



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: I Can Do All Things Through Him: Living Out Philippians 4:13

Guest(s): Jennifer Rothschild

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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.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Welcome in to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here at Family Talk. As a licensed professional counselor and marriage and family therapist, I also serve as president of the American Association of Christian Counselors. Thank you for joining us. Today, we're backstage at the Extraordinary Women Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Let me tell you, the energy here, it's like none other. Thousands of women, all different walks of life, have come from near and far to the Mabee Center to worship, hear incredible speakers, and experience the presence of God.

One of those speakers is here with us today as my guest. She brought the house down last night opening up the conference. You may be familiar with her name. She's been seen on programs such as *Good Morning America*, the *Today Show*, and even a Billy Graham television special, or perhaps you have read about her story in *Today's Christian Woman*, *Virtue Magazine*, or *Becoming Family Magazine*. Her name, Jennifer Rothschild. She's an author, speaker, bible study teacher, and podcaster. Jennifer grew up in Clearwater, Florida, Costa Rica, and Miami. Sadly, at the age of 15, she was diagnosed with a rare degenerative eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa, that eventually caused her blindness.

She is a Palm Beach Atlantic University graduate where she met her husband, Phillip Rothschild. Later in 1998, they founded the Womensministry.net Leadership Library, which is a free online resource for women in ministry. Jennifer has written 28 books, including Bible studies and eBooks. In 2018, she started her podcast entitled the *4:13 Podcast* after her favorite Bible verse from Philippians 4:13. You know it, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me the strength." I like that. She co-hosts the podcast with her close friend, Casey Wright. Jennifer is also host and teacher for the Fresh Grounded Faith Women's Conferences that strives to encourage women and to help them learn more about the Bible. Jennifer and her husband Philip have two grown sons, three grandchildren. They live in Springfield, Missouri.

Jennifer, what a delight to have you. Thank you so much for joining us. Dr. Dobson and his wife, Shirley, they send their regards.

Jennifer Rothschild: Well, I want to send my regards and gratefulness to Dr. Dobson and Shirley. I have followed them for years. I'll never forget, Tim, Little kids, like when Dr. Dobson's *Strong-Willed Child* book came out, our baby was so little, I didn't even know he was strong-willed, but I was prepared. I read it. But can I tell you this? This is the sweetest thing. Shirley won't remember this, but I had the privilege of speaking once at Focus on the Family, and we were right in the middle of adolescent parenting, and it was not going super well between my husband and my oldest son. And my husband was very discouraged, and there was something that either he said, I don't know what it was, but Shirley Dobson came over to us, and she said, "I just want you to know that who that child is now is not who they will be in 10 years, so do not lose heart. Do not feel despair."

And it turned my husband around. And so I love that Dr. Dobson, Shirley have a public ministry, but that private ministry that she had right there with my husband just made such a difference in his encouragement. So I'm just a big fan of the Dobsons' hearts and so grateful for them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love that story. That's told so many times over. It's just amazing how God continues to use that voice, their voice for such a time as this.

Jennifer Rothschild: Hallelujah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jennifer, last night you were on stage here at the Extraordinary Woman Conference. We're in Tulsa at the Mabee Center on the campus of Oral Roberts University. There were over 5,000 women in there. You were the like the opening pitcher, if you will, and you've got to set the pace. And boy, I'll tell you what, there was an anointing on our time together last night. But you did something on stage that really fascinated me, you had a Bible in your hands. And you told the story of why you had that particular Bible. You mind sharing that with our listeners?

Jennifer Rothschild: Well, it is somewhat interesting that I would carry a Bible on stage and if our friends who are listening don't know all of my story, they might think, well, if you're teaching the Bible, why would that be unusual? Well, the reason is, I'm blind. I've been blind since I was 15, so I cannot see the printed word, but I carry a Bible on stage when I get the opportunity to share scripture with women because the Bible I carry was my daddy's first preaching Bible. So I'm a PK. My dad was a pastor. I grew up in the church. And when my daddy went to Heaven a couple of years ago, he was my hero. I mean, it was from my daddy that I learned who Christ was. I learned Scripture. I learned how to tell a story. But the best part of my dad's ministry was what happened outside of the pulpit. He was the same man behind the sink doing dishes or behind the pulpit preaching the word. And that impacted me so deeply.

