



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** They Call Me Coach: Ministry from the Pulpit and the Field – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Pastor Tom Mullins

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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:** Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you had a restful weekend. Maybe you had a chance to experience the great outdoors and enjoyed some recreation with your friends or family. Perhaps you played a little catch with your children. Well, if you're into sports or competition of any sort, you probably know the value of teamwork. If so, well, you'll want to pay close attention to today's guest. He has a huge love of sports and fellowship, and most importantly, a love for God. His name is Pastor Tom Mullins. Pastor Tom, otherwise known as Coach, is an author, speaker and founding pastor of Christ Fellowship Church, along with his lovely wife, Donna.

They started Christ Fellowship in their living room with a few people down in South Florida. Today, the group has grown into a multi-site church, over 30,000 people every weekend. Pastor Tom, otherwise known as Coach, is an author and a speaker, and along with his wife, Donna is the founding pastor of Christ Fellowship Church in South Florida. They started Christ Fellowship in their living room with a few people in their home. Today it has now grown into a multi-site church of over 30,000 people attending every weekend. They even have thousands more worshipping online from all over the globe. Incredible.

Now, this edition of Family Talk was recorded this past spring at the Men's Ignite Impact Weekend in Lynchburg, Virginia. Pastor Tom, or Coach, as we know him, was a speaker at that event where thousands of men from all walks of life attended and were hungry to develop a closer bond with Jesus. You'll hear from Tom backstage in a one-on-one interview with our own Dr. Tim Clinton. Plus, you'll get to experience some of Tom's presentation from the stage as he ignited the men to get off the sidelines and get into a real relationship with Jesus Christ. Let's join Pastor Tom Mullins and our own Tim Clinton right now, right here on Family Talk.

**Dr. Tim Clinton:** Hey, now, before Christ Fellowship, his ministry and serving on boards and all that, football was a big part of Coach Tom's life. He was a player then a coach, athletic director at high school, collegiate levels. He has carried the passion and

skills he gained from on the field to how he served the Lord off the field. I love that. Coach Tom and his wife Donna have two grown children, a bunch of grandkids. I love that. Welcome to Family Talk, Coach Mullins, what a delight to have you. Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, send their regards.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Hey, it's great to be with you, Dr. Clinton. And of course, to hang around Dr. Dobson is always an honor.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. You guys got a little history together, you and Dr. Dobson. How'd you guys meet?

Pastor Tom Mullins: Well, we've been on several conferences together and trips together, but I remember we really bonded in an unusual way one time. We were in Israel and we're getting ready to have a meal and someone passes a container of mayonnaise to me and I said, "Please get that away from me. I can't stand mayonnaise. I can't stand the look of it, the smell of it, the jar, nothing." And I passed it to Dr. Dobson. He said, "Oh, I can't stand mayonnaise." And he said, "Get that away from me." And I look, I said, "Do you hate mayonnaise?" He said, "I despise mayonnaise." I said, "Well, we're dear brothers. We're long lost ..." So we actually bonded over our common hatred of mayonnaise.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kindred spirits. But I'll tell you what, God has done some amazing work obviously through Dr. Dobson, through your ministry. Tom, what an amazing run that God's had you on. You're here with us, we're at the Ignite Men's Impact Weekend, Lynchburg, Virginia, Thomas Road Baptist Church. Place is packed out there. You spoke this morning. Tom, what I love about you is before you spoke, I know that you walked around. I love how you approach your audience. You want to know who's there. What'd you see? Coach, you've been doing ministry for a long time. You know men, there's a big beat down on men. They're in a battle, a lot of toxic masculinity talking more. But what's your take on all that?

Pastor Tom Mullins: Well, one of the things that encouraged me is, I've met men from all different walks of life, as you can tell, as you meet them and interact with them. But I walked up to this one family and it's four generations sitting there. So the father, the son, the grandson, and the great grandson are all there together, a family of four. And I thought, now, this is it. This is really what we need. When you can have impact for generations and lead them, because that's what impacted my life. My great-grandfather was a circuit-riding preacher. I don't know if you know that, Tim, back in 1890s.

Dr. Tim Clinton: My dad was a circuit rider.

Pastor Tom Mullins: A circuit-riding preacher, and then he moved up to Middletown, Ohio just at the turn of the century and early 1900s. My grandfather met my grandmother there in Middletown, Ohio. He then went into full-time ministry, raised my mother there, and then she met my father there in Hamilton, Ohio. And we grew up. So I had this wonderful heritage. And actually, someone did a study of my family

line that I didn't know as a gift from me and they brought it to me. And I have family that go all the way back, on my mother's side of the family, all the way back to George Washington. They served with General Washington in the Revolutionary War. And I have two letters that George Washington signed, commending my great-great-great grandfather back then.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a legacy.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Now my father's side, they were moonshiners and rough in the state of Kentucky. So the mother's side-

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a legacy.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Yeah. And my mom's side has a real strong legacy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I affectionately refer to you as coach. You have a love for sports, you coach football. We're going to talk a little bit about that. You pastor the great Christ Fellowship Church there in West Palm Beach, south Florida, that area. I know your son is now.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Along with his wife are there at Christ Fellowship. And the ministry continues to go. You're also a ministry leader, EQUIP, so many things you've done through the years. Tom, did you ever have any idea that God was going to take someone like you, place you in a place to have influence for the kingdom?

