



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Facing the Blitz – Part 1

Guest(s): Jeff Kemp

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Dr. Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson with another edition of Family Talk, and today we're going to have a very interesting conversation, I'm sure, because I know this man. The guest who is with us has been a friend of mine for many years. He is Jeff Kemp, a former NFL quarterback who played for more than 11 years with the Rams and the Niners and the Seahawks and the Eagles. He got traded a lot, obviously. His father was another great friend of mine that I just love like a brother, Jack Kemp, who was a Congressman from New York. He was also a superstar quarterback with the Buffalo Bills.

Dr. Dobson: Jack went on to be secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and he and I collaborated to lower the taxes on middle-class families. By the way, Jeff, your dad was married to Joanne who did a radio program with us in 1982. What a great lady she was and is.

Jeff Kemp: Yeah. People always say, "You're Jack Kemp's son." I say, "I'm Joanne Kemp's son as well."

Dr. Dobson: Yeah. I hope you will give her my regards.

Jeff Kemp: I will.

Dr. Dobson: Again, I've had a lot of contact with your family and you've been on this program before too. That was in the '90s, I guess?

Jeff Kemp: Yeah. I think it was late '90s.

Dr. Dobson: With Congressman Steve Largent.

Jeff Kemp: Steve Largent, that was a teammate of mine.

Dr. Dobson: He set a record for receptions, didn't he? I think it may still stand. I don't know.

Jeff Kemp: The most touchdown catches was 100 and he broke that record. And then he went to the Hall of Fame. Those records have been broken, but he was phenomenal.

Dr. Dobson: Well, he was on our board of directors for-

Jeff Kemp: Many years.

Dr. Dobson: ... a period of time. Give him my regards, if you will. Now, I need to clarify that Jeff Kemp is the son of Jack Kemp, whom we've been talking about here. Jeff has written a book called *Facing the Blitz*. This is really a very good book and you're going to find out some of the concepts in it today. I'm sure it's for women and men, but I want men to read this. You have a heart for men, don't you?

Jeff Kemp: I do. God has blessed me and Stacy with four sons, so I've had an automatic ministry to men, young men.

Dr. Dobson: How many of them were quarterbacks?

Jeff Kemp: Well, two of them are quarterbacks and two were wide receivers. All of them probably played quarterback at some point.

Dr. Dobson: And you have a daughter too.

Jeff Kemp: I don't. I have two daughters-in-law.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, daughters-in-law.

Jeff Kemp: And we have another son about to get married. So we had to get girls by acquisition. We didn't have any born to us. But I love the camaraderie of men shaping the identity of men, and helping them find out that Jesus is the ultimate man and that this nation needs men who have tender hearts and are courageous for the things of God, particularly marriage and family.

Dr. Dobson: This book is endorsed, in fact, the foreword is written by Tony Dungy. He has some pretty dramatic things to say about this book. You still have a lot of friends in football, don't you?

Jeff Kemp: I do, but I think I respect Tony Dungy as much as anyone that I've come across. I asked him to write the foreword because, A) he understands football inside out. He's faced blitzes as a quarterback. He's called blitzes as a defensive coach. But he and his wife have lost a son to suicide. They have another child with significant birth defects.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah, I know.

Jeff Kemp: Tony Dungy has seen that God has a silver lining, a deeper purpose for the trials, difficulties, persecutions and losses in life. So I wanted him to write the foreword, and the foreword alone is worth the buck. I'm very thankful.

Dr. Dobson: Tell those who don't follow football and don't know the rules and the game, what a blitz is. I mean that's a World War II term.

Jeff Kemp: Yeah. Well, the Blitzkrieg, remember?

Dr. Dobson: It really relates to Germany.

Jeff Kemp: Germany bombed London. That was called the Blitzkrieg, in football, defense normally brings three or four players to attack the quarterback and rush. But when they bring five or six, sometimes even seven, that's called a blitz. Linebackers and safeties and cornerbacks, when they attack the quarterback rather than going back to cover a pass, that's a blitz. It's very dangerous. It's a crisis point.

Dr. Dobson: You can get killed that way.

