



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Bible in Stories

Guest(s): Glenn Ransom

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Dr. Dobson: Well, welcome to this Friday edition of Family Talk. I'm Dr. James Dobson, thanking you for tuning into our broadcast every day and for supporting this ministry. I want to ask a question of parents. How often do you read the Bible to your kids? Is it a priority in your home or is it more of a guilty after thought? Cultivating a child's understanding of God's word is one of the most important responsibilities for every mom and dad. And today's program is going to focus on that significant task through my colleague, Dr. Tim Clinton's recent interview with Glenn Ransom. Glenn is the founder and president of the ministry, the Bible In Stories. In a moment, he'll explain his calling to equip and encourage families to explore the scriptures together. There's a lot of content here, so let's get started. Here now is my friend, my colleague, Dr. Tim Clinton on this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Clinton: Glenn, thank you for joining us on this edition of Family Talk.

Glenn Ransom: It's a pleasure to be here Tim.

Dr. Clinton: Ephesians 6 says that, "We're to grow our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Deuteronomy Chapter 6, verses six through nine. That passage is all about the 10 Commandments, that we're supposed to make them so much a part of our lives as parents, that in everything we do, our children see them and they're able to hopefully receive them. And by the way, there's a generational flow and transmission Glenn, that flows from our children to our children's children and more. The home is the center piece here. Let's get started, Glenn in this whole area of family devotions because by the way, an amazing project that Glen is involved with. I'm so excited to share it with you. But Glenn, there's a big need out there in our homes.

We know we need God. We know the bedrock of a healthy, strong family is anchored in Christ, in a relationship with him. We've heard the sayings, how many times the family that prays together, what?

Glenn Ransom: Stays together.

Dr. Clinton: Stays together. Glenn, you visited about 8,000 homes and you learned a lot about what they're doing and not doing. Can you tell us about that?

Glenn Ransom: Absolutely Tim. The typical American home that I was in and our students were in is just way too busy. Stressed schedules, dad's working all day, mom's working all day at home or away from the home. You come home, you've still got to put supper on the table, you've still got to mow the yard. And most families are not going to spend 10, 15, 20 minutes preparing a devotion.

Dr. Clinton: The intention is good. I mean, I really believe homes want this.

Glenn Ransom: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: But there's a lot of things that come in the way, isn't it true Glenn?

Glenn Ransom: Well, a lot of the families that we talked to have not seen it modeled. It's been family devotions, family altars, almost like a dinosaur in our Christian homes. From what we've seen, most families have pushed the spiritual education or the Bible education off on the Christian school or the youth pastor or the church and 45 minutes or an hour once a week is not cutting it. And we're trying to help the families bring it back to a daily time that's led by the mom and dad or led by the grandparents that's simple and fun, that everybody can get involved.

Dr. Clinton: Glenn, it reminds me of that verse in Psalm 127, where it says, "Except the Lord, build the house, they labor in vain that build it." I think our families are stressed. I think there's a lot of stress out there. I think people probably struggle with time, don't have a lot of time, you're exhausted taking care of all the responsibilities of the home. Now I'm watching my daughter, Megan, with our little granddaughter, Olivia. I mean, they're feeding them, giving them baths, picking up toys, all these kinds of things. And before long, the night has slipped away. And if we don't make a priority here, we're going to miss an opportunity. I think people struggle with time, don't you?

Glenn Ransom: Absolutely Tim. And I'll be the first one to admit, there was a time in my life where I was not placing a high enough priority on my role as the dad. I was on the road a good bit, traveling, recruiting teams. My wife was always faithful each night to be reading to the children from the Bible, singing hymns, praying with them. But as a dad, I was not doing what I needed to do. And as we were working on this project, one of the things that I became very convicted about was I needed to clean up my act.

Dr. Clinton: It starts at the top.

Glenn Ransom: Yes.

Dr. Clinton: Everything rises and falls on leadership.

Glenn Ransom: Making the decision.

Dr. Clinton: In the home, it's all about mom and dad. Mom and dad, are we going to step into this moment? I also wrote down in my notes too, Glenn, I think some people get tentative or fearful maybe. Maybe they don't really know the word. They don't know how to do devotions very well. They can share a verse. They feel comfortable praying with their kids at night. And we're 1,000% for this. By the way, we don't want this to be a guilt trip. We're not piling guilt on anybody. Today, we're going to talk about a plan to help bring this alive in your home. That's what's exciting to me. But Glenn, do you think sometimes our lack of maybe not spending time in God's word and maybe not knowing how or what to do when it comes to family devotions is a barrier?

