



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Stepping Away from the Common Life- Part 1

Guest(s): Tony Dungy

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Dr James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Booker T. Washington once said, "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way." Hello everyone, I'm Roger Marsh, and you're listening to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Today, we are bringing you a conversation between Dr. Dobson and popular sports analyst and former professional football coach, Tony Dungy. If you're a dad or you mentor a young boy or a young man, I'm glad you've tuned into today's broadcast. And if you're a mom, if you are anyone who's had any hand in raising a child, you will also appreciate Tony Dungy's pitch to make a difference in the life of a young person.

Tony Dungy is a New York Times bestselling author. He's also the former head coach of the Indianapolis Colts and Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the NFL. In 2007, he led the Colts to victory and the long-awaited championship title in Super Bowl 41. With that win, Tony Dungy became the first African-American coach to take home the Lombardi trophy. In 2016, he was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

He is widely considered by NFL players, both current and retired, as one of the most knowledgeable, well-liked and respected coaches to ever walk the sidelines. Outside of football, Tony Dungy is heavily involved in numerous organizations, including the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the Prison Crusade Ministry.

Tony retired from coaching in 2008 and now serves as an analyst for NBC's Football Night in America. He and his wife, Lauren, are the parents of 10 children. Now part of Tony and Lauren's story includes the tragic suicide of their 18 year old son in 2005. In an 'iron sharpens iron conversation', Dr. Dobson now sits down with a man who embodies Christian faith and conviction, which encompasses some of life's highest ups and lowest downs. On today's program,

the two men will be discussing Tony Dungy's 2009 book titled *Uncommon*. Let's go there now.

Dr James Dobson: The year was 2007, and our guest on one of those days was coach Tony Dungy, who had just won the Superbowl shortly before that as the coach of the Indianapolis Colts. He had also just come out with a new book called *Quiet Strength*, which went on to be the number one bestselling book on the New York Times list. Everyone here fell in love with this good, godly man on that day, especially my wife, Shirley. And I wasn't even jealous because Coach Dungy was so generous with his time in helping Shirley with the National Day of Prayer. And she wanted me to give you her regards and welcome you back.

Tony Dungy: Well, thank you, Dr. Dobson. It's great to be back.

Dr James Dobson: This is a time when we need prayer, isn't it?

Tony Dungy: We do, we do. Our country does and our young people do, and we've got to stay fervent in that area.

Dr James Dobson: Now you've brought out your second book, called *Uncommon*. The subtitle says *Finding Your Path to Significance*. There's a lot of very good advice in this book. And again, it's a real pleasure to have you back.

You retired from professional football January 21st, 2009. And you warned us when you were here in 2007, you said you were thinking about doing that. I said to myself, "No, no. This man's been too successful and he loves football so much." But you turned around and did it. As much as you love football and it was your whole life up to that point, or at least a very significant part of it, why did you close the door to that?

Tony Dungy: Well, I do love football and I wasn't burned out, I wasn't tired of it. I enjoyed our team tremendously. But to me, I was going to something and that something was to try to do a little bit different things to help the communities I lived in. For 30 years I had brought good football and tried to raise up good football players. But the past few years, just the things that are going on in our communities in Indianapolis, where I lived the last seven years, our graduation rates, our crime rates, things that were going on with our teenagers, I just felt there was a little more that I could do that would be more significant.

Dr James Dobson: So reaching out to young people and to your own family and so on was what motivated you to walk away at the peak of your career. You get a lump in your throat over that?

Tony Dungy: I will miss it, but right now I'm staying very busy. I'm getting to do things that I would never have gotten to do before. Taking on projects that are going to be a great deal of fun, I think very rewarding. But for 30 years, I was really occupied

with preparing football teams, getting players ready to play. And then you realize there's a lot of other unique things and neat things that you can do.

Dr James Dobson: You had 10 consecutive playoff appearances with your teams, which was an NFL record. You were a Super Bowl winning coach, of course, which every NFL coach dreams about. You are the NFL's winning-est coach going back to the '99 season. And you played in Super Bowl 13, I'd forgotten that, with the Steelers. You actually played in the game, didn't you?

Tony Dungy: I did. I was fortunate enough to be on a team that won as a player, and then 27 years later come back and win as a coach. And they were two tremendous thrills. They really were.

Dr James Dobson: All right. I want to ask you one last question about retirement. Has your identity changed? Have you had any second thoughts about the fact that "I was a very good professional football coach and I'm not now?" Has that changed your perception of yourself?

Tony Dungy: It really hasn't changed me. I thought my popularity around the country might go down a little bit, but it just almost seems the opposite. That more people stop you, more people ask the same question you're asking, how could you step away from a game? And that gives you a chance to talk about things that are really important in life. It's been great.