Well, when he passed, what I did not know is my mother had been given instructions that he wanted me to have his first preaching Bible. And so it's an honor, Tim, every time I teach to carry that Bible because it's a reminder that God's Word needs to be handled accurately. And it's an honor of course, to my Heavenly Father, but it's also a sweet reminder to me of the legacy that I have as my dad's daughter to continue to teach the Word. He had this quote on the computer by his bed when he was near the end of his life, and he had written it in his own little, his shaky hand. It said, "preach the word till the Lord calls you home." And that legacy has been given to me as his daughter, and I'm so grateful I get to teach the word till the Lord calls me home. So that's what I got to do with those amazing 5,000 women last night.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jennifer, as you were talking about your dad, my heart was going back to my dad. Rural country pastor, three small churches, circuit rider. Sometimes there wouldn't be a lot of people who showed up, but he would preach as if there were 10,000.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And it's the faithfulness of those pastors.

Jennifer Rothschild: It is.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You know that. Dr. Dobson often says that we need to pray the church would awaken and take their rightful place. But until then, parachurch organizations and others have to stand in the gap. But the real powers in the church.

Jennifer Rothschild: It is in the church. And in those men who faithfully serve. And Tim, people know your name, people know the Dobsons' name, but they may not know your daddy's name. They may not know my daddy's name, but their ministry impact is no less significant. It's always my joy and honor to lift up that local pastor who's walking out a long obedience in the same direction, not for their name, but for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I believe their impact will be felt for generations to come.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Meredith Andrews is leading praise and worship here at the Extraordinary Women Conference. Brandon Lake was in concert last night, and what I felt resonate throughout the entire evening and through the event so far is this whole issue of believing that God is real.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That there's a stirring going on. You can sense it. It's sweeping across the country. But Jennifer, there's a power like I've never seen before. And we're praying and earnestly crying out to God that He would awaken the hearts of people everywhere. Jennifer, you are no stranger to the stage. God's given you quite a ministry and a voice. In a lot of ways, you're carrying out that faith that

was in your dad, you know that, and echoing it to the masses. But I wanted to ask you, Jennifer, I know you have opportunity to interact with a lot of women. Jennifer, what has your attention, what has your heart as you listen to these stories?

Jennifer Rothschild: Well, I've had the opportunity to hug so many women, even just this morning as I've been able to be around so many women. And what I have felt is the brokenness, but not just the brokenness that ends with despair, but a brokenness that therefore leads to freedom and release. And that's been encouraging to me. My heart breaks when I hear women's stories of, "well, my husband has cancer, or I'm alone after 30 years of marriage," and I feel that brokenness for them. But there's something within that brokenness that has not ended in despair. And that right there to me shows that the hope of Jesus really is an anchor for the soul, because it's like God is taking all those broken pieces and with that dismantling and heartbreak that has occurred, it's like He's putting it back together and making it this pathway to a greater hope.

I think it's that awakening that you are talking about, that move of God, that what Satan could have meant for evil, God is using for good. And I believe it is on that foundation of hope where God is rebuilding broken women's life. That foundation of hope is where greater hope is going to continue to grow. And I believe that's going to be part of the hope of our nation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jennifer, I think for those who know you and maybe those who don't know you, you're no stranger to brokenness. Every girl has dreams, aspirations, and that was your story. And Jennifer, that narrative changed in a lot of ways, you know that. But God was in that story.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Can you take us back and just share where the listeners again for those who don't know you?

Jennifer Rothschild: Well, I was a teenage girl, 15 years old. And my thing was art. I loved art, Tim, and since no one can really ever prove or disprove my statement, I'll say I was so good. I had so much potential. I don't know if I really did, but I was pretty good at it, at least in my class. And cartooning, caricatures, I loved it all. But it became very obvious quickly that something was wrong with my eyes. Every time I'd focus to draw, I would see extra, looked like pencil marks on the paper. Anyway, there were a lot of things, falling up the stairs as I would be trying to walk in the evening, lots of little things began to occur that, once put together, my parents realized something was wrong with my eyes. Led to an eye doctor and an eye hospital, and it was there I was diagnosed with an eye disease, which was a rare form of retinitis pigmentosa. That's degenerative.

So at that point, it had caused enough of my retinas to deteriorate that I was legally blind. But the nature of the disease was that I would continue to lose

vision as my retinas would continue to deteriorate, which meant the end of that story or the beginning of the new story would be total blindness. And so yes, my dreams were to be an artist, and I loved creativity and I loved color, and I loved balance and symmetry. I loved all of that because I was just so visual. But when I was no longer able to see, to draw, to read the kindness of God, I began to play the piano by ear.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Jennifer Rothschild: And one of the neatest things that I think God did for me, yes, He gave me the gift of playing by ear, because that creativity was just channeled in a different direction. But here's what's beautiful about that. The very first song I ever played by ear, it was actually when I got home from the eye hospital, that particular dark day, was that old hymn, "It is Well with my Soul." And I look back at that as a 50 something year old woman now, and I think, well, how kind is God that what a 15 year old girl could not understand, the grace of God was writing upon my heart. That, no, it was not well with my circumstance on that day, nor has it ever really been, ever since. Blindness is hard. But God had already made it well with my soul through Christ.