Glenn Ransom: Tim, you have nailed it 100%. Some of the families that I've met, they've tried different things. They've made attempts, but they're like, "Well, I couldn't hold the kid's attention." Or, "I didn't really feel like I knew what I was doing," or... the typical things, the typical barriers that come there and our goal was to try to strategically answer the challenges the family was facing.

Dr. Clinton: Well, let's talk about then, what are some of the foundational pieces here? What are some of the basics? Glenn, again, you have been in more than 8,000 homes, one-on-one, speaking to them about prescriptively building this vibrancy into their homes. What do you think of some of the purposes, or how do we get there? Maybe that's where we start. You've got to have a mission or purpose. Why should we have family devotions? Why is it critical? How do we get started here? How do we anchor ourselves?

Glenn Ransom: From what I've understood and what I've seen, Tim, over the years: time always wins. And I think currently we may be giving more time to reading the news or listening to the news about the virus or ...

Dr. Clinton: On our phones like crazy. How many hours a day on the phone?

Glenn Ransom: As far as prioritizing it, it's a decision. I mean, I know for myself that it came down to me having to come to grips with the fact that I could work night and day trying to accomplish things on my own, or I could spend more time on my knees. I could spend more time reading the Bible, teaching the Bible to my children at home. You referenced Deuteronomy 6:6-9. We've pushed that responsibility off on the church, or on Christian schools.

Dr. Clinton: Or on a Christian school.

Glenn Ransom: And that's not ...

Dr. Clinton: It's got to start in the home. I remember a few years back Glenn, having a conversation with a Christian psychologist, mentor friend of mine. And he told me about how he did everything right. He really pounded the word into his kids

and more. And what he said, "Tim, I did it with the wrong motivation." This is about knowing God better together because we need Him. Automatically, the outgrowth of life in the Spirit and life in God's word is to follow His ways naturally. You hear what I'm saying? There's something about us that has a natural drift away from the things of God. Why are we doing family devotions? Why are we sitting down together? It's because what? His words are life. 2 Timothy 3:16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God as profitable for correction, reproof, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be," What? "Thoroughly furnished unto every good work." In other words, it helps us to understand life and to live out our lives in a meaningful, coherent way so that we what? Have life in Him.

Glenn Ransom: Well, Tim, I think the enemy... one of the Devil's favorite tactics is to get us to look at family devotions or reading the Bible or quiet time as a responsibility, as like a requirement that this is what a good Christian does, rather than looking at the Bible as the answer, like, that it holds the answers. Like when you sit down with the Bible and you open it up or you're teaching it to your children, He's going to give us answers to things that are going on in our family. And that life that you're talking about, it's about a relationship, it's about knowing Him and understanding that He has written the Bible to us personally. And instead of it being a requirement or a responsibility, just being more about building a relationship with Him and a desire to spend time with Him.

I can remember a young lady in our church, one time she got up and spoke about, she just had difficulty when she was reading her Bible or having a quiet time. Sometimes she'd fall asleep or she'd be distracted. And I said, well, I knew she was dating someone. I said, "When you're on the phone with Galen, do you have trouble staying awake?" And she just kind of smiled. I'm trying to do everything I can to help people have a real and a personal relationship with the Lord. And it is part of their life and it is what's driving them. And they're looking forward to a quiet time with the family. They're looking forward to a quiet time alone with our Father.

Dr. Clinton: In my mind, Glenn, it's kind of like having dinner together. It's kind of like having game time together. There's something that starts to happen when we press in like that.

Glenn Ransom: Those dynamics.

Dr. Clinton: And when you press in spiritually together, as a family, conversations begin to evolve, life lessons begin to be shared and absorbed and so much more. Let's get to it Glenn. You put together a family devotional project that's pretty amazing. It's the Bible In Story. Tell us all about the construction of this. Why you uniquely put it together the way you did? And what you're finding as a result of this as families embark on this journey?

Glenn Ransom: Well, again, the goal was to address every challenge that we saw in the home that the family faced and try to strategically equip them with the answers. One

of the first challenges that we hear from the families is I just don't have time. Too busy. Like you said, stressed. Another challenge is finding things like people said, "I know the answers are in the Bible, but I don't know how to find it."

Dr. Clinton: They need a prescription. A plan to go through.

Glenn Ransom: Right. The third challenge is just understanding. If you've ever ran across a verse in the Bible and it wasn't making a lot of sense, or you ran across a word ...

Dr. Clinton: Help me understand it.

