



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Oneness Embraced

Guest(s): Dr. Tony Evans

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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 Mash: This is Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh thanking you for joining us today. Today is Wednesday, December 7th, and I want to take a brief moment to remember Pearl Harbor, that surprise attack on the naval base at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1941, thrust America into World War II. On that day, 2,403 military and civilian personnel lost their lives, over a thousand more were injured, and everything changed in this country. It's been 81 years since that day, and it's important to remember how this country came together in a time of great turmoil.

Today here on Family Talk, our guest is Dr. Tony Evans, and he'll be joining our host, Dr. Tim Clinton for a dynamic conversation discussing cultural division and other hot button topics from a biblical perspective. Today's broadcast is from our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection. Dr. Tony Evans grew up during segregation and went on to become founder and senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship. He's the author of more than 125 books and is the host of a radio program called The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans. His wife Lois passed away in 2019, but Tony and Lois were married for 50 wonderful years. Together they raised four children and have many grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well.

Now, before we get started, I want to remind you that this is a listener-supported broadcast outreach. For this month only, we have a special matching grant in place. So, if your heart is stirred to help us impact lives with God's Word, know that by making a donation to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute during the month of December, your dollars will be doubled. To make a donation online, visit drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, or give us a call. Our constituent care team is standing by ready to help you when you dial 877-732-6285. That's 877-7732-6825. We'd love to talk with you to answer any questions you might have about our ministry or the resources that we offer, or to simply just listen and pray with and for you. We appreciate your prayers, your encouragement, and your financial support, and we more than anything hope that you enjoy today's program. So let's get to it right now.

Here now is our host, Dr. Tim Clinton, with today's guest, Dr. Tony Evans here on Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dr. Tony Evans is one of the country's most respected evangelical leaders. He's a pastor, best-selling author, frequent speaker at Bible conferences and seminars throughout the nation. He served as senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship for nearly four decades, witnessing a growth from about 10 people back in the mid-'70s to 10,000-plus congregants, 100-plus ministries and more. He also serves as president of the Urban Alternative, a national ministry that seeks to bring about spiritual renewal in America through the church.

His daily radio broadcast, *The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans* can be heard in more than 1,200 radio outlets throughout the United States and in more than 130 countries. He's written over 50 books. *Kingdom Agenda*, *Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations*, *Oneness Embraced*. We're going to talk a lot about that today. *Marriage Matters* and so much more. He also served as chaplain of the NFL Dallas Cowboys. I like the Steelers, but we're okay with the Cowboys. And continues to serve as chaplain of the NBA Dallas Mavericks.

It's such a delight to have you. Tony, thank you for joining us.

Dr. Tony Evans: Thank you for having me. It's always good to be with you, sir.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know Dr. Dobson sends his regard. He has such a love for you and what God's doing in and through you, and he wanted me to make sure and say, "Tell Tony I said hello."

Dr. Tony Evans: Well, you give him my love, he and his lovely wife. They have meant a lot to our lives personally as well as our ministry.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Tony, it's been a pretty tough road over the last couple of years. Really difficult actually for most Americans and people around the globe. Last time you were with us though, you were coming off ... Well, we had a conversation about your wife Lois and the loss in your life. That was quite an interview. I'll never forget it. I just wanted to ask how you were doing, how the family's doing?

Dr. Tony Evans: Well, we fight forward. Our circumstances haven't been great, but our faith is strong. That's what carries you forward when you face the trials of life. So we've had our share over the last couple of years losing eight family members, just one right after the other, virtually every six months. That means adjustments. But because our family is close, sometimes too close because my kids worry me to death, but other than that we are staying close and enjoying one another. Still, everybody's active in ministry. So we're moving forward, but there are those rollercoaster moments.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Tony, I think with COVID hitting a couple of years ago and the lockdowns, the loss, the loneliness, and then you begin to just dial back about what we've

been through. There was a stretch of racial trauma that really captivated the country, creating a lot of tension, rioting. You go into the election fiasco and everything that went on around that. People are emotionally shot. They're wiped out. But I think there's a recognition that in many ways we're just torn apart. There's tension everywhere. People are confused. They're angry. They're frustrated. Maybe brothers pitted against brother, sister against sister, citizen against citizen, even Christian against Christian. And it's hard to find agreement. It's hard to find harmony, especially as we look to the future. You wrote a new book, *Oneness Embraced: The Kingdom Race Theology for Reconciliation, Unity, and Justice*. Tony, we're here to talk about what that book is all about. Tell us what's in your heart, where this came from, where it originated from.

