



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: One at a Time: God Wants to Use You to Change the World – Part 1

Guest(s): Kyle Idleman

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Hello and welcome to another edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and the entire staff here at the Dobson Institute, thank you for making us a part of your day. Please remember, we are a listener supported Christian radio outreach. It's because of you and your support that we're able to bring you quality content for you, your family, and for your life each and every day. To find out more, visit our website at drjamesdobson.org.

Now, do you ever think to yourself, "I want to make a difference, but I don't know where to begin?" I think many of us would say that we have felt this way, and a lot of people, especially the younger generation that's coming into their own right now, may not be sure how they can make a positive change in the world. Well, no matter who you are, it all starts with the things you say and the decisions you make. In today's program, our special guest will explain what developing good in the world looks like and feels like starting from within. He's a godly man who really knows how to speak to young people and the young at heart because it's never too late to make your mark.

His name is Kyle Idleman. Kyle is the senior pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He's known for his best-selling book, *Not A Fan* that has sold over 1.3 million copies. He's the author of the books *Grace is Greater, Don't Give Up*, and his recent release, *One at a Time: The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change the World*. We'll be talking about that release today. Kyle is married to his lovely wife, DesiRae, and together they have four kids and they live on a farm, which is interesting because he doesn't do any actual farming. Let's join our own Dr. Tim Clinton right now. He's co-host for the broadcast along with his guest, Kyle Idleman here on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kyle, thank you for joining us here on Family Talk. Dr. Dobson sends his regards.

Kyle Idleman: It is great to be with you and honored to be with you. I am 45 years old and I can't tell you a time in my life where I don't remember being influenced by Dr.

Dobson, so this is fun for me. Feels like it's kind of come full circle a little bit. So thanks for having me on.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kyle, you are senior pastor at Southeast Christian Church there in Louisville, the great Southeastern Christian Church. Kyle, I was just wondering before the broadcast, I wonder what it's like at the church. A lot of people talk about Covid and the impact it had on church attendance and more. What are you seeing? What are you hearing out there? You're speaking all over the country too.

Kyle Idleman: Yeah. Some things are predictable in that we have a long history as a church of experiencing difficulty and hardship and it teaches us greater dependence on God and that is a difficult fruit to bear, but it is worthwhile and I feel like we're seeing some of that. We're learning to be dependent on Him in deeper ways, more reliant on Him for our source of hope, becoming more aware of how some things that we've put our hope in don't necessarily hold up very well. So that's been encouraging. I feel like there's been some spiritual awakening within our church. And something that's a little more surprising is that we have seen in particular an awakening within this younger generation. I think during Covid, we anticipated that perhaps some of our older church members would be the first to come back and while they've come back and they've been faithful, where we have really seen growth and new faces, new names has been in the 18 to 24 age group. So we're really excited to see that. Really love what God seems to be doing in that generation and excited about the future there.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kyle, a few years back, I was in a meeting where Dr. Dobson was leading the room, a number of Christian leaders around the table, but I'll never forget a moment when he began to talk about the need in modern day culture and he was saying that we needed to pray the church would awaken and take her rightful place. He said until then, parachurch organizations have to "stand in the gap". But he said, "The real hope, the real power is in the church." And it caught me by surprise for a moment and I just thought a lot about it and I looked back and I just think about the church of our Lord and people pressing in close to his heart and pastors willing to be bold and courageous and I want to say anchored. Anchored in that love for the Lord, which changes hearts. Kyle, that is where we need to press in and we really need to pray that the church would awaken for such a time as this.

Kyle Idleman: Yeah. I do believe that this is where revival comes from. It's very unusual for there to be much awakening or revival when things are comfortable and easy and convenient. When we experience some of the challenges and struggles, there comes with that an opportunity for spiritual awakening and growth. When hardships come, it's not really a threat to Christianity. It's a threat to comfortable Christianity. One of the things I've loved in this season is watching people who were, I guess I would call them metaphorically the back row believers move to the front row. That's not been true across the board. Some of them I don't see much at all anymore, but it's been really sweet to see some of the people who were on the fringes become part of the foundation of the

church. I think there's just something about trouble that allows us to anchor more deeply to Jesus.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It certainly gets our attention. I think moments of crisis and challenge in our life are representative of both danger and opportunity and what we do with it is everything. Hey, before we talk about your new book, *One at a Time*, which I love. *The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change The World*. And by the way, if you're wrestling in your own heart, your own spirit about how God may want to use you or how He is using you or maybe how you feel He isn't using you, this is the conversation that we want to have today. But Kyle, you a while back wrote a book that just kind of took the church, if you will by storm, *Not a Fan*. I wanted to come back, and my son, Zach, who's getting his Ph.D. at Liberty, is a fan of that book. He said, "Dad, it did something inside of me." And Kyle, let me just ask it this way. What are you not a fan of?