Pastor Tom Mullins: No clue. No clue, of course. But it was interesting though that my grandfather always spoke words of affirmation over me. And he would always call me Tommy. He said, "Tommy, God's got His hand on you, Tommy. God's got a calling on you." It's like he placed that over me. My father's side of the family, they didn't know how to express words of affirmation. I don't think I'd ever heard, Tim, my father say, "I love you" to me. I've never heard that. Now he proved, validated his love for us by providing for us. That's the way he did it, he was old school. But my grandfather, he was very affirming and very affectionate. So I, obviously, gravitated towards my grandfather and he planted a seed in me that, "Son, God's got His hand on you, God's got His call on you." So I always kind of had that.

But I was in Israel in 1983, my first trip. I've been back 20 plus times to Israel, when I really felt a sense of God's calling all my life that it was time to really dig deep down into that sense of calling and purpose that went beyond just my career. I've been very successful in my career in coaching. Whatever I touched became an instant winner. And I loved it, became natural to me. And I still, to this day, love it. I still smell the grass in the fall when football season's getting ready to start and I go ... I still have that little urge in me.

We've been hanging out with some of the football players here at the conference and just sit with Ray Lewis and Brooks and the guys and the new football coach here at Liberty. We were just talking football with him.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Coach Jamie Chadwell.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Yeah. And I called him, I'm going to start helping him recruit for Liberty down in South Florida because we got a lot of talent in South Florida.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Oh yeah.

Pastor Tom Mullins: We have speed in South Florida. And so I loved all that. But there was a sense of a calling, but we had no idea what we were doing, Tim. We just stepped out by faith when we launched Christ Fellowship about 40 years ago, but had no clue where God was going to take us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I'm sitting here watching you tell the story of your grandfather. I can't help but think about the power of influence. Just words of affirmation coming from someone you love or someone you'll accept influence over and how it will stay with you for the rest of your life.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Oh, it does.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's powerful.

Pastor Tom Mullins: We deal with people, I deal with people all the time, Tim, as you do too, who have been crushed by words, who have been crushed by the lack of support and affirmation, who have grown up so insecure and with so much anxiety in their life because they never had that foundation. I am so thankful for a grandfather who spoke that over me and actually built up in me a sense of an inner awareness that God is with you. And if God is with you, we have nothing to fear. There is a passage that I've been using a lot lately, Tim, to talk to people when they're especially dealing with anxiety, is in the Book of Jude, which we know is the 65th book of the Bible. So it's the very last, right next to Revelation. He addresses the saints of God this way.

He says to the called and the loved of the Father and kept by Christ. And I thought in that interesting, he's identified as we're called of God. With that calling comes our sense of identity and purpose. We are loved by the Father, that brings us our security that we're looking for in our lives, knowing that God loves us. And we are kept by Christ, that's our confidence, that no matter what we face, we have the spirit of God with us to overcome. So somehow that got in me and my grandfather would say, "Son, you know you're called." I felt his love. And then I developed a sense of real confidence in that if God is with me, who can really be against me. And so that kind of became my philosophy towards life as I approached life. And that was instilled in me as a young man by my grandfather.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow. The power of life and death is in the tongue.

Pastor Tom Mullins: In the words.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And we need to be so careful and so wise with all that. Coach, I want to go a little bit deeper into your love for football for a moment. My son, Zach, and I, I think people know, have a real love for sports. Zach was a three-sport athlete in high school and God bonded our hearts in so many ways, but the life lessons that come out of it. Some of the gifts that football gave to you, Coach, that influenced your ministry, that influenced how you pastored people, that influenced how you approached life, that and how you felt God wanted you to be who you are uniquely.

Pastor Tom Mullins: I think I can tell you a real quick story that illustrates the power of coaches that speak affirmation over you. Several years ago, I got a call from my graduating class for our 50th reunion. I didn't want to accept the call because I was in denial. I'm not that old. It's not been 50 years since I graduated. Who's calling me? So I told them, no, I can't come. I don't want to go back up to southern Ohio. I'm living in South Florida and yada, yada, yada. She calls back again a week later, says, "Tom, you were president of our class. You need to be there." Well, I'd forgotten that I was president of the class. I knew I was captain of the football team and all that. I forgot I was president of the class. Hello. And so then I said, "no, I can't come. I got all the..."

