved forever. And I didn't even know. I just started talking and it didn't stop. And who cared about the deer? We were out there building memories together.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I've often said that when the boys get together again, there's something that happens. For us, when we get up to our camp, we go to a restaurant and have a little breakfast together, have a breakfast eating contest.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The crazy young guys are just, they're insane trying to throw down these pancakes, but that starts the journey. And we get out and ride four wheelers, Dr. Dobson. We get in the woods and do work, put up tree stands, different things. We start talking about the game that we're going to hunt or the fish that we're going after in the streams. You get out there around a campfire at night and begin to talk. You're out throwing a football around and you're disconnected because where we're at you can't use your phone, you know that. And what begins to take place, you're right, is this generational flow. And the stories, and the activities together, and the work, the industry that you have to do to take place. It begins to speak into our hearts.

Dr. James Dobson: You've been a very busy father. Not only have you been a professor for about 30 years at Liberty University, you've written more than 30 books and you speak, you write, you do all these things, but you found time to do this.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Oh, let me tell you about.

Dr. James Dobson: How in the world do you, you had that. I did it too. We need to tell our listeners how you get that done.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I had a moment and it was back to a broadcast that you had done. I was way beyond my limits. I was out of control. I was a young maverick trying to prove my worth and find my way. I listened to this broadcast on my way home one afternoon, and it so moved me. It was about kids and the outdoors. And I kept thinking about my daughter, Megan, and my young son, Zach, at the time. I never forget coming home and Zach was like two at the time. And his very first sentence, he put a couple of words together as I walked in the door that day. And Zach comes running over to me wide open, I mean wide open. He's like two or three years old. "Dad." Okay. And he looked at me and he looked down at my shoes and he says, "Shoes off. Shoes off."

Dr. James Dobson: Is that right?

Dr. Tim Clinton: But it so moved me because I thought...

Dr. James Dobson: He wanted you to sit down and talk to you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That meant, "Dad you come here with me." And I remember later going outside and the sun was bright, but there were leaves everywhere. And I thought about as a boy, how we used to rake those leaves together and we would jump in them, and we had such a time doing that. And I said, "Tim, you're missing all this. You're missing your kids. You're missing everything. What are you doing? And I mean, it doesn't make any sense. And that statement, 'what does it gain a man if he wins the whole world and loses his own kids?' And Tim, are you going to do that? Is that what you're going to do? And you're going to defend it because your quote doing 'Christian things,' or are you going to be a dad?" And I remember tears started coming down my face and I said, "I don't want to do that. I don't want to lose my kids. I'm going to do everything I can to not be at the game, I'm going to coach the game." I made decisions where I said, "I'm not going to travel and speak. I'm going to cut everything. I'm going to start changing the way I do my life." And it was a broadcast that God used that said, "Get your tail home."

Dr. James Dobson: And how early was that?

Dr. Tim Clinton: That was when I was a young father. And I'll tell you, I never forgot that moment because it was really about the outdoors. You were talking about kids and get your kids outside. It was one of those kinds of broadcasts. And I'll never forget this. I reflected on the gifts that were given to me through my own dad, how he would... my dad would take us to the crick. We grew up in Pennsylvania, and you don't call them creeks. We called them "cricks." We went there swimming. My dad used to pile everybody in the van or all the kids in the neighborhood, and he would take us swimming. My dad was the one who took us to Young People's and we would play softball. He took us roller skating. My dad showed up at the games, you know that? He taught us how to play ball. And so-

Dr. James Dobson: You and I are very blessed. You know that? I was speaking recently and a man came up to me and shook my hand, told me what his name was. And he had tears in his eyes and he couldn't talk. He literally could not talk. He put his head down until he gained his composure. And then he said to me, "I have to tell you something, that my dad was a full-blown alcoholic and he was abusive. And he was never a father to me. And I began listening to your broadcast and you became my father." And he just wept. He stood there and wept as he talked about this. A greatest honor I think anybody's ever paid to me. That this man that I never met saw me as a role model and saw me as a father.

And I think this program today is motivated by the desire to say to the other men who are out there, who are trying so hard to keep it all together, "I know that you want to earn a living. I know you want to make a success. Don't forget those kids." And some other time, we'll talk about fathers and daughters, but I believe, and some people would question this, I believe daughters need their fathers as much or more as boys do. It's a different relationship. It's an affirmation. It's love, and talking, and touching. But boys need role modeling. They need to see what a man does and how he thinks. And man, I had a great father who did that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. I guess what we're trying to say is that dads do matter, and it's never too late to become a good dad. And I want to encourage moms out there too, to know this, that dads love often differently. They usually do what we call is action love. They like being out there, getting their hands dirty, climbing a tree, changing a tire, changing the oil, whatever it is. And I know also that sometimes, Dr. Dobson this is true, sometimes our kids are different than we are, and they may not like the same things, but it's our...