Jeff Kemp: You can get injured. You can get knocked out. There are interceptions, there are fumbles. There are injuries. But the crisis, and there's a word for this in Chinese, it's two symbols. One symbol is danger, the other symbol is opportunity. The blitz is fabulous opportunity. I can give you a real quick story about it. Monday Night Football, playing for the Houston Oilers, our quarterback got hit so many times he got knocked out of the game. I was new to the team. They put me in. We were about to get into the red zone on the 20-yard line, late in the third quarter, losing six to three. As I get ready to snap the ball, I realized it wasn't just four guys coming at me, it was seven. The free safety left the middle of the field to cover the deep passes.

Dr. Dobson: What that means is that guys are coming at you, but they're not playing defense.

Jeff Kemp: They're not playing defense and they're playing aggressive toward the quarterback. That means there's no one to cover. It also means I might not be able to get the ball off. But everyone on the offense noticed the blitz. We adapted to the blitz. We adjusted. People sacrificed. They changed their routes. I changed my drop back. I threw the ball to a different spot. Keith Jackson, the tight end, caught the only touchdown pass of the whole game for either team, and we won the game on the blitz even though I was on my back with a bunch of people from the visiting team happy that I was on my back.

Dr. Dobson: You told a number of stories in this book. Is this the one where you couldn't even see the receiver?

Jeff Kemp: Because there was an eclipse. The free safety that blitzed instead of playing deep came into my face and I couldn't see the receiver. So I threw the spot to where I envisioned he would be. Thank you, God.

Dr. Dobson: You heard the roar of the crowd.

Jeff Kemp: He caught it. In this case, I had no roar. We are playing in a visiting stadium. So if it's really noisy, it's good for them. If it's real quiet, it's good for you. Sure enough, it was quiet and the Philadelphia Eagles won the game on that play. So we just explained a blitz is a play in football where things start really bad, but they can actually turn very good. It turns around quickly. The parallel to life is good, but it's not exact. Life doesn't turn around quite so quickly. Joseph-

Dr. Dobson: But we all have blitzes.

Jeff Kemp: Every one of us faces the blitz, trials, losses, persecutions. I quote Jesus. He said, "In this world, you're going to get blitzed, but don't panic. I've overcome the world." You may not have the NFL version, Doctor. You've got the NIV or New American Standard or ESV. In this world, we're going to have trouble. We're going to have blitzes. The Apostle Paul talks about it in Romans 5. Romans 5 verse 3 says, "We not only rejoice in eternal life and the glory of God and the forgiveness that we have in our salvation, we rejoice in tribulation and trials and difficulties," and blitzes, because those are circumstances that produce perseverance towards Christ, character like Christ, hope in heaven, and more of God's love is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit when we face trials.

You don't rejoice that you broke your leg and missed the season. You don't rejoice that the doctor just gave you a negative report. You don't rejoice that your company downsized and you lost your job. You rejoice that you're in a desperate situation that has to turn all of your focus upon God. Secondly, you rejoice, "He's going to teach me something to make me a better person, to be able to bless and encourage and help others." I think it's 2 Corinthians chapter 1 where it says, "We comfort others with the comfort with which we've been comforted." If you've never went through something tough, then you don't have the right experience to comfort them.

That's why Steve Largent and Terri, when they had a child born with spina bifida, you were talking about Steve earlier, Kramer.

Dr. Dobson: I remember that. Yes.

Jeff Kemp: Steve was shattered. But what happened was another couple, Clark and Joanie Donald that had a child a year earlier with spina bifida at Seattle Children's Hospital, was set up as the mentor couple. They happened to be Christ followers. They're good friends of mine. They ended up mentoring Steve and Terri Largent through this experience of having a child with spina bifida. The

families became friends. The Largents gained bigger vision. They ended up helping other families in the future with this trial. Today, both those children, Kelsey Donald and Kramer Largent, are wonderful people that know Christ and have blessings to many other people because their parents helped each other and found that the blitz could be a blessing.

Dr. Dobson: Jeff, how long did it take you to learn that there is a positive side to blitzes? You didn't know that when you were lying on your back in front of 100,000 people.

Jeff Kemp: Well, I was raised in a family where my dad had been cut and traded and booed by thousands of people. One time my dad broke his finger and couldn't play for the Chargers and they sold him for \$100 to the Buffalo Bills. He didn't want to go. But his mom and my wife-

Dr. Dobson: And that's where he made his name.