Kyle Idleman: Yeah. Well, I found the idea of fan versus follower as a helpful challenge, especially for people who grew up in the church around faith, that it's not necessarily foe or follower. The idea that we are followers of Jesus, we want to be close to Him, we want to follow Him in a way that's committed. A fan of Jesus is somebody who wants to be close enough to Jesus to be identified with him but not so close that it requires anything from them. And when Jesus invited us to follow Him, he framed it this way in Luke 9. He said, "If anyone would come after me, they must deny themselves to take up the cross daily and follow me."

And the challenge is to not just be a fan where we know about Jesus, but to be a follower where we truly know Him and we're living in a way that is committed and devoted. That's where joy is really found. It's not in one foot in, one foot out approach. It's the going all in. Yeah, that's the idea of that book is that we've been called to be a lot more than fans of Jesus that sit in His cheering section. We've been called to follow Him.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And if you've ever sat under someone's teaching that it's moving the hearts of men and women, the Holy Spirit, when that conviction comes over, you start thinking, "Lord, I want to be used by you. I want to serve you." I'm thinking of our Men's Impact Weekend we do at Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. Every year, Kyle somebody you know, Clayton King, came and Clayton spoke at our event and over 400 men gave their life to Christ this past year at our Men's Ignite event, Micah Tyler did the concert and he sang that song Different. I want to be different. Ben Roethlisberger was there and Big Ben told me, he said, "Tim, that song has really impacted my life." And I think, Kyle, in the midst of all this, that stirring going on needs to go to a place where it moves us to action to get to a different place. And I think that's what this book *One at a Time* is all about. People want to be used by God, they want to do something, but they often struggle or they feel stuck or they get lost in this journey.

Kyle Idleman: I am struck, especially by this generation of influencers. The way we define impact and influence tends to be by how many followers we have, how many

likes a post gets, how many shares something gets. We tend to define it by how many, how much. Certainly as pastors, we can get caught up in that defining influence by how many people attend or as an author, how many people read the books. And yet as you read through the gospels, there is an inordinate amount of real estate given to just one person at a time encountering Jesus. And you start to recognize this is how He lived his life, this is how He impacted the world. It's one person at a time. So as you read through the gospels, you just can't go very far without Him meeting someone and their life being changed. And usually it's not somebody He had an appointment with. It's someone that He met along the way going somewhere else, but He leaned into those moments and it's that one at a time impact that all of us can have.

I, a number of years ago asked some folks in our church, a group of people to kind of reverse engineer how God had impacted them. What are the significant spiritual growth moments in your life and what instigated that? And to be honest, very few people referenced a specific sermon or a specific book, and that might have been part of the journey, but the majority of those moments were a relationship. It's one person who had the right word at the right time, one person who engaged in compassion and showed that they cared. That tends to be the story. I think if my own life, I could go back to eighth grade, it was probably the first time I ever considered any kind of ministry. I was in a Sunday school class with an accountant who was the Sunday school teacher, and he kept me after class and he just spoke some life into me, said, "Hey, I just see you as a leader, as a difference maker."

He may have had that conversation with every eighth grader that ever came through. He probably did. But when he said that to me, I heard it and I believed it, and I thought, maybe that's true or what if that's the way God wants to use me? And just an accountant deciding that he's going to say something to an eighth grade kid and it was the right time, the right words had a profound impact. I think a lot of us can trace our spiritual growth to one conversation at a time, one relationship at a time where somebody did that for us. So the challenge is how does God want to use us to do that for the people around us?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kyle, you opened up the book with the story of your daughter Morgan, and I want you to share a little bit about it because God used it as a way to "get your attention" and he got your attention. Incidentally, last night we're at home and my daughter Megan is at the house and her daughter Olivia, who's four years old, right before they were leaving, ran upstairs to her room, meaning my wife Julie helps take care of Olivia a couple of days a week. So she runs up to her bedroom upstairs where she takes her nap, and all of a sudden we hear her screaming up there and Megan said, "Olivia, are you okay? Are you okay?" Next thing you know, she heard more screaming and Megan thought the dresser fell over on Olivia last night and we went blowing up there. Anyway, it had our attention, Kyle. Which is a handoff to the whole story of Morgan.