Dr. James Dobson: And they don't have to. Find what the kid needs.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's it. And connect with them there because you know why? They want those stories.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You don't make memories. You are the memory.

Roger Marsh: That's a powerful challenge to dads to be more involved in the lives of their kids. I'm Roger Marsh. And you are listening to Family Talk, a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. We thank you for your continued support and also your ongoing prayers. We wouldn't be able to change lives and uphold marriages and families without your help. Go to drjamesdobson.org to learn how you can assist in our ministry. Okay, let's rejoin Dr. Dobson and Dr. Clinton and their great discussion now on the relationship between fathers and sons.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, I don't know if you will agree with this, Dr. Tim, but for me and I know for some other boys, I didn't want my mother to go in on those trips. I loved my

mother and we did things together, but it was a man thing. It made me feel like a man. And I've seen other boys who cried when their mothers wanted to go. There are mothers listening to us who liked to hunt, and they're going to not understand what I said, but I'm telling you in my life, it was my dad and me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I believe that there are only certain things that a dad can give to his children. And a tip of the hat to the single parent moms out there who try to step and fill in the gap. But when a dad is active and present in his son or daughter's life, it's a game changer. The research is clear on it. It's everything from managing peer pressure to even cognitive skills. I mean, it's all there. And that relationship is so powerful. And you're right, who doesn't want... Look at the brokenness, look at the research on when dad's gone, father thirst, father hunger, and we search for the love of our dad everywhere.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. The mother plays a different kind of role and it is just as important. There's an affirmation. With my mom and dad, my dad was tough as nails and my mother was loving and soft. And it was a great combination because I got affirmation from my mother. I could really do no wrong in her eyes, although she spanked me good and proper.

Dr. Tim Clinton: My mother did too. She was tough.

Dr. James Dobson: On the occasion. But there was a different kind of love from my mother. It's a two person job. And I'm with you and feeling great empathy for the single mother especially who's out there.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You wrote the book *Bringing Up Boys*, which I read because I wanted to figure Zach out. And I remember you making a statement in the book that one of the gifts you can give to them is to help them learn to manage their testosterone.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That they've got some boys' stuff that is all over the map. And it's going to take somebody who gets that and who wants to help them channel that energy. And by the way, learn to be industrious, what does it mean really to become a man.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well, there's still propaganda out there from radical feminists and many, many radical men.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Recently.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Who are saying that they're the same. Boys and girls are not different. The only difference is that they're raised differently, and they're given patriarchal biases, and so on. I'm telling you, we are made differently. The scripture says, "Male and female created He them." You know who quoted that? Jesus did. They're different, and they didn't make one sex. He made two. And how disappointing it would be to think that God made us all alike. How boring would

that be? What I love about Shirley is that she's different from me, and I'm drawn to her because of her femininity. And why do we have to deny that? And you try to deny it in regard to a boy or a girl, you're going to run into big problems because the boy's going to disappoint you big time, you try to make a girl out of him. And I've talked a lot about that. I know those who've listened to me over the years know this is familiar territory, but you agree with it don't you?

Dr. Tim Clinton: I really agree with it. And we started talking about, yesterday on the broadcast, about going to Alaska and enjoying the great outdoors. One of the things that I wanted to make sure and say on the broadcast was the significance of getting your son and your daughter outside. Dr. Dobson, there's all kinds of research on being outside and mental health. You know that. You know that it's everything from, when you go for a walk outside, research shows that it improves memory, it helps fight depression, it lowers blood pressure. People even starting to show that. Even though it's small, but it's still significant. Some people are now talking about how just getting outside, enjoying the green, if you will, that it can even lower cancer risk.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me tell you what else my father did for me. When I was eight years old, he decided that he wanted to teach me to play tennis. And tennis is a hard sport to learn when you're eight years old. And frankly, I'd rather play with my friends in the neighborhood, and I went with him without protesting because I respected him. But I would really had rather ride my bike and play in the neighborhood. But my dad said, "We're going to learn to play tennis." And so I said, "Okay."

And with my dad, you made work out of it. I mean, he'd have me at the net and he drilled me and everything. And I really never, in those early days come said it they didn't last very long, I didn't want to learn to play tennis. And then a little kid came along one day and said, "Would you like to play a game?" And I had never thought about that, and I said, "Why not? And then we played and I beat him and I loved the sport. I loved the feeling. And I played tennis till I was 40 years old. I lettered four years in college and tennis was the thing. And that was another gift from my father that came along. What else did your dad give you?