Jeff Kemp: His mom and my mom both told him that God always has a plan. Trust the Lord. Go to Buffalo. See what good things he has in store. What did he have in store? Two championships over the Chargers, running for Congress, running for president, running for vice president. All those doors were opened because he went through blitzes. So I had some examples of blitzes, but I've been through my own. This game, I played poorly. I had three interceptions in the first half. I was first string for half a game and then I went to third string.

The coaches didn't even talk to me for a week after that. But I learned my identity is not as a starting quarterback. It's as a son of God. Jesus sacrificed for me. My identity is in Christ. I'm a Christ follower that plays football. I'm not a football player who happens to be a Christian.

Dr. Dobson: Praise the Lord for that. Go back to my question. Were you out of football when you finally realized that life will blitz you too and that it's not always bad?

Jeff Kemp: I've gotten some of these lessons along the way. I wrote this book right as I turned 50 years old. I feel like wisdom starts to finally sink in at that age and you can kind of trust God's messages that He's put in your life. Our marriage wasn't an easy one, Dr. Dobson. You know Stacy and myself. We're so strong-willed and leaders, but we're different in every other way. So all those differences make for a lot of contrast and friction and difficulty. But it turns out that that drove us to seek Christ, to seek mentoring, to seek counseling, to have marriage conferences. It ended up that we ended up mentoring other couples because our marriage was hard.

So, I've known that hard things can turn good because they make you dependent on Christ. But losing dad to cancer, running a nonprofit that ran out of money that caused me to lay off a bunch of staff-

Dr. Dobson: And stronger family.

Jeff Kemp: Stronger families. I fired myself. That was a rotten blitz. We had weeks with no income to keep the organization going and I didn't know what was going to happen. I chose to get myself out of the equation and give the organization to a young guy. The wonderful thing was, when it was all said and done, God had a job for me that was better suited to me working for FamilyLife where I'm a speaker and an ambassador and a networker, but I'm not an administrator and an organizer and a fundraiser. So I get to do more of what I'm good at and less of what I'm bad at. But it took a blitz to wake me up to make that change.

Dr. Dobson: What a testimony, Jeff. That's beautiful because we're talking to people right now. Let's say we're talking particularly to men who are flat on their back right now. They've been hit by four 250-pound linebackers and others that have come at him and have left him just exhausted on the field. Everybody's booing. What now? How do they say, "Well, wait a minute, Lord, what are you trying to teach me and what can I learn from this?"

Jeff Kemp: First of all, you've probably lost some of your sense of confidence and worth and dignity. You're not sure if you really have what it takes to be a good man. I would remind any man that if you turn to the Lord, you are a good man and that He will put His righteousness, His strength, His spirit in you. He's going to forgive every mistake and every sin you've ever had if you come to the foot of the cross.

Dr. Dobson: Describe doing that. Describe coming to the Lord. What does that mean for a person who's never experienced it?

Jeff Kemp: It's the contrast between two words. One is pride, and pro football in America trained you to be proud. The other is humility. Humility is the path to Jesus and it's the path to all good things. Interestingly, pride is the path to everything bad. Satan, the angel that messed everything up, he had so much pride, he wanted to be God and he rebelled. Adam and Eve had pride and wanted to do it their own way. I've wanted to do it my own way many times. I've wanted to take the credit. I didn't want to be at fault.

Dr. Dobson: Well, that's a natural course, isn't it?

Jeff Kemp: I didn't want to apologize. I wanted it to be my wife's fault. But humility heals relationships. Humility is actually the greatest act of strength. So, you ask me to say to a guy who's never really found the relationship with God to be real. It's as simple as saying, "You know what? It makes me no less of a person to say I can't do it, God. I need you." In fact, humility is the greatest step of courage. So I'd urge a guy to look around and say, "Has trying life my way worked out for me?" And if it hasn't say, "I'm ready to give life a chance God's way. I humble myself. I want you to come in and forgive me. I want you to become the boss, you to become the Lord. I'd like to have humility become a trait of mine because I know that humility makes good marriages."

Humility makes good fathers. Humility makes good bosses. Tony Dungy's a very humble leader. The greatest leaders are wise enough to choose people smarter than them and empower them. Level five leaders in Jim Collins' book, Good to Great, they're the most humble. So humility is a strong word. It's just a tough step.