Dr. Tony Evans:

Well, 2 Chronicles 15:3-6 says that there was no peace in those days. It says people rose up against people, city rose up against city, and nation rose up against nations. So it is a perfect description of perpetual conflict on every level. But then it says at the end of verse six, "For God troubled them with every kind of distress." You would've thought it would've said the devil troubled them, but it doesn't. It says God troubled them. It says the reason God troubled them in verse three is because idolatry had taken over, the ministry had failed. It says there was no teaching priest, and then it says people made up their own rules. So there was no standard that people could operate by, and so it perfectly describes the culture and the country we are living in now.

If God is your problem, God troubled them, then that means it doesn't matter who you elect, doesn't matter what programs you come up with and how they are funded. If God is your problem, that means only God is your solution. So I view all of these things that you so aptly summarize theologically, not sociologically, politically. Those are fruit not root, because God is the issue. That means God has to be repositioned and His standards in our lives and in the culture.

Oneness Embraced argues that it is the unity of Christians and unity we define as oneness of purpose that will determine the engagement of God. God will only engage to the degree that His people are legitimately unified. John 17: 23-25 says, "That they might be one," Jesus says, "perfect them in unity so that they might see my glory." There's one God composed of three co-equal persons. One, in essence, distinctive personality. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, but they all make up the one unified Godhead.

When it comes to our human relationships, God is not colorblind. He's just not blinded by color. He does not want the distinctives that He has allowed and created to be the ultimate place of our identity. And what we have done is we've made race, color, culture, ethnicities, class, a point of identity, which makes it a point of idolatry. And whatever false identity is rooted in a personal inner culture, it has become idolatrous. And once it becomes idolatrous, then we're back to verse three, no true God. And that's because the pulpits have failed, and the mist in the pulpit will always lead to a fog in the pew so that people don't know how to respond.

When I wrote *Kingdom Race Theology*, there's the big book, that 434 pages of in-depth theological analysis, and then we have a pullout from that, the small book called *Kingdom Race Theology* for people who don't want to read 434 pages. What we are trying to argue is God has given us a theology that we can link into to override, overrule, and bring harmony in a chaotic situation. So as bad as things look, there's an opportunity here like we've never had before, because the culture doesn't have answers.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tony, would you say that the culture, everyone's screaming but no one's listening, no one can really hear? Let's go back to Trayvon Martin, maybe around, what, 2012.

Dr. Tony Evans: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You fast forward, come up into 2020, the Ahmaud Arbery situation, and then of course the horrific scenes of George Floyd. Tony, it just escalated everything into like an explosion. What are you seeing out there and what really has you concerned? Before we can receive the truth, I'm trying to see what's happening in culture and can we break through? Because in some respects, a lot of people think racism is going backwards, not forward.

Dr. Tony Evans: Well, it's gone backwards because we keep picking fruit and not digging up root. And as long as you're picking fruit, new fruit's going to grow if the root is not addressed. And the root is having a right view of the Imago Dei. The Imago Dei, the biblical word for the Image of God. The image of God starts in the womb. It starts in God from conception. Psalm 139:16, God is engaged in the beginning and the origin of life.

But the Imago Dei is also used of our relationship with one another. James 3:9 says that you are not to curse another person because of the image of God. So what we've had is a term life agenda and not a whole life agenda. So they should be the right to life pre-birth and the right to life pro-birth. Those two must be hitched together. When they're unhitched, then that creates a divisiveness that God never intended. It's like the unity between righteousness and justice. The Bible always makes them twin towers and never ... I mean, they're Siamese twins. Over and over and over again, those two. Psalm 89:14, from his throne kingdom. "From his throne comes righteousness and justice." God tells Abraham, Genesis 18:19, "Raise your children in righteousness and justice."

Because people haven't preached them as twins and because people don't receive them as equals, they divide the two. And when that division happens theologically, it happens sociologically and culturally. So we need to get to a Imago Dei understanding of life. And then when we proclaim that, live that, and model that, now people are looking at life differently.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Yeah, I would agree with you completely. I had a conversation with a dear friend of mine, and it was over the issue of racism. He is a Black leader and someone that I care a lot about. He said, "Tim, a lot of people don't understand racism and how common it is." He went on to tell me about what it was like to live in his world, and how that people would come by, taking human feces and put all over his mailbox, destroy his mailbox, put everything on the ground, et cetera. He said, "Tim, when you receive that stuff every day, it does something inside of you." And I just listened to him. He said, "Let me tell you what it was like to grow up as a boy and to work hard to become the valedictorian of a class, and to have people basically turn away from you and not recognize you because of the color of your skin."