Dr. Tim Clinton: My dad loved the game of baseball. Interesting we go back to my relationship with my own son. I remember a story about my dad in DuBois, Pennsylvania. Right before the war, he loved the game so much that there were people coming and scouts talking about him possibly going on and playing ball. And the entire family loved it. My dad passed that down to us, even through Young People's in our church, we would go play softball on Friday nights because he would pitch, he loved to play. He played late. I mean, and I remember my dad coming and watching my son Zach pitch in a little league game in Roanoke, Virginia, sitting up there with a blanket wrapped around him. He was battling cancer, but he loved it so much. He said, Tim, we need to work on his delivery a little bit, but it bonded us together in a special way. And we loved that.

And I love what you're saying because when you get out there, it's the gift of sports, athleticism, when kids are taught the fundamentals the right way, they

learn to love the game. The tragedy is so many kids want to play, but they're never taught how to play. And I saw some recent research on, did you know this, that nearly 80-85% of kids drop out of organized sports by age 13, they're gone. And so then what are they doing, they're on the street.

Dr. James Dobson: When one doesn't work, go to another one. I mean, fish for it till you find what it is.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Find some type of activity. Get outside. Don't let them be locked up in their room. You know that, and spending six, eight hours behind a screen. That's what we're saying. I think a lot of this emphasis on the outdoors and that now a lot of this conversation about developing emotional closeness with your kids really is making sense. People are starting to get it. I think a lot of young dads are stepping up to the plate. A lot of them grew up without a dad, or they had an emotionally absent dad. They don't want that for their boy, their son, they want something different. And I think that's the word of encouragement here. We need this. God ordained it this way. He wants us to be connected at this level. I believe that.

Dr. James Dobson: Joseph taught Jesus carpentry. And wouldn't you have loved to have been there to watch that interaction between his earthly father and his profession until he entered his own three years of ministry. Well, there's a lot we could talk about there. Tim, going back to yesterday, we talked about a gift that I was given by my daughter and you were given a gift by your son, Zach. Your daughter's named Megan, and she gave you a Father's Day gift this year was of a different nature. Share that, you must tell what she gave you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, as a part of a gift to Julie and I for Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Dr. James Dobson: It was Mother's Day?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Mother's Day and Father's Day. She actually delivered a box that looked like a watch. Julie had bought watches for my son Zach and for our son-in-law Ben for graduating from college, and Ben graduated from law school. And so she gave them watches. Megan got a box that was almost identical to it and wrapped it up and gave it to Julie to open. And Julie began opening. And I said, "What'd you think?" She said, "I was thinking they must have bought me a watch." And Julie went to open the box, and as she opened it inside were two little booties and a note that said, "Coming January 1st." And that was our first, it's going to be our first grandchild, and Julie and I are so excited. And I tell you what, tears in our eyes because you know what, the gift of life is so, so meaningful and so precious.

Dr. James Dobson: It was five years for Shirley and me cause I was in graduate school before we had a baby, before Shirley got pregnant. And my mother was really antsy about that. She didn't mind telling you, "Come on, you got a job to do here." And we knew what we were doing. And we invited her to a birthday party and there was

a birthday cake there, only it didn't say, "Happy Birthday," it said, "Happy Birthday, Grandmother." And she looked at it and said, "Aw, isn't that ni-" and it hit her that she's going to be a grandmother. And she got up and ran around the table about three times. So it was such a precious time.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We're going to have a gender reveal party soon. I can't wait. So we bought fireworks. So we have fireworks that are blue, and we have fireworks that are pink. And that's how we're going to know what we're going to have. We can't wait.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Tim Clinton, I loved talking to you. And it's been fun these two days, just going back to the basics about the relationships that we have at home. There's nothing that outranks that. I don't care how much money you make or what you achieve or buildings that have your name on it and all of that. All those things have their place, but building those relationships that matter, and the ones that lead to eternity are at the top of the list. And I think you've helped us get that said today. You're here often, we'll do it again.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: What a good reminder to get back to the basics and prioritize our relationships with our fathers. As I mentioned earlier, this conversation today on Family Talk was recorded back in 2018. In early 2019, Dr. Tim Clinton's daughter Megan had a baby girl, and Dr. Clinton often says that being a grandpa to little Olivia is one of his favorite things in the world. Mother Theresa is credited with saying, "If you want to change the world, go home and love your family." I think she was onto something there.

By the way, to listen to any part of yesterday or today's broadcast that you might've missed, or you just want to hear again, go to our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. That web address once again is drjamesdobson.org. While you're there, you can also order a CD copy of yesterday and today's two-part broadcast all on one disc to share with friends and family. Again, go to drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Whether you're listening at home or on the go, thanks so much for making Family Talk a part of your day. I'm Roger Marsh, and for everyone here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, have a wonderful rest of your day.

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