Dr. Dobson: So, is a part of humility going to the Lord and saying, "I've sinned, I've done wrong?"

Jeff Kemp: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: "I ask you to forgive me."

Jeff Kemp: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: "I will do what I can to follow the principles in the scripture and I want to turn. I want to repent." Is all that part of humility?

Jeff Kemp: Humility is the beginning of that pathway and the more you say, "God, I'm sorry. God, I'm a sinner. God, I can't fix this problem. Please forgive me. I trust in what Jesus did on the cross." The more His spirit then fills you, so you can start behaving as a humble person toward other people, which is what might heal the relationship that's broken right now.

Dr. Dobson: What are the evidences of a proud man? What does he look like? What's he doing wrong? I mean I think there are a lot of men out there making this mistake and they have no idea what we're talking about. Explain.

Jeff Kemp: Yeah, I agree. I asked a Navy pilot to come on a father/son trip with me. I had six friends, my son, and myself on a welcome to manhood trip. We spoke about manhood over the course of a ski weekend. This Navy pilot explained the way they train the pilots about oxygen deprivation, which will make them go unconscious and crash a plane. This pilot buddy of mine, Don, sure enough, he was flying his plane without his oxygen mask on during a training exercise and he lost pressurization, which means he lost oxygen. His commanding officer told him, "Don, turn this way," and he didn't. "Don, turn." He didn't.

Finally, the guy said, "Don, put your oxygen mask on." He was in a different plane and he realized that Don didn't have oxygen. Don slowly put it to his mouth and, all of a sudden, he came aware again and he was about 15 seconds from crashing his plane. What Don explained to Colby and the rest of us men was that we men are blind to pride and that if you don't have a friend that you give permission to speak the truth to you and say, "Dude, you're getting caught up in yourself. You're becoming a bully to your wife. You don't listen any more. You're taking all the credit and it's not all you." Unless you have a friend who can speak like that to you, you're going to have a hard time waking up from that

oxygen deprivation. You're going to crash your plane. So you ask, "What's a man look like?"

Dr. Dobson:

A proud man.

Jeff Kemp:

He says, "I don't need help." He's got an alcohol problem. "No, I don't need help." He never apologizes. He makes it her fault.

Dr. Dobson:

Even when wrong.

Jeff Kemp:

Of course when wrong. He never apologizes.

Dr. Dobson:

Especially when wrong.

Jeff Kemp:

He never apologizes. He doesn't like to forgive because he's a hard man. He's a hard man. If you do wrong to him, he doesn't want to forgive. He'll hold that grudge. So it's that toughness that says, "I can't accept help." It's that toughness that says, "I won't apologize." And then it's the guy that takes credit for stuff and he's always looking for praise, always looking for kudos. It makes him selfish. He may be kind of domineering and mean or he may be Mr. Social, but it's all about him because he's proud. But giving my life to Christ and getting trained at what it is to be a Christ-like man and realizing my righteousness and my goodness and my worth and my value are all wrapped up in the fact that He made me and He fixed me and He's got a perfect version of me on the way for heaven.

I can start living like that right now. I don't need to take the credit for it. He gets the credit for it. That makes me a lot easier to live with for my sons and my wife and other people. I'm not afraid to apologize. A real man isn't afraid to apologize. You know what that means? It means he can heal relationships. Most men don't have good marriages. Their sex life is kind of bouncing around consuming from one woman, maybe it's pornography that's got them.

Dr. Dobson:

You know, Jeff, I was on the Commission to Explore Pornography for 18 months.

Jeff Kemp:

Yeah, I remember.

Dr. Dobson:

It is so much worse now than it was then. That was 1985 and '86. Today I would estimate that 75% of young men, and maybe older ones too, are addicted to pornography. It captures a kid at 13-

Jeff Kemp:

It steals them. At 10. At 10 years old on their phone.

Dr. Dobson:

They remain a victim of it for the rest of their lives. It is amazing what it's doing. It destroys families. It destroys the relationship between the husband and wife. There is nothing a woman can do to compete with what an airbrushed model can show in a picture, and it destroys the sexual relationship for marriage.