And that deep soul wellness is what sustains me and what anchors me. And though sometimes the song is hard to sing because there are really bad days, the truth has never changed. And I can sing that truth still with the assurance that it's okay if it's not well with my circumstance because earth is short and Heaven is long. And because of Christ, it really is deeply well with my soul.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jennifer, my mother, was a very strong woman. My mother, later in life, she became a diabetic. And then, Jennifer, she began to lose her eyesight. And when my mother really began battling with being able to see much at all, she would talk about how she walked back through the hallway of, mom and dad had a trailer with a couple of rooms built on it up in central PA where I grew up as a boy. She would feel the walls going back along the rooms to the back bedroom. And I remember when my mother began to weep about not being able to see anymore. And Jennifer, there was a time when this matriarch Bible teacher, she was Kay Arthur and a few of them wrapped up in one. She was so powerful, began to buckle in the knees in brokenness. I remember speaking to her about it. And finally, what I did to express myself, was I wrote a letter to her. And I wanted to say, "Mom, listen to me. Your struggle with blindness doesn't define who you are to us."

Jennifer Rothschild: Yep, that's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: "I know it's a journey for you, but it means nothing to us." Meaning, you are, you're our mom, you are no less loved or anything. If anything, probably be more loved."

Jennifer Rothschild: Yeah. No less significant.

Dr. Tim Clinton: When people go through, let's call it darkness for a moment, whatever that darkness is, Jennifer, it's easy to get lost and they can have a crisis of faith almost, if you will.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes. Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And what do you say to people who are going through those moments? How'd you battle through it?

Jennifer Rothschild: Oh gosh, how do I still battle through it sometimes, right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There you go.

Jennifer Rothschild: Well, I think the first thing I would say is I get it, and I am so sorry. And before we have to try to explain anything, we got to deep dive into empathy because everybody's got their stuff and it hurts. And none of us need to feel ashamed of the grief or that we need to micromanage the mourning. We got to feel the loss, experience the loss, and then be patient with the process of the loss. Because I think, Tim, a lot of the loss we experience on this side of eternity, it's like a sentence that doesn't have a period at the end. It's like, well, this happened. I got over it, and now I'm good. No, I think loss, blindness, cancer, a broken relationship, those are like, if you could encapsulate into a sentence, it's a sentence that ends with an ellipses. In other words, it just feels like it goes on and on.

So I think for me, I've not tried to finalize my sorrow. I've just tried to learn how to walk through it. And that's what I would say to someone. Go ahead and grieve the loss. Mourn what you're experiencing.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sure.

Jennifer Rothschild: And if you need words to put to it, go through Psalm 13. "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" It's okay to be honest with him. And then just to say, enlighten my eyes, or I feel like I'm going to sleep the sleep of death. That's what David said. But then the beautiful thing is when we are honest with God about our emotions, we don't try to hide it from others or from Him. That honesty leads to intimacy. And when we are intimately in the presence of God, that presence, being in His presence, there is fullness of joy. And the joy of the Lord is our strength. It's this beautiful cycle that God invites us into. And that's why, I'm not going to preach here, Tim, but I just know God's words are more powerful than mine. But the end of Psalm 13, after David has had this tumultuous, "How long, O Lord? You're going to forget me forever, I'm stuck in cancer. I'm stuck in blindness. I'm stuck in brokenness. Enlighten my eyes. I'm not going to make it."

But then he gets to the end and he said, "But I will trust in your unfailing love. My heart's going to rejoice in your salvation. I will sing unto the Lord because

you have taken good care of me." And that's what I would say to my broken brother or sister, trust in His unfailing love. Don't trust in your ability. Don't trust in your circumstance. Trust in His love. You don't have to rejoice in your circumstance, but you can rejoice in God's salvation. As tough as it may be right now, you don't know how much worse it might have been without the salvation and rescue of God. And therefore, keep singing unto the Lord because He really has and He will keep on taking very good care of you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love that. Jennifer, as a young therapist, I remember Dr. Larry Crabb spending some time with me and pouring into my life. And one of the lessons he taught me was, "Tim, it's not about the darkness, it's about the light."

Jennifer Rothschild: Yep.

Dr. Tim Clinton: He is light-

Jennifer Rothschild: He is.

