



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: From Survive to Thrive – Part 1

Guest(s): Sammy Rodriguez

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- Dr. 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, and today our cohost, Dr. Tim Clinton, will sit down with pastor Sammy Rodriguez to talk with him about his brand new book, *From Survive to Thrive*. Recently, our cohost today, Dr. Tim Clinton, visited with pastor Sammy Rodriguez on his new book entitled *From Survive to Thrive: Live a Holy, Healed, Healthy, Happy, Humble, Hungry, and Honoring Life*. Not only is Sammy Rodriguez the senior pastor of New Season Christian Worship Center in Sacramento, California, but he is the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, the world's largest Hispanic Christian organization, with 42,000 member churches.
- In addition to having advised presidents Bush, Obama and Trump on faith matters, Newsmax named Pastor Rodriguez among the top 100 Christian leaders in America. If you're feeling defeated or stuck in survival mode, you won't want to miss out on today's program. So listen now so you can learn how to begin to thrive here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk
- Dr. Clinton: Sammy, it's great to talk to you, my friend. Dr. Dobson, as always, sends his regards to you. Welcome back to Family Talk.
- Sammy Rodriguez: Honored to be with you, thank you for having me.
- Dr. Clinton: Sam, as we get started, let's go back – well, we don't want to go back to 2020 - but let's go back to 2020, Sam, the pandemic, the civil unrest, the election mess, the lockdowns during the holidays and more. Sam, one thing that I think really became clear to me, and I've heard you say this, we need a new breed of people to rise up, to step up into this moment. We've got to see that happening. Sammy, is there a stirring out there? What are you hearing from people?
- Sammy Rodriguez: Without a doubt. I truly believe that we are living a Judges 6 moment. What we're experiencing is the need, the need to see the Gideons rise up. Let's not forget, Gideon came out of a wine press, that he was actually utilizing using as a

threshing floor, Judges 6. He was in a pit, and he came out. He had an encounter with the angel of the Lord, subsequently with the Lord, and it transformed the history of Israel. I believe the Gideons are rising up. I call these Gideons cultural architects and cultural reformers.

Let me explain. We don't need perpetual whiners. We don't need a group of believers in perpetuity in fetal position whining about absolutely everything. What we need are a bunch of Gideons to get out of the proverbial pit, to go out there, to build altars - I'm speaking metaphorically now - meaning to elevate truth, love, hope, grace, the gospel of Christ, our Judeo-Christian value system. But we need Gideons to do what Gideon did in Judges 6, Dr. Tim, which is to bring the false altars down, to confront the false. And I do believe that it's easy to build churches, it's easy to build ministries, I'm going to be honest. Social media platforms, 2020 revealed that. You get a microphone and a Facebook page, wham-o, you're global. So how about that? It's not that complicated to build alters.

But God is calling upon a generation, just like Gideon, who will not just build, but have the audacity to bring down. Can we both construct truth and deconstruct the lies that were built up, be it by Joash, Gideon's dad, previous generations, the current cultural landscape about human sexuality, about religious liberty, about life? All these things, there are lies out there that we have to bring down. So you asked, is there a new breed? The answer is, "heavens yes." You're about to see cultural architects and cultural reformers rise up like we've never seen before. Committed to Christ, biblical orthodoxy, and empowered by God's precious Holy spirit.

Dr. Clinton: While you were talking, Sam, a verse popped in my mind. The apostle Paul said, a great effectual door's been opened unto me, but there are many adversaries, there are many challenges in life. Sam, I think a lot of people have that stirring, but they feel like they're up against it, or there's just so much oppression coming against them. Sam, I think a lot of people live stuck. They're trapped in yesterday. They're losing their vision. They struggle with goals. You've got this new book, we're going to talk a lot about the heart of this book, From Surviving to Thriving, really, survive to thrive. But Sam, I wanted to ask you up front, what do you think keeps most people down?