Glenn Ransom: That you didn't know the meaning of, and all that leads us to the goal of being able to remember it. If you cannot remember it, you will not apply it. The goal's all about application. And so ...

Dr. Clinton: Especially, well for us, for sure. And especially for our kids.

Glenn Ransom: Yes. And repetition has something to do with that. But our goal, again, we started in 2004, we worked on it two years. God showed up in so many ways. For our family, it was our getting out of the boat, walking on water experience because I didn't have the 7 to \$8 million, they said. I didn't know anything about publishing or writing. I'm not an artist. I'd never published anything before in my life, but God showed up and he took care of all of those challenges.

Dr. Clinton: Take us into it. For example, I've got the devotional Glenn has put together in my hands. You start right upfront in the Old Testament and you begin to take us on a biblical journey and you tell stories, you actually take the scripture, you're faithful. There's a fidelity to God's word here. And then you put narrative around the stories with pictures to teach our children these truths and how they apply to our everyday life.

Glenn Ransom: Yes, the goal was to do as much of the Bible as we could humanly possibly do. And probably Tim, one of the most fearful things about the whole project was that we were handling the word of God, and biblical accuracy. Some people say, well, how do you do that? Well, if there was a story in the Bible that only has two or three verses, we did not retell that story because we weren't going to get creative and make it up. We stuck to the stories in the Bible that had enough scripture where we could accurately and biblically tell that story. No one on the planet thinks in letters or words. Everyone thinks in pictures. And more importantly, remember in pictures. If I say to you ball, you don't see B-A-L-L. You see a ball, it may be a soccer ball or a baseball or a football.

Dr. Clinton: You're right. We've got a visual imagery with it.

Glenn Ransom: And so, one of the big aspects of this project, and Dr. Elmer Towns was the one that helped me gain the rights to this artwork. But there was an artist named James Pageant who was commissioned in 1970 to illustrate the Bible. And he

worked on it over four years, from Genesis to Revelation. So our goal was to go from Genesis to Revelation. When we got done, I said, well, count the stories. We didn't have a number. I wanted at least 365 so that we'd have one for every day in a whole year. But when we finished and we counted, there were 400 stories exactly.

Dr. Clinton: I'm actually going through it here real quick. "Cain and Abel," "Noah and the Ark," "The Tower of Babel," just start thinking about all this stuff and the significance. And by the way, they're stories that are very doable. You're not talking about taking a lot of time, but a lot, again, fidelity to the scripture, and there's the imagery going with it. You can see this. I remember reading stories to my daughter, Megan, at night. Bible stories. And we memorized them. She memorized them as a little girl. I'm talking as a little girl. She knew the word of God. And by the way, if you do this right, it carries over into her everyday life.

Glenn Ransom: Absolutely. We've had many, many customers write us and tell us at the age of two or three years old, their children know massive amounts of the Bible, but they're doing it off the pictures. The child can't even read yet, but because the parents have been through the story so many times, the picture is what locks in.

Dr. Clinton: "God Changes Abraham's Name," "Sarah Laughs," "Mercy On Sodom and Gomorrah." All the applications and even discussion questions and points to highlight at the end of each piece. Here's the pictorial piece. And you're saying, "Hey, listen, how or what does this mean to us?"

Glenn Ransom: A lot of the parents tell us, "Well Glenn, I don't feel confident when I'm doing this. I don't know what questions to ask." So I had the writer craft three to seven questions on each and every story that gets the ball rolling, that gets the discussion going. This is one of the things my wife, Kathy, probably liked the most with our children, because as we would ask those questions, that's where we could tie in to what was going on in our house. Maybe a situation had come up or maybe it was a situation in the neighborhood that the family was a part of. And the questions led into engagement, the kids would compete to try to answer the questions.

Dr. Clinton: I remember Bible school as a boy, my mother was a magnificent storyteller, and she did the old flannelgraph. Remember those days?

Glenn Ransom: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: I still remember those ...

Glenn Ransom: Characters and ...

Dr. Clinton: Yeah, up on these little whiteboards and she would walk us through it. The kids would come, they would pack in just to hear what was going to happen at the next level, piece of the story. Glenn, that's what you're doing here. You're

bringing that back to life with our kids. I know there's a lot of stuff online and there's a lot of devo things you can do online and stuff. But there's something about having a book like the Word of God in your hands. You hear what I'm saying? A pictorial piece here and to walk through it together intimately and discuss this as a family. What sets your devotional apart?