Jeff Kemp: That's true. It's a counterfeit and it kills. There are people listening whose son is addicted or dabbling, people that are listening that are dabbling or addicted, and if you're dabbling, it's going to get you addicted really quickly. What it fires in all the chemicals in the brain is just as addictive as crack cocaine and these other things.

Dr. Dobson: More so, I think.

Jeff Kemp: But we have to give them some hope. I would say this, a pornography addiction, an alcohol addiction, a drunk driving arrest, an embarrassment of going to a massage parlor or getting caught in an affair, terrible as these things are, they could be the wake-up call. They could be the alarm. They could be the blitz that sends you to your knees and you fully surrender your life to Jesus for the first time in your life. If you fully surrender to Him, He'll wipe out all the sin. You'll probably need to go to some classes and accountability, like an AA group or Pornography Anonymous group, some teamwork that's going to be needed.

But you can be healed. You certainly are forgiven. You can rebuild relationships and know the authentic thing that good marriage, good relationship, and good sexuality are all about. But you need to face the truth. We need humility to face the truth.

Dr. Dobson: You know, Jeff, there are times in this studio when you can feel the attention of guys, women too-

Jeff Kemp: Women too.

Dr. Dobson: ... who are listening to us in a different way. This is one of them. We're hitting home now. There's so many families out there that are crushed by addictions, gambling. I served on a gambling commission and I saw it there. I mean it'll grab and hold too. Usually it's one member of a family that's addicted and not both of them. Therefore, it eventually creates anger and frustration and it destroys the family. It destroys children.

Dr. Dobson: We're talking to those people right now and especially with regard to the issue of pornography. You said you're going to give them some hope.

Jeff Kemp: I think we better pray right now. Can I take a moment and pray for them?

Dr. Dobson: Let's stop. Let's do.

Jeff Kemp: Lord in heaven, you are not just in heaven. You are right here with us if we would humble ourselves and open up to you. I pray for that person listening right now, that they are feeling so oppressed, so far away from you, so discouraged, so trapped, so addicted, so ashamed. Lord, it's Satan who causes shame. It's you who lead us to guilt, and guilt can set us free if we confess and repent. So I would pray the Holy Spirit would give confidence, hope, and love to

each person listening now that needs to be set free from an addiction, that needs to be set free from a sin, that needs to be set free from a pattern that is counter to your good blueprints, but is destructive and damaging.

Dr. Dobson:

Yes, Lord.

Jeff Kemp:

May they not be afraid to tell the truth, raise their hand. We are all so stinking imperfect. Only Jesus is perfect. May this person feel a comfort to raise their hand, call a friend, ask a pastor, tell someone, "I'm struggling. I'm hurting. I got this problem. Can you guide me to help?" Go to a pastor. Go to a church. Get a counselor. Open your heart. Lord, please do a miraculous work and not just heal them, Lord. I pray that you would rebuild them so that they would be an ambassador for Christ who uses their blitz, their pain, their sin, and the sin against them, whether it was abuse or something else, to use that blitz to go ahead and minister and bless others someday, for your glory. Give hope through Christ alone, the only way. Amen.

Roger Marsh:

Amen and amen. What a moving prayer to end this edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Now, no matter how broken or lost we may feel, God can still use us for His glory and His purpose. I'm Roger Marsh and our guest today has been author, speaker, and former NFL quarterback, Jeff Kemp. He shared some honest insights into the difficult times in life that can feel like an NFL blitz. It's inevitable that we all get hit and knocked down by the pressures and pitfalls of life, but through the power of Jesus Christ, we can get back up and fight for our livelihood.

You can visit today's broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org to learn more about Jeff and his organization. That's drjamesdobson.org. And then click onto the broadcast tab at the top of the page. Be sure to tune in again next time to hear the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's interview with Jeff Kemp. He'll continue talking about his time in the NFL, and he'll also share the lessons he's learned from that experience. That's all coming up next time on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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

Dr. Tim Clinton:

This is Dr. Tim Clinton, executive director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks for listening today. We hope you found this program helpful and encouraging. Please remember that our ministry is here to serve you and your family. For more information about our programs and resources or to learn how you can support us, go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org or call us toll free, (877) 732-6825. I pray that God will bless you in 2020. We're so grateful for your partnership. We ask you to stand with us and to continue to defend the Christian values in an ever-changing culture. Thanks again for joining us. We hope you'll join us again on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.