Dr James Dobson: Well, you brought out this book called *Uncommon*. I've already explained that the subtitle identifies it to some degree. But what's the significance of that title?

Tony Dungy: It really came from my college coach. He talked about being uncommon and that success was an uncommon thing. And you had to step away from the norms. Don't come to college just to be average. I really kind of wrote this for teenagers to really not feel like you had to follow the crowd. I think that's one of the big problems we have now. We all want to be accepted, we all want to fit in, and so that leads us to do things that maybe we don't even believe in. And Jesus talked about taking the narrow road and not taking the wide road, and that's really the message in this book.

Dr James Dobson: You know what I thought of when I saw the title? Do you remember a famous quote from World War II by Chester Nimitz, the admiral who headed up the Iwo Jima landings? Admiral Nimitz said, "Uncommon valor was a common virtue." That is one of the most famous quotes from the Marine Corps.

Tony Dungy: My college coach grew up in that era and talked about being uncommon a lot. And he said, "There's two ways you can make yourself uncommon. You can either have a talent that no one else has, or you can have a desire, a drive, an attitude, something in your heart that allows you to do things that the common person could do, but most people won't."

Dr James Dobson: You said in here that it's been your observation that many young men are struggling with what it means to be a man.

Tony Dungy: I think we really are because of the absence of fathers in the home. I saw it as an NFL coach, as I would interview our players that would come to us. And probably three out of four, by the time I was finished coaching, three out of four were coming without that dad in the home. So you start to-

Dr James Dobson: Three out of four.

Tony Dungy: Three out of four, three out of four. So you start talking about things about how you're going to represent the community, what you're going to do, how to be a good teammate, how to be a good person. A lot of this was the first time for many of these guys to hear it.

And so, it just made me think that we've got to some way fill the void. Everybody doesn't have the benefit of a great dad like I did. So where do the mentors come in? How can we step in and help young men really see this is what life is all about? And that was the idea behind the book. If I could just sit down with a teenager in a six hour car ride and just tell them what I thought was important about life.

Dr James Dobson: Well, let's talk about that. When you were coaching in the NFL, every year you would have a class of rookies and they'd come in and they're what? 21, 22, 23 years of age.

Tony Dungy: Exactly.

Dr James Dobson: And they're great athletes or they wouldn't be there, and they've been given a lot of praise and publicity and now a huge amount of money to come in and play football with you. What is uppermost in your mind that you want to get across to them? Where do you start and what is the deficit that you're seeking to address?

Tony Dungy: Well, to me, I wanted those guys to come in and be part of our team and be part of the city. I also realized just what you're saying, they're facing new challenges that they have never experienced before. They're living on their own, they're going to be making their own decisions for the first time, what they're going to do when they're away from the football field. And so just talking about those things and making good decisions and realizing that that's the part that really stops a lot of guys. It's not athletic ability. Most of them have the ability to play. But can they handle all the other things that go with it? So you start talking about relationships with women, role modeling, being part of the community. And very often you're really treading on unknown territory for these men.

Dr James Dobson: I think of those that come out of the inner city and they've had nothing. They've grown up in poverty and now they've gotten contracts for \$10 million. What do you tell them about money?

Tony Dungy: Well, you talk about money and using it wisely, saving. You talk about economics. But you also talk about being careful. So many people now are going to come to them with different plans, different, "Hey, you can do this. I can double your money. I can do this for you here." So many of them, they become the sole source of supply for-

Dr James Dobson: The whole family.

Tony Dungy: ... the whole family, friends, that type of thing. They have to think about not only their responsibility to their family, yes, but their responsibility to themselves down the road. those are all issues that, for a 21 year old, they're huge.

Dr James Dobson: Head coaches are very, very busy people. Did you have an open door for these guys? Could they come in and sit down and say, "Coach, I'm lonely. I'm away from home and I'm scared. I'm afraid I'm going to fall on my face. Can you help me?" Did you sit down with them?

Tony Dungy: I tried to create that environment, but most guys wouldn't take advantage of that until they'd been there two or three years because their first year, they don't want to admit to the head coach, "I may be having some problems." He may not welcome that, he may not play me, he may not think that I'm mature enough, so I'm going to stay away from the head coach. But once they got to know me and realize that I'm there to help, most of the guys would come in and take advantage of that later on.

Dr James Dobson: How difficult was it for you to let somebody go? How hard was it when somebody had played their heart out and they just didn't have it, or they had it and lost it, and you were the one that had to say, "You're not going to be part of our organization."

Tony Dungy: That is the hardest thing about coaching. People often ask me, what's the best part of my job and I'd say, "Hey, when you win a championship game and you're up there and you realize your organization has done something special, they wouldn't even have to pay you. You'd still enjoy the job." But on those cutdown days, when you have to let 15 players go, or 20 players go, there's not enough money in the world. It's the hardest thing in the world to tell a young man that his dream is over.