Sammy Rodriguez: Lids. L-I-D-S. Lids. Spiritual lids, relational lids, mental lids, emotional lids, financial lids, cognitive lids, lids, multi-generational lids, cultural lids, lids. We are kept down by fear, the lid of fear, the lid of anxiety, the lid of shame, the lid of theological myopia or cognitive dissonance. In all these different lids, there are some cultural threads that serve as lids, multi-generational realities have yet to be confronted, addiction. All these are lids. The great news from the gospel: all these lids have already been addressed when Jesus said "It is finished," on the cross. The cross is a finished work. Christ addressed every single stifling, obstructing, hindering, impediment. Every single thing that could put a stifle on your God-ordained destiny and purpose has already been addressed by the

cross. All we have to do is come to the realization that Jesus paid the price for it all.

Dr. Clinton, every single person on the planet is either failing, surviving or thriving. You fall into one of these three respective categories. You're either failing right now in 2021, you're surviving, or you're thriving. If I were to use a biblical narrative as a metaphor, every single person is either in Egypt, the desert or the promised land. I would argue that the vast majority of people don't die in Egypt. They don't. People think like the vast majority of the world dies in Egypt. No. I do believe the majority of people die in the desert, in survival mode, perpetual survival mode. Somehow, they get used to eating manna in the desert and drinking water from the rock without realizing that there's milk and honey in the promised land. And because when you survive, you don't die from malnutrition. You just barely make it. You survive.

And all of us survived the crazy year that was 2020. We did. The question is, will we stay stuck, as you referenced and alluded to, in this perpetual stuck mode, this survival mode? And we need to come out of survival now, we all have to survive to thrive. But those days stuck in perpetual survival mode. Jesus died to give us life and life abundantly so we can glorify and magnify His name. Let's do that. Let's come out of survival mode and let's start thriving.

Dr. Clinton: Also, if you have any value to God, I believe all hell will be against you because there's a real light and darkness battle going on here. So, Sam, you throw that on top of it, and it's like, "God, help me."

Sammy Rodriguez: You and I both know, and it sounds mystical to some. I'm a person committed to biblical orthodoxy, I'm a classical evangelical. I'm a faith and science guy. So I'm not weird, but I'm wired. So I'm a good evangelical Trekkie. I may preach like captain Kirk but I think like Spock. The fact of the matter is that there is spiritual warfare. That term is a little bit eerie for some. Ladies and gentlemen, there is light and darkness, as Tim just referenced. And the angst, the consternation, the amount of spiritual dynamics out there that are real. These are not conceived in your mind and some sort of self-fulfilling spiritual prophecy. No, there is a war between good and evil. And those of us that are committed to obeying the word of God, to living out the word of God, to elevating Christ, we will confront spiritual warfare.

However, Romans 8:37, "we are more than conquerors." Romans 8 is arguably, if you ever need a pickup chapter in scripture, a pick you up, nothing can separate you from the love of God. It's amazing. If God be for us, who can be against us. Go to Romans 8, an amazing chapter written by the apostle Paul filled with God's precious Holy Spirit.

So yes, there is spiritual warfare, but we can't even stay stuck with the lid of that spiritual warfare will hold me back, will deter, will stop me from thriving. Absolutely not. That spiritual warfare is actually one of the greatest indicators that there's something greater waiting for you. All you need to do is walk by

faith, live a holy, healed, healthy, happy, humble, hungry, honoring life. Pursue righteousness, and you will thrive.

Dr. Clinton:

Sam, I've got an image in my mind of people who have been in the battle, they've been in the fight. It's like they just got pounded and they're coming back over to the corner and they need their coach to say something to them, tell them, do something with their hands, their feet, do something. Make an adjustment. As we've always said, great athletes don't make excuses, they make adjustments. What you're saying is you got to get some fight back in you. And if you want to move from just existing, from just surviving, to thriving, you've got to make some adjustments.