Kyle Idleman: Yeah, there's something about hearing child, grandchild in fear that gets your attention quickly. And so for us, when my daughter Morgan is now a married

mother, when she was two, she was waking up from her nap. I was sent upstairs to get her when I got home from work and went into her room, I saw the chest of drawers on the floor, but I didn't see Morgan. And then I realized suddenly that she was under that chest of drawers and I pulled it up and she was unresponsive. I scooped her up in my arms and yelled for my wife, and we rushed to the emergency room at the hospital. When we got there, they took her in to do some x-rays and to run tests, but they would only let one parent into that space in the hospital. So I was not the parent, so I was out in the hallway. My wife stayed with my daughter.

I just remember sitting out in that hallway and feeling very alone, just feeling very desperate for God's help in a way that maybe I had never before or just certainly aware of my own lack of control in that situation. As I prayed to God and I asked Him to help my daughter Morgan, there were a number of things that He taught me in that, but one of them was this idea that she's His daughter first. She's His daughter too. I love my girl, but He loves my girl more. And I found an incredible comfort and peace in knowing that God is a father, not only identifies with me as a father, but even more so. I'm His son and this is His daughter. And getting that vision of how God sees people really impacted me as a ministry leader, as a pastor.

Morgan went on to make a full recovery and is doing great, but I'll not forget that because it helped me recognize this is how I need to see the people around me. Everyone I meet are potential sons and daughters of God. These are children that He loves and cares for and died for. And just the way that I viewed Morgan in that moment, the way that I understood her situation and cared about it is the way I want to have a heart for His sons and daughters around me. So that's one of the prayers that I pray every day. I'll say, "God, help me to see people the way you see people. Give me your eyes for the one." That God looks around and the people that I don't necessarily notice or that I have a tendency to overlook, He sees as sons and daughters. He sees the cashier at the grocery store the same way I would see Morgan.

And understanding that really profoundly changes the way that you see the people around you. And you know what? I don't talk about this in the book, but any parent can resonate with this idea that if you want to show me how much you care about me, care about my children. When someone decides they're going to invest in my kids for no reason, when someone decides they're looking out for one of my kids and I find out about that later, that means exponentially more to me than had they done that for me. I feel a different kind of gratitude to the person who looks out for one of my children and just this beautiful privilege that we would have each day to do that as an expression of love to God as a father that we love Him by loving His sons and daughters well.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Kyle, you take us on a journey in the book and you open up with acknowledging that in your own personal life, you struggled with connecting with people. You didn't call yourself an introvert, but you are extroverted. But at the same time, when that whole people dynamic comes into play, I think we all kind of in this

culture especially have this. I want to come close, but at the same time I've got distance that I'm maintaining. And if you tie that in with a heart that has a desire to make a difference and you want to be used by the Lord, you want to be able to share the love of Christ with someone else, you realize there are a lot of things that push back against that. But Kyle, in that you take us as a pastor would into the Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus and the gospels. I love how you begin the journey here and explain this one at a time concept. And you use Jairus' daughter, the unclean woman, Zacchaeus and more, but take us into what God taught you as you unpack those scriptures.

Kyle Idleman:

Well, Tim, you and I have a mutual friend, Dave Stone. Dave was a senior pastor of the church I'm at now for quite a few years that I worked very closely with. And Dave is the definition of a people person. He has tons of people energy. Whenever he's in a room, he brings lots of joy and laughter. People always want to be around him. So I spent a lot of time with Dave and I would inevitably when I was with him, feel like, "Man, I do not have these gifts. I really love people and I enjoy being around people, but he's like a magnet." And it just always would seem to come naturally for him. He would remember people's names. He just had a gift for that. I would spend time with him and feel like, "I don't know. I don't feel like I'm gifted in this way. I'm not sure God made me for this."