Dr James Dobson: You have him cry in front of you and beg you.

Tony Dungy: I've had some cry. And then sometimes you're dealing with guys who have done a great job for you for eight, nine, 10 years and you have to say, "Hey, as good a

person as you are and as great a relationship as we've had, it's going to be better for the team if I keep another player." Those are difficult.

Dr James Dobson: Have you tried to stay in touch with some of those guys?

Tony Dungy: I have stayed in touch with a lot of guys, and I think I've gotten a closer relationship to some guys now that it's not employer employee, it's just friend to friend. That's one of the gratifying things. When a player will come back to you eight, 10 years later and say, "Hey, I really appreciate the lessons that I learned from you in 1996 or 97, or even when you had to release me because I wasn't really listening. That was a wake up call for me, and even though it was painful then, it helped me down the road."

I was just walking down the street with my family and ran into one of my former players who told me that and said, "I didn't really understand all the things you were talking about when I played for you. And I didn't understand why you didn't just stick to just football. It seemed like you were just hammering us with all these other things about life." He said, "But now that I'm married, I really understand and I thank you for it." Those are so gratifying. That's what really makes it for you.

Dr James Dobson: I know that in your drafting, you were not only looking for ability, athletic ability, and the knowledge of the game. You were looking for character. How do you know it when you see it? What's it look like? And if a person doesn't seem to have it, can you help him get it?

Tony Dungy: Part of our job is to help them get it. And so, it wasn't the type of thing where if everybody's not the mature concrete person that we're looking for, you can't just say, "No, we don't want them." But those major decisions, when you're drafting a guy with the first pick in the draft, when you're drafting a guy high, it is much more character than ability. Athletic ability is going to take you to a certain level, but the championship teams are built on character. So that was very something we stressed a lot with the Colts and with the Bucks when I was there. It's so important and I think many people overlook that. But the chemistry, putting together a winning team, character is important.

And then you also, when you're winning, your players are going to be role models for the young men in the community. So you want to be able to say, "These are the guys that are going to represent us. They're going to be the standard for the community." It's critical.

Dr James Dobson: I was fishing in Canada one time with a very well-known developer who had done a lot of things with his company. And I asked him how he selected his lieutenants, the people that would help him lead the organization. Especially what were the characteristics that he was looking for. He smiled and he said, "I only ask one question." And I said, "What is that?" And he said, "I wanted to know what his relationship with his father was," because he said, "If he

respected the authority of his father and came under his leadership, he would do a good job for me and he would not challenge my authority." Now the three out of four guys you bring in, didn't have a dad, and they've never seen that. How do they respond to your authority and is that a major factor in the way you relate to them?

Tony Dungy: It is. It's one of the questions that you ask yourself when you're evaluating whether to select the player or not. How is he going to fit in? How does he respond to authority? And is he going to be a team player? We would go to great lengths to try to find that out. We talked to their high school coaches, we talked to their college professors. The greatest tips we would get on that would be to talk to the college support staff. We'd talk to the equipment men, the trainers.

Dr James Dobson: Will they tell you?

Tony Dungy: Oh, yeah. Very much so. If you asked the right questions, you would find out. It was something that I think held us in good stead. With the Colts, we were able to maintain those winning teams throughout the years because we did have good, high quality, high character guys that practiced hard, that had that good team spirit, that played together year in and year out. A lot of that was because of the players we selected.

Dr James Dobson: Would you draft a person who had three or four drug incidents?

Tony Dungy: We would talk to people who had incidents with the law. What I tried to do is just look them in the eye and get a gut feel. Did this young man learned from his experience? Does he have a repentant heart? Does he want to go forward and be part of a winning program? Is he just trying to pull the wool over my eyes? Sometimes you're fooled, but many times you could just sit there and talk and you'd have a gut feel. And if my gut said no, most of the time, we wouldn't take those guys.

Dr James Dobson: Coach, how much freedom did you have to talk about Jesus Christ to these kids?

Tony Dungy: Unbelievably had the ultimate freedom. Both of the organizations I worked in, the ownership was very much behind me. And I felt that it was part of my responsibility. I would start out the first meeting of the year and say, "Hey, I'm a Christian. So that's going to impact the way that I coach. Here's how you're going to be coached; with respect, with love," so on and so forth. "That's what I believe. You don't have to believe that. You don't have to be a Christian to be on the team, but I'm going to model that behavior to you. And if you ever want to talk about it, my door's always open."

Dr James Dobson: Man, that is so impressive. That is impressive. That goes along with, I think, the bonding that you were trying to create with the individual too.