Sam, in your new book, you talk about, you've got seven words really that you've anchored a message on that you think are really beacons of life and that will strengthen marriages and ministries and relationships and more. Sam, tell us how this came together and lay the bedrock here for us, because I want to jump into this, I want to hold onto these things. I want to practice these things because I'm tired, I'm tired of living like we're living. We're not going to do this anymore. It's like the old Dr. Phil thing, "how has that been working for you?" It's not working for us. We need to make an adjustment.

Sammy Rodriguez:

Absolutely. These words are biblically substantiated. They come from the word of God. All of them have biblical foundations to them. Live a holy, healed, healthy, happy, humble, hungry, honoring life. Let me repeat that. Live a holy, healed, healthy, happy, humble, hungry, honoring life. Each of these biblical truths, we could argue, they are virtues. Each of these virtues that emerged from the word of God through a relationship with Jesus will assure, and here's a strong term, according to scripture, and I validate it in each chapter, they will guarantee, guarantee is a strong term, right? They guarantee that you won't just survive. There is a connective element to a thriving, abundant life, new life, II Corinthians 5:17, eternal life, we know that that's already dealt with the cross, John 3:16, and abundant life in the Greek is applicable, not just in the long-term on the other side of eternity. It is actually holistic.

Jesus was saying, I came to give you this life, not the life just when you die and you resurrect in me through me with me, but even on this side of eternity. The enemy came to rob, kill and destroy. Tim just referenced that. He alluded to this spiritual warfare dynamic. But Jesus said, wait a second, time out. I came to give you life, and not just any life, but life abundantly. And I want you to do away with the idea, that means material possessions. That's myopic. If you limit that interpretation to cars and homes, oh, you missed it. You missed it theologically, and you missed the fact that there are things that money cannot buy that make us richer than any material possession we could ever obtain. So we have to be careful with this obsession of just material gains and so forth.

But with that being said, these seven virtues, live a holy life, a healed life, a holy, healed, healthy, happy, humble, hungry, honoring life. It begins with holiness. That life where you are holy, we're positionally holy in Christ through who He is.

We are holy because we are temple of the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 3:16. It's I Peter 1:16, "Be holy for I am holy saith the Lord." We get that. But it's that pursuit of righteousness, that constant saying no to the world, saying no to the ideas of the world, saying no to sin, saying no to temptation. And I know it sounds legalistic in a world full of grace, but listen, grace is the facilitative platform by which we live a holy life. So Tim, it begins with that.

Let me give you an example. I'm going to tell you what a person who survives the way they pray. This is the way a survivor prays, a perpetual survivor. Lord, bless me. This is what a thriver, a thriver prays, here's a thriving prayer, someone who's thriving, Lord, make me the blessing to everyone I know. Here's another difference. A survivor prays like this, Lord, answer my prayer. A thriver prays, Lord, make me the answer to someone else's prayer. In order to survive, you must learn to climb out of hell. In order to thrive, you must learn to bring down heaven. In order to survive, you must ask God for forgiveness. In order to thrive, you must be willing to forgive those that offended you. It's a world of difference.

Dr. Clinton: Sam, my mother, one of the most amazing Bible teachers I've ever been around my whole life. She'd been gone for a long time, but her words live in my heart and mind. She reminded us as kids, the Lord loves righteousness. In other words, the Lord wants us to live holy as best we can. Of course, we all fall short and we've got a lot of work to do. But Sam, she also said this, too, she said, "listen, doing right doesn't necessarily always feel right." As a matter of fact, sometimes it'll feel not so right. Everybody else is going in a different direction, but she said this, listen, in the end, I promise you, it will always be right.

Sammy Rodriguez: I'm telling you, your mom's words serve as a clarion call for you and me, for all of our generations. We're so enamored with people liking us. We're so like, we want to be this influential and so forth. Holiness matters. It really does. And you're so on point, even when it doesn't feel right. Let me go back to Judges 6. Gideon, he's threshing wheat at the bottom of the wine press. All right, you missed that. He's threshing wheat at the bottom of a wine press. First of all, no one threshes wheat in a pit. It's on a cliff side usually in the old Testament where the wind would separate the wheat and the shaft. You don't separate wheat in a pit because there's no wind to separate the wheat and shaft. He was doing the right thing in the wrong place, in the wrong season, because the Midianite marauders would steal the harvest, the Bible says.