Then she calls back a third time and here's how she got me, Tim. She says, "Coach Young, your football coach, is going to be there and he wants to see you." I said, "I'll be there."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Boom. I changed all my plans, travel a thousand miles, show up. I pull into the parking lot with my cousin who, he and I went to high school together. We pull up, I see all these old people standing out there. It looked like the nursing home had dropped off these people, the early bird special. There's one guy standing there with an oxygen tank smoking a cigarette. I'm going, "Who in the world is that?" And I asked my cousin, he said, "That's our class." I said, "Oh my gosh, it can't be our class." I said, "They're all a bunch of old people." And I didn't want to get out of the car, but then I saw Coach. I saw Coach Young and I went straight to Coach Young, hugged him, cried, loved him. And the reason I made that trip, Tim, is because Coach Young came up to me one day. I was a 16 year old. And he looked at me and he said, "Mullins", he says, "You know have the potential to play at the next level. And if you'll work hard, I'll work hard to help you play there."

No one in my family had ever been to college, let alone go to college on a football scholarship. And that coach spoke that to me in my junior year that he believed in me and saw potential in me. And he called that champion out in me.

And he gave me several opportunities to go and play. I owed him that. That's what sport does for you. It helps you understand when you're around the right atmosphere and the right coaches, they're going to work on you so hard to develop this inner-discipline that we need to apply to every dimension of our life. I thought about it spiritually, just suck it up and get tough. I told the story earlier today about getting my teeth knocked out and getting knocked out and nose broken and all that and didn't miss another play of the game.

Well, if I can do that for a game, why can't I do that in life when times get tough? You got to learn how to suck it up and get tough. You got to learn how to just keep lining up and keep firing out and keep running the play until you get it right and you will execute. So there was this sense of developing endurance, tenacity, a spiritual toughness. We had to have a physical toughness. So I wanted to translate it to that. And teamwork, the whole thing about team that we are together and you bond. In sports, you bond with your teammates. It's a lifetime bond. They bond that way in military. When you're out on action in military, you're deployed. Those guys bond. You bond with the guy to your right and the guy to your left when you're in that foxhole.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tom, basic training, it's the first thing they teach you.

Pastor Tom Mullins: You bond.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You have to be flanked and you got to trust implicitly.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Literally. And the enemy of our soul is trying to get us insulated and isolated in everything. But the principle of that team, that huddle, I've taught leadership principles on the principles of the huddle. What takes place in the huddle dynamic is so important and you've got to get in your huddle. You've got to learn how to huddle up. So there's so many life lessons. I could go on for the next couple hours about life lessons in football, but it really helps shape you. And it shaped me as a leader on how to really lead, how to build teams, focus teams, challenge teams and get people in the right position and keep flexibility in your organization. Sometimes someone's injured, you got to step up and take in a position. You might be used to playing left tackle, but now I got to put you over here at right guard. Or you might have been used to running as a back, back here, but I need you on defense right now. So you've got to ... That taught me that too. And how to make adjustments and put people where they can really prosper.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I was reading through the Scriptures and saw a piece, Tom, that said, "I've sent Timothy to encourage you." And then I did a little digging on encouragement and it really means to give courage to someone. Tom, what I love about you, I've heard you speak many, many times. I watch how you work a room. You bring a lot of encouragement to people, because there's the power that's there. That's what you're speaking to. And if people need help and hope and encouragement, they need it now like never before. There's been such a beat down. People are

so anxious, they're confused, they're frustrated. There's so much going on in our country, Tom.

People, in some ways, have lost hope, but they're praying that God's doing something. Are you seeing a stirring? We're coming through where we hear a lot about something happening at Asbury College, maybe a little revival getting going and then all of a sudden we saw, oh, this thing's burning out there. There's some real fire going on. Next thing you know, Greg Laurie comes out with that Jesus Revolution movie.

Pastor Tom Mullins: Right. Right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And it's taking the box office by storm. But Tom, are you seeing it? Are you encouraged in your heart about what's happening?

Pastor Tom Mullins: We are. We're seeing it. We've grown in our area of over 5,000 more people coming and attending just in a recent period of months. We opened a brand new campus this week, had 2,700 new people show up. And the numbers that our other campuses didn't go down. It wasn't like a bunch of people coming over to fill it in. We're seeing baptisms off the charts. There is a spiritual wave of God moving right now. And power, people are hungry. They are desperate for what only God can bring, in His love, and in their lives and the blessing that God gives them. And I think we're trying to do that. And one thing I tell, Tim, young pastors all the time, tell your people every week how much you love them. They need to hear that. I always tell them when I wrapped up today in the conference. I said, "Men, I love you." And I walked off the platform.