Tony Dungy: It was part of my leadership style. I always felt that if you were going to lead a group, if they felt a closeness with you and they were going with you, it was not that you were pushing them to some goal. That's how I think the stereotypical coach is viewed in the NFL. That you're the driver, that you push people. And I always felt that we're going together. And if we build this bond together, you know that I care about you. When the road gets rough, we're going to go together. If I'm just pushing you all the time and all of a sudden the road gets rough, you may not want to get pushed anymore.

Dr James Dobson: You didn't do a lot of screaming at your players, either.

Tony Dungy: I did not. I did not. And there were times when I did, but more of it was instruction and encouragement. And I felt like we had motivated players. That if we instructed and encouraged, they were going to do well.

Dr James Dobson: What did you tell them about trash talk on the field?

Tony Dungy: We talked about class a lot and doing things the right way. We talked about humility. One of my favorite quotes, "Pride goes before destruction." And so we want to go out there, we want to win with class, we want to lose with dignity. But we want to be the type of team that when young guys looked at us, that a parent would be able to say, "That's how you should be. Be like those Indianapolis Colts." That was a big thing to me.

Dr James Dobson: What are the qualities that Peyton Manning has that made him such a winner?

Tony Dungy: Peyton is really a driven person. He wants-

Dr James Dobson: For those that aren't into football, we're talking to a lot of women who aren't. We're talking about the quarterback.

Tony Dungy: Peyton Manning is a fantastic player. He's a great leader. He was a pleasure to coach because he wanted to improve, he wanted to win.

Dr James Dobson: He studied a lot.

Tony Dungy: He studied a lot. He wanted to play the perfect game every week. And when your top player was a guy that you didn't have to motivate, you could just tell the other teammates, "This is how we want to do it," that really helps you as a coach.

Dr James Dobson: Well, you have already answered this question, but Jesus Christ is the centerpiece. His love is a centerpiece of your life, isn't it?

Tony Dungy: It really is.

Dr James Dobson: That's what motivates you, what drives you.

Tony Dungy: It really is. I think that's what we talked the last time I was on the show. I thought I'd get out of coaching pretty early in life. But the reason I stayed in it 30 years, I wanted to show people that you could be Christ led and be successful in an industry where most people would say, "Well, that's not the style. You got to be rough. You got to be tough. You got to be aggressive." And I wanted to show that that Christ can be paramount and win anywhere, in any industry, including the National Football League.

Dr James Dobson: You do not have to be an uncaring coach in order to force these guys, beat them over the head, to get them to perform. You can do it with love.

Tony Dungy: Right. Many people said over the years, "Well, he's a good coach, but they'll never really win big because he's not going to push him. He's not going to demand. He's not going to scream at them, and that's what they really need." And I never felt that was the case. So when we did win, I kind of subtly did say that. That you can win and still have Christian principles and treat players this way and they'll perform for you.

Dr James Dobson: Well, I admire you greatly. *Uncommon: Finding Your Path to Significance*, by Coach Tony Dungy. It's published by Tyndale, and they're good people too. Thank you. I'd like to talk to you tomorrow if you will stay with us

Tony Dungy: I would love to. I would love to. It's always great being here.

Dr James Dobson: I appreciate what you're out there trying to do. We haven't had a chance to talk much about your family, but I'd like to do that next time. That played a major role in your stepping down too, didn't it?

Tony Dungy: It did. That's the one negative about coaching. You are away a lot. And I felt I wasn't home as much as my dad was. And so being able to step down and be home a little bit more was important.

Dr James Dobson: Let's start next time by talking about your dad.

Tony Dungy: I'd love to.

Dr James Dobson: Thanks for being with us again.

Tony Dungy: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: Tony Dungy is such a great example of what a man of God looks like. He prioritizes his family. He has made it clear that his faith and his vocation are inseparable and he expects everyone under him to act with respect and good character. You've just heard part one of Dr. Dobson's interview with Tony Dungy right here on Family Talk.

In Proverbs 10:9, we read, "Whoever walks with integrity, walks securely." I think that a man of integrity is a great way to describe Tony Dungy, don't you? Now on tomorrow's broadcast, Tony Dungy and Dr. Dobson will conclude their discussion about Tony's 2009 book entitled *Uncommon*. You will not want to miss this. I was personally riveted by what Tony had to say, and I imagine that tomorrow will be just as compelling.

But until then, go ahead and visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. You can learn more about Tony Dungy, his books, where you can listen to any of the program that you might've missed on today's broadcast. That address again is drjamesdobson.org/broadcast.

And of course, you can also feel free to call us anytime day or night. We are here to pray with you, to answer your questions about the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and the Ministry of Family Talk as well. Our number is (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825.

It's because of listeners just like you that we've been able to produce and release relevant biblical content for over 10 years now. To learn more about the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, or how you can join in our efforts, go to drjamesdobson.org. I'm Roger Marsh. Blessings to you and your family, and join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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