Get this, but he kept on doing the right thing. The angel of the Lord comes around and looks at him, no conversation prior, and says, "hey you, sunshine, you're a mighty hero." Galatians 6:9, "Do not grow weary of doing the right thing." At the appropriate time, you will reap a harvest of blessings if you don't give up. We're living in a time where doing the right thing will provoke the woke culture and the cancel culture. If you and I preach about what the Bible says regarding human sexuality, about gender, even about racial issues, and look at racial unity, be the conduit of the truth and lens of righteousness and justice, truth and love, everyone is created in the image of God, every single life is

sacred and created in the image of God, black, white, yellow, brown, whatever it may be.

I was talking about how to push back on the political cultural movements that are out of alignment with the word of God. And we confront that with love and truth. Woke culture, cancel culture, you and I get protested, virtually, online, we get trolled. Hey, we can't stop doing the right thing. We can't stop pursuing holiness, righteousness.

Dr. Clinton: And Sam, we can't ignore sin. Whatever became of sin.

Sammy Rodriguez: We're afraid to mention, my whole point in *Survive to Thrive* is, there's one thing to build altars, but Gideon didn't just build altars, he brought down the altars that his father built. Oh my goodness. The Bible says he tore it down. The next morning, the people from the village came out and said, who did this. Tim, I want in 2021 for an entire nation to stand up and ask, "who did this?" And Tim Clinton and Sam Rodriguez and James Dobson are drinking a coffee. I'll probably drink an almond milk latte because I'm lactose intolerant. And we're drinking coffee and then we're hanging around the ruins of old altars that were created for Baal, I'm speaking metaphorically. Every idol, every false idea, we got to call sin, sin. And you asked in the beginning, a new breed? Absolutely. I'm telling you.

We're about to see individuals rise up that are cultural architects, they know how to build, cultural reformers, they know how to transform the reality. And we need a demolition crew anointed by God's precious Holy spirit that will dare to confront sin, the Asherah poles and the alters of Baal and bring them down, not in the name of a political movement, but in the Name that is above every other name.

Dr. Clinton: Amen. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, your host. Our special guest, Sam Rodriguez, he's one of my favorites. Sam's got a new book out called *From Survive to Thrive*. And we're talking about seven words right now that are guiding beacons for life, marriage, ministry, relationships, management, and beyond. Getting the holy piece is the baseline, we've got to start right there.

Sam, you talk also about healed, a healed life. Can you share with us what that means?

Sammy Rodriguez: Broken people break people. People that are bleeding and wounded, and not out of anger or with ill intention, but if you're bleeding, you're probably going to bleed on someone else. We have to be healed. I Peter 10:24, by the stripes of Christ, not we will be, we already are healed. And we live in a broken world. We experience people broken, that are wounded, everywhere we see. Healing is so necessary. It's critical. You couldn't even live holy, meaning pursuing righteousness, and yet you haven't addressed a broken area in your life.

Tim, I went to South Africa prior to COVID, in 2019, one of the largest churches in all of Africa. I spoke at their conference called Dream Week. CRC. I was able to go to one of the animal reserves there, and it's an animal reserve on one side, I kid you not, they had hyenas, and the other side, they had lions. My assistant George Hinks was with me. So this dynamic of the hyenas and lions in the same reserve, but they wouldn't come near each other of course. And I'm going, what in the world's going on here? What dynamic is this? Is this like Lion King movie on steroids? I looked at George, I asked George, "Hey George, ask our guide, the expert there, a question." So George went up, and he asked the question that I asked George to ask. I was too timid to ask myself.