And I do, because you know what, years ago I got letters from these people and they said to me back when people used to write letters, remember that before the email and text. And now they do it with email and text. But they said, the only time I hear those words, I love you, is when you say them from the pulpit on Sunday. And I thought, how sad that is that people live in a world where they don't hear the words, I love you, that affirmation that is needed. So we as followers of Christ, man, our mission is to share the love of Christ through the words of affirmation, encouragement, and reinforcement where we can.

Roger Marsh: Hi, Roger Marsh here jumping in just to say that we are fighting against the clock today and Dr. Clinton has so much more to discuss with Coach Mullins, but we're going to save that for tomorrow's program. In the meantime though, in the time we do have left today, want to give you a good sense of how Pastor Tom Mullins really connected with the men at the event and ignited their hearts to serve God and each other through Jesus and Scripture. So with that, let's go back to the stage at Men's Ignite as Coach addressed the men.

Pastor Tom Mullins: I grew up in southern Ohio playing football, loved football, went on to coach football in high school and college level before God called me into full-time ministry. One night, I learned a very important lesson. I was a sophomore

playing both ways in our high school. I went in on a tackle. I stumbled, I fell back, I had my weight all back, and this running back ran through me. I had no momentum, no ability to thrust into him. And when he ran through me, he broke my nose and knocked out my four front teeth and knocked me out on the field. Now, there was no concussion protocol when I played. We'd barely gotten face masks when I played. Hello.

And so coaches come out and they have these things, you old players know this, called ammonia capsules. They break, remember that, they break that ammonia capsule. That'd raised Lazarus from the dead. Come on. And so they broke that ammonia capsule under my nose, drug me to the sideline, stuffed cotton in my nose. I was bleeding some bad out of my nose. It was broken. It was all over my face. And the coaches said, "Mullins, get out there, suck it up and get tough." I did not miss a play. Played the entire second half. Don't remember a thing about the game, but I played.

I learned an important lesson. And here's a lesson I learned, guys. I'm never going to find myself playing with my weight back. I'm going to always have my weight forward, ready. And even in an offensive position when I'm even playing defense, I'm going to be on offense. I'm going to be in a position to attack, not to be attacked. Now, here's my concern. I'm convinced, men, today that the enemy of our soul is doing everything he can to keep us on defense, keep us living with our weight back, off balance, not ready to deal with the challenges of the day. And because, listen, if he can keep us on defense, he renders us basically ineffective in what God has called us to do in our mission and our purpose that we heard last night from Pastor Tim.

Well, I want to give you some thoughts real quick. Let me run through these real quick with you. I wrote these down, five disadvantages of living on defense. Think about it with me for a moment. Number one, you're always reacting to pressure instead of initiating it. Think about that. You're always reacting instead of initiating. Nick Sabin, nobody likes Nick Sabin unless you live in Alabama. That's the only people that like Nick Sabin. Alabama, you love Nick Sabin. Nobody else likes him. That's okay. That's what happens when you win all the time. But I like this quote by Nick. He said, "We want to apply pressure, not feel it." Instead of us being under pressure, what if we were the ones that were initiating pressure? The culture's putting all kind of pressure on us to conform to its ideologies. What if we were the ones initiating pressure, not reacting to it?

Well, here's something. When you're living on defense, you're always trying to hold ground instead of take ground. Think about that. Now in football, it's good to get out there defensively and hold your position. That's okay in the game of football, but in the game of life, status quo does not work. You better be advancing or guess what, you are retreating. There's no status quo. Here's another thought. Disadvantage of living on defense. You're always defending at your point of weakness instead of living at your point of strength. I was an offensive coordinator for college before I became a head coach, and I love to pick out the defense's weak points and attack them with our strength. Well,



when you're on defense, you're reacting. They are going to attack you at your point of weakness. But when you're on offense, you play from a point of strength.

Roger Marsh: Stay bold and stand in truth, indeed, a message I hope all the men and women listening to our program right now will really take to heart. Now, that was the conclusion of the first part of this conversation featuring Pastor Tom Mullins and our own Dr. Tim Clinton. So be sure to tune in tomorrow for part two here on Family Talk. Now, if you enjoyed today's program, please share it with a friend or loved one. You can do so on our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Again, that's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Or remember, you can easily share this program from the Official Family Talk, JDFI app. If you don't have the app already, it's easy to download from your app store today. Just search for James Dobson Family Institute. And while you're on the app, be sure to create your own account and personalize the content you receive. That makes it easy to listen or to share the latest family talk radio broadcasts, as well as to access thousands of archived shows as well. You'll be glad you did.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Well, thank you everyone for tuning in to our program today. You may know that Family Talk is a listener supported program and we remain on the air by your generosity, literally. If you can help us financially, we would certainly appreciate it. God's blessings to you all.