Dr. Tim Clinton: ... in the darkness. You, Jennifer, you have an amazing story. Went on to Palm Beach Atlantic University, got your bachelor's degree in psychology. I love that.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Of course, a minor in communications with your gifted speaking skills and more, Jennifer. Met a young man named Phil. You guys got married, you have two sons and three grandsons. I mean, that's a house full. You got football team going there.

Jennifer Rothschild: I do.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But Jennifer, God is in that story.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes, He is.

Dr. Tim Clinton: He's been in the midst of it. He's in the midst. He's in the midst. That's Psalm 46. He's in the midst.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes, He is.

Dr. Tim Clinton: He in the midst of it. Jennifer, we're fighting time here for a moment, but I wanted to ask you about your favorite verse.

Jennifer Rothschild: Okay.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Philippians 4:13.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We all know it. I can do all things to Christ who gives me the strength.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: How'd that come about for you, Jennifer?

Jennifer Rothschild: It's kind of one of those verses you see on a poster or a coffee mug. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And here's my honest admission, I love that verse for years, because of the first two words, I can. I thought, yes, I can. I can. But then you know what happened, Tim? About 15 years ago, I crumbled into the most giant I can't. Depression, met menopause, met blindness, and I couldn't do it anymore. And it was during that season that I realized that what I thought was really the strength of Christ in me that I was relying on was actually my drive, my intellect, my personality, until I could not access those things. And then suddenly, when I began to realize, oh, I can't do anything except through Christ who strengthens me, then that verse came alive to me. And now it has been such a bedrock in my life, but it's not because of the first two words. It's because of the later words, through Christ who strengthens me.

And so anything I do, anything that I am is because of Christ's strength in me, His supernatural power. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead, it is in me. It is in you. It is in all of us who have trusted Christ as Savior. And that's why I love Philippians 4:13. So literally, I would say to my kids, when they leave for school 4:13, and that meant you trust Christ's power in you because, because of Him, you can.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You spoke last night here at the Extraordinary Women Conference, 5,000 women in attendance. Jennifer, you told your story, was so moving, but you lived or camped in the words of the Apostle Paul in Second Corinthians, I think, chapter 12.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And I'm going to read a piece of that in closing here, where he said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me." Jennifer, that's what I just heard in this broadcast today. I love that in you.

Jennifer Rothschild: Grace, grace, grace, sufficient.

Dr. Tim Clinton: He is sufficient.

Jennifer Rothschild: He is.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And He will see us through, won't He?

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes, He will. And if removing those thorns was sufficient, that's what our God would do for us. But He only gives us the best gifts, Tim. His grace is the best gift we could ever receive.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Nehemiah 8:10 says, "The joy of the Lord is our strength." You certainly radiate that. Jennifer, you're the author of numerous books, Bible studies, so much more. You've got a new one coming out on the Book of Amos.

Jennifer Rothschild: Yes. Who does that?

Dr. Tim Clinton: *Amos: An Invitation to the Good Life*. Give us a little sneak peek on what it's about.

Jennifer Rothschild: So I love the minor prophets because I just love how we see God in the minor prophets. And Amos is so full of condemnation because God, He had given those people the invitation to seek Him and live. They had rejected that invitation. So consequently, Amos is full of condemnation. I remember listening to the Book of Amos over and over and over, and thinking, Lord, why would anyone want to read this? And it was as if the Lord just prompted me. What if Israel had accepted my invitation? It would've avoided the condemnations. So I went through the Book of Amos and I turned every condemnation into an invitation. Tim, when we accept those invitations to live humble and justly and faithful and to seek Him, that's when we really live our best life. And so I called it *Amos: An Invitation to the Good Life*.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, you have so encouraged my heart, and I know many who are listening today. Hey, I want to say this on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, our team here at Family Talk, we salute you and pray that God would continue to just encourage your heart, embolden you, and give you strength for the journey. Thank you so much for joining us.

Jennifer Rothschild: Right back at you. God bless you, my brother.

Roger Marsh: Well, whatever that darkness may be in your life, remember the verse that Jennifer Rothschild has held close to her heart. It's Philippians chapter four, verse 13. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

This is Roger Marsh, and if you are feeling inspired to move with God, consider sharing the good news with a neighbor by giving them a life basket. If you haven't made one before, a life basket is a way to bless a neighbor with a beautiful basket of fun treats and goodies that introduces them to Jesus Christ and invites them to enjoy the loving Christian community at your local church this Easter. Life baskets are also a fun activity that you can do with some of your friends or even your whole family and extended family. If you have any questions or if you'd like more information about life baskets, go to lifebaskets.org. If you're writing that down, again, it's lifebaskets.org. Or give us a call at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

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