And George asked him, "Hey, which lion are the hyenas more intimidated by? The pristine looking beautiful lion over there that doesn't have a scar, or the old lion with so many scars just drooping along, barely walking through the field? Which one?" The guy interrupted George at the end of the last sentence and says, "I've been asked before, don't waste your time. I already have the answer. It's easy." He said, "You see the one that's pristine and perfect and beautiful, if that lion ever finds himself without his pride, without his tribe, alone with the hyenas, they will jump on him in a heartbeat. You see the one with the scars? They won't even come near that one." And George said "What?" The one that has the scars meant that he was wounded, but he healed. It also means that he's been through a fight and knows how to survive. The hyenas through their animal instinct realize we don't mess with that guy. He has a testimony.

Ladies and gentlemen, we all have scars. We have scars. We've all been through a battle somehow. And maybe some of our scars are more apparent than others. Nevertheless, your scars, when they are healed, they serve as a testimony. Revelation 12:11 says, we overcame, "They overcame by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony." How do we overcome? By the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony. Our testimony in Christ with Christ through Christ. So be healed. That healing process will serve as a testimony.

Tim, I mentioned in that chapter, I mentioned in the book, how when we are healed, our children will not inherit our sins. Our children will inherit our blessings. When we are healed, and it's biblically substantiated, hence the altar at Gilgal in Joshua, when we are healed, our children will not inherit our mistakes. Our children will inherit our mantels. So it behooves us to be healed. Address whatever issue in your life has yet to be addressed, bring it to the cross. But once you bring it to the cross, stop bringing it up for crying out loud. If Jesus dealt with it, do not bring it up. And I know it's counter-intuitive to some psychological psychotherapeutic, and that's your field, and I get that. You're pristine, that's why I love you. Yours is biblically substantiated. That's why you are who you are around the world.

But in the secular non-Christian world, there's this idea of repetitive sort of mantra, repeating cycles in perpetuity where it's never dealt with, and there's never closure. When Jesus said it was finished, he meant it. Take that pain to

the cross. Do not permit that to hurt to define you. That pain can be a lid that keeps you in survival mode. Bring it to the cross. Forgive those that offended you. Even if it was self-inflicted wounds, how about this? Forgive yourself. Experience the healing virtue of Christ and go change the world around you.

Dr. Clinton: You are right. Hurt people do hurt people. We carry those buckets and it affects and infects everything around us. But we're called to a new life. And you are right. We call it multi-generational flow or transmission. It passes generation to generation. Somewhere you got to put a clog in the wheel, you got to stop this. And if you're going to move, like you say, from surviving to thriving, to living in a new life, you've got to hold on, and by the way, chase after this with all that you've got.

Sam, this has been just delightful. We're battling time here, we're almost done. But Sam, I want to ask you to stay with us, maybe we can do a follow-up broadcast here. We'll keep this conversation going on because what I'm seeing down here is electric. This stuff here about moving into that thriving world, it's what we all need. It's such a gift. Sam, thank you for being a part of Family Talk, and we look forward to tomorrow.

Sammy Rodriguez: Thank you for having me.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Family Talk. And that concludes part one of our special conversation with our special guest, Pastor Samuel Rodriguez. To learn more about Pastor Rodriguez and his new book, *From Survive to Thrive*, or if you missed any portion of the broadcast today, visit our broadcast page at Drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. And be sure to join us again on tomorrow's program when you'll hear the second half of that conversation.

This month marks the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, the U. S. Supreme court decision that legalized abortion. Here at the James Dobson Family Institute, we stand firm with you to fight against this assault on the pre-born. That is why we've created a special audio CD entitled "God's Miracle of Life." Now to order your copy, go to Drjamesdobson.org/miraclecd. We'll be happy to send you a copy as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the James Dobson Family Institute. Again, that's the CD called God's "Miracle of Life," and the place to go to order is Drjamesdobson.org/forward/miraclecd.

Well, that's all the time we have for today. Be sure to join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for listening.

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