As we continue to have this conversation, let's just talk about racism. What is it? Tony, help us understand.

Dr. Tony Evans:

Racism is the decision to relate to a person or to treat a person in a way that the demeans their dignity because of color or ethnicity. So it is prejudicial action based on illegitimate criteria, which is their color of skin or culture or ethnicity. That can happen individually or it can happen structurally. We tend to be more familiar with individual racial animus, but it can be structural.

The illustration I give in the book *Oneness Embraced* is adjacent to our church is a golf course. Blacks were not allowed on that golf course until 1994. The way they would keep Blacks away is a structure. What they would say is if a Black person was brought to this course, two-thirds of the membership had to agree for them to become members. Well, you would never get two-thirds to agree, and therefore Blacks would be kept out. So an individual who brought a Black person could argue, "I'm not a racist," but the system of the golf course was. It wasn't written. It was in the structure of how they operated.

So things like that. I'm the fourth African American to attend Dallas Seminary in 1972. If I would've tried to get in a couple of years earlier, they would not have let me in because it was segregated. Now, this is the leading independent theological seminary in America, but they were still culturally bound, not biblically sound. So when you see all of those kinds of things.

Here, we are doing this taping from NRB. Well, there were stations who told us until Moody came aboard, and until Dr. Dobson wrote a letter telling these stations to give us the opportunity. And that's where our affinity comes from. On the early stages of our ministry, we were being rejected simply because of race.

So when those are your life experiences to varying degrees, because some had much more vitriolic experiences than I had. But when those are your experiences or the experiences of your context of life, then the issue of race hits you differently and much deeper. If you've never been pulled over by a policeman like I have, simply because of your race or the neighborhood you're in, you're going to relate to the issue differently.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The word discrimination, add that to our conversation.

Dr. Tony Evans: Yeah. Well, when you talk about racism, there is a discrimination. That is where you are making choices for a person because of who they are or against a person because of who they are. So you are creating a discriminatory or a divisive different based on illegitimate criteria. When people talk about white privilege, they're talking about the fact that whites have never been rejected because of skin color, and therefore benefits accrue to them that were not historically available to Black people because of skin color, therefore they were discriminated against illegitimately.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Is it fair to say, Tony, then in the midst of what we've been through and began to experience and watch unfold in front of her eyes and more, that people began to just spin with this. You saw some politicizing of this, and then of course the birth of the Black Lives Matter organization. People started debating that. They saw two different sides, and they debated both sides. And then comes critical race theory and the debating that went on there. Help us understand what you saw or what you see happening in culture and where this thing's getting away from us.

Dr. Tony Evans: Well, you have different sides coming at this from different perspectives, so they're drawing different conclusions. Some of the conclusions are legitimate, and some of the conclusions are not legitimate. For example, Black lives matter. Well, yes, that's a true statement like when people say the life of the unborn matters. We give that credence. The life of the unborn matters, so you have a pro-life movement. And because of the history of the treatment of Black people by police and Black men in particular, the emphasis of Black Lives Matter.

Now, when you break that off from all lives matter, now you have a biblical issue because the Bible does teach that all lives matter. But we shouldn't condemn the fact that Black lives matter like we don't condemn the fact that the lives of the unborn matter. The problem is other things get attached to it like other things get attached to pro-life, like bombings of abortion clinics. That's an illegitimate attachment. It doesn't deny the essential reality, nor should illegitimate attachments. We should reject the attachments, but not the legitimate complaints.

But having said that, you can talk about that all day, but until you have a plan set forth to address it, and this is where the failure comes in, there are legitimate critiques without a sufficient answer. That's where the church should be coming in.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tony, our time is ...

Dr. Tony Evans: Whoo, it's rolling right along.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We're running, and I love this conversation. We've got to get into where do we go from here, because the church is broken here. We've got to press in and say, "God, help us. Show us the road forward." I believe that God's given you a voice and some wisdom here, Tony. Take us down. The words of Jesus, "Lord, I pray that they would be one even as we are one." Help us.