What I learned as I studied the gospels is that the pressure to be a certain way in front of crowds or the life of the party is a pressure that I was putting on myself. I was defining influence that way. Now, that is the way God used Dave to have influence. But if I could have a zoom lens so that when I'm in a crowd, I could look and see the one person, the one person who needed encouragement, the one person who might need prayer, the one person who might need a friend, the one person who might need to have a certain conversation, the one person who might need to be challenged. If I could see that one person in a crowd and be God's hands and feet and say the right word at the right time to that person, that would have impact, that would have influence.

And if you study the gospels, the word crowd shows up quite a lot in the ministry of Jesus, and it just is defined as a large group of unidentified people. But what Jesus would do so beautifully is that He would identify the one person in the crowd. So you referenced in the book where I talk about the woman with the issue of blood and this crowd that's surrounding Jesus, and she thinks to herself, if I could just reach out and touch his cloak, I'll be healed. So she does. She reaches out and she tries to disappear into the crowd and hopefully nobody will notice her, but Jesus is looking around trying to see who it was that might have touched Him. And there's this really beautiful verse in that text. It says, "When she realized that she could not go unnoticed," and I love that. She saw the way Jesus was looking for her and recognized, "Oh, He's not going to let me go unnoticed." And that really began to shape my prayer for influence.

God, who is the person that needs to not go unnoticed? Who's that one person? So a few minutes before I sat down here with you, Tim, I was in the other room

with seven year old boy named Reed. His parents brought him by just so I could pray for him, and he has cancer and is having radiation and chemo treatments. And just not being in a hurry with Reed, being able to talk to him and pray with him and ask him about football and favorite player and favorite team and just be able to spend time with him and understand that that's it. It was so helpful and freeing to me that at the end of this day, I don't know what kind of opportunities I'll have or not have, and this recording will reach all kinds of people, but that one conversation I had with Reed is really significant, having the time and presence to just be with him.

So my prayer is, God, who needs to not go unnoticed? Help me to see people the way you see people and then to live life with that zoomed lens. The idea that you're going to zoom in and focus on the one person, and it's okay if some other people fade into the background so that you can do that well.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

What's so amazing to me, Kyle, is someone is always watching you. Someone is always eyeing up, and the real question is what do they see in and through you? And you may be, in some sense, the only Jesus that person may ever get to see. And how are we doing that? I think at the end of the day, Kyle, that's the conversation that Dr. Dobson for basically his entire career has focused in on one critical gift that parents can give to their children and that they would introduce their children to Christ, and ultimately one day in Heaven, they would all be there together.

And I think Kyle, we're talking about the significance of influence, and I'm moving this into the influence of our everyday faith of sharing Christ and more. But yes, the lessons of Jesus, there's so much that you have for us in and through this book. We're going to talk tomorrow on the broadcast about compassion, the proximity principle and so much more. What do they look like? How can God work in and through my life to bring others to Him? Kyle, what a gift. The book, again, is *One at a Time*. It's exploding out there in bookstores, online, everywhere. *The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change the World*. Our special guest, again, has been Kyle Idleman. Kyle is the senior pastor at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Kyle, what a delight to have you on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, the entire team here at Family Talk. We salute you and pray that God will continue to work in and through you. I can't wait to get into tomorrow's broadcast. Thank you for joining us.

Roger Marsh:

Well, this has been another edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and the entire staff here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we thank you for making us a part of your day. Thanks for remembering that we are a listener supported Christian radio outreach and it's because of you and your support that we're able to bring you quality content each and every day. Remember, you can learn more by visiting our webpage if you're not there already. That's drjamesdobson.org.

Well, God certainly has unique ways for using us all for kingdom purposes, and I pray that your heart is open to hear how God has called you. If you're like me, I imagine you were hanging on to most every word from today's guest, Pastor Kyle Idleman. Be sure to join us again tomorrow to hear more in part two with our own Dr. Tim Clinton's insightful conversation with the man behind the bestselling book, *Not A Fan* and *One at a Time: The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change the World*. Together, these two godly men will inspire you to listen more closely for God's direction, to do more with what you have, to better the world, and strengthen your faith walk. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks again for making us a part of your day today and join us again tomorrow right here for another edition of Family Talk.

Announcer:

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