Dr. Tony Evans: Well, we have a strategy that we're promoting nationally called a Kingdom Strategy for Community Transformation. It's a national strategy, but local implementation. It's simply saying biblically minded churches come together around Three A's. First of all, once a year they assemble a solemn assembly, which was a sacred gathering in Scripture whenever there was a crisis, to call God in. So these biblically minded, Kingdom minded churches come together to call on God. Second A is address. That is where they speak with one voice biblically about the issues facing their community as spiritual leaders and spiritual gatekeepers. The third A is act. Act is where they do something common to all of the churches and all of the pastors that benefit the community. Adopting every public school and providing mentoring and family support services to the at-risk students in those schools. Adopting the police precinct together so that we become the bridge between the police and the community.

And then we are initiating an initiative called Kindness in the Culture where a pastor will get all of his members to do one act of kindness a week just as they move about. Helping a homeless person, giving somebody a meal, helping an elderly person, encouraging somebody who's distressed. They do this act of kindness, but then they pray for that person and then share the gospel. And even if they can't share the gospel, we'll have a card that they can give them that'll have a QR code so that person can hear the gospel. So you're no longer doing good things, you're doing good works.

The Urban Alternative is going to make that available to churches and Christians all across America. If you get millions of Christians in all this vitriol doing a visible act of kindness, and on the card they can have their own church's name so that the person knows what church did it and maybe then can get connected to the church. That's part of this three-point plan. It's called the Kindness in the Culture.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We've got to be intentional in our efforts, because again, the tendency is just to throw your hands up in the air and just move on and just do your own thing, cocoon, isolate. Which is the tendency in culture, because ultimately the goal is to silence and shame and stigmatize people is what's going on. When you process this at 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning-

Dr. Tony Evans: That's a good time for me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What's cycling in that mind of yours and in your heart as you wrestle with God and say, "God, it seems like the biggest barrier here, it's this. Help us get through this."

Dr. Tony Evans: The biggest barrier is spiritual leadership. When you don't have good shepherds, you have confused sheep. And so we've got to challenge spiritual leadership at a Kingdom level, not a church level, because the church only exists for the Kingdom. The church does not exist for itself. And when you can get spiritual leaders to become kingdomized and not culturalized and transfer that down, now you can have an army that is ready to spiritually go to war.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tony, I'd like to end the broadcast today by going back to where we began. You talked about the image of God in each and every one of us. If we miss that, and if we don't see our brothers and sisters anchored right there, we're lost.

Dr. Tony Evans: Absolutely, because you're starting in the wrong place.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Explain again to us as we go, what that means to you.

Dr. Tony Evans: It means to me that every life matters. Every life has inherent dignity. And every life, we should seek to become conformed to Christ through the content of the gospel, but also through the scope of the gospel where we give them the message of forgiveness for Heaven, but also the message of transformation and history, and all because the mark of God has been stamped upon them at birth and through all of life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tony, what a word for such a time is this. Praying that God would continue to just sow good seed in your heart, give you the leadership skills and put around you some people to help rally. I agree with you, the greatest challenge we have is spiritual leadership. I believe that with all my heart, and we've got to press in like never before for such a time as this.

Dr. Tony Evans: Well, for those folks or leaders who want to find out more about the initiatives and how they can plug into it, tonyevans.org. They can also get the books on tonyevans.org. So we'd love to serve them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And Tony, the book again is *Oneness Embraced: The Kingdom Race Theology for Reconciliation, Unity, and Justice*. The one and only Tony Evans, a dear friend of Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, the entire team here of Family Talk. Dr. Evans, again, thank you for taking time to join us. We'll pray with you that God would unite our hearts and that we truly would be one even as They are one. Thank you for joining us.

Dr. Tony Evans: Thank you very much.

Roger Mash: That was our co-host, Dr. Tim Clinton, who spoke with Dr. Tony Evans this past March at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention about some very challenging topics that our country is still struggling with today. Let's be in prayer for change in the hearts and minds of those who can make change and move our country forward.

We are in the season of giving. As we deck the halls and trim the tree this month, please consider giving a gift that will truly touch the heart of a friend or a loved one. I'm talking about this year's Family Talk Best of Broadcast Collection. It's available either as a six-CD set of our most popular programs from 2022. Or new this year, there's a digital download version as well. You'll be able to stream it off your phone or connect your device to any larger device or Bluetooth speaker and play it for family and friends.

It's all yours. It's our way of thanking you for a suggested donation of \$50 or more to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. You can reserve your copy by visiting drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. That's drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. Or you can make your request over the phone when you call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Our customer care team is standing by ready to serve you.

I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for inviting us into your day today. We invite you to come back again tomorrow for another one of this year's favorite programs as we celebrate our Best of Broadcast 2022, coming up again tomorrow right here on Family Talk.

Announcer:

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