Glenn Ransom: Over the last 35 years, my wife and I with our six children have collected over 100 different Bible storybooks and almost every single one of them is for children. It's what I call "kid-ized." There's going to be a cover, bright blue, Noah's Ark, animals are falling off. We intentionally designed this for adults. Now it's simple so children can use it. But when people ask me what sets it apart, one of the first things I tell them is the cost. I mean, if you go to Walmart and you buy one little Noah and the Ark, little board book, you're going to pay 4 or \$5, maybe 6 or 10.

If you do that 400 stories, you're looking at \$2,000. Well, most families can't afford that. So we save them 80 or 90%. And the stories are like, I think 63 cents each, but they're organized, because I've been taught the value of a book is how easy it is to find things and speed. People want to find answers quickly. So we spent over three months preparing the topical index. And all you have to do is know the alphabet, but there's topics for adults and teens and children.

Dr. Clinton: What you're saying is, you created something that you want mom and or dad to lead with their family. This is about the family being together and connecting spiritually.

Glenn Ransom: Giving them confidence that they can do it.

Dr. Clinton: And pressing into God's word.

Glenn Ransom: Yes. And then the other items are just the quality. I've been scolded by several people in the publishing world for the paper choice that I made because it doubled our raw costs. But I know from being in those homes that people like things that last. And so we spent a lot of extra time on the quality of the paper, the binding, the cover, the number of stories. And most people have never seen this much of the Bible covered before. And the artwork that accompanies it, because most of the time there's only the 20 or 30 stories in a Bible storybook, the David and Goliath, Easter story, Christmas story, Daniel and the lion's den. But we wanted to cover as much of the Bible as we could humanly possibly cover. A lot of families we talked to, I don't have anything against digital devices or technology, but most of the parents that I talked to do not feel comfortable with a digital device and what ad is going to pop up on the side.

Dr. Clinton: I know what the tendency is for me. If I'm looking at my phone, I'm going to scroll or whatever, it's going to take me away from where we're at and what we're doing. Recently, Dr. Dobson did a piece with Karen Santorum. I think it was the May newsletter.

Glenn Ransom: Yes sir.

Dr. Clinton: And talked about this idea of connecting with our family. So I want to read a piece here. Karen said this. "Rick and I believe that children learn best through role modeling and by hearing stories." Here we go. "That's why we have read thousands of stories to our kids. Good things happen when a child is sitting on your lap, it lends itself to emotional and physical bonding." Yes, it does. "He or she identifies with the characters in the stories, to, and that allows you to explain the moral lesson being taught. Think about those kind of moments over and over again. And the gift that we're giving to our kids, especially as they walk into a pretty rough, dangerous, difficult world."

Glenn Ransom: We know that, throughout history, the best way to get something ingrained, or the best way to communicate, is through a story. Dr. Dobson and Adventures in Odyssey, things like that used to call it the Theater of The Mind. And when you paint those pictures and when you give a story, your best teachers, your best preachers, your best communicators are constantly telling stories. And with 400 stories from Genesis to Revelation, one pastor up in Michigan said what he liked was the fact that, he said, "It required no prep time. I just was able to start and every day we would hand the book to a different child. They would read a story." He said, "By the end of the year, we'd covered almost all the major concepts in the Bible and all the different character traits."

Dr. Clinton: And Glenn, those are some of the blessings. Again, the blessings of connecting together as a family, it really is about shared values. I think it increases our communication around difficult issues. I think it's a wonderful way to show love to one another. Don't you?

Glenn Ransom: Absolutely Tim, because again, I think there's so many people out there trying to distract us and get us to be extremely fearful.

Dr. Clinton: Glenn, this is an amazing effort. I applaud you for stepping into this and we do need to bring the family back to center and to anchor our lives in Christ. Glenn, as we close up, because we know we're fighting time here, any stories in particular, as a result of people engaging your project Bible In Stories?

Glenn Ransom: Out of the over 17,000 that we have, I've pulled three and I can share as few or as many of these three as you'd like. But I'll just read the letter that the lady wrote to us. She said, "I'm writing to let you know the difference the Bible In Stories have made in my family's life, especially my dad. He's always been one to drink and curse like a sailor and has never been to church since he was old enough to make his own decision not to go. My grandmother was a really strong Christian lady who was faithful, but my dad would not attend. My dad and mom never attended church while I was growing up but I started going on my own and my husband started attending as well. Now we go regularly and my mom attends also."

Things started changing when we adopted a child. We've had him for more than two years and we are always saying he has a special gift from God. We told my dad, he shouldn't use God's name in vain and he should be thanking God for bringing our son into our lives. My dad thinks that there's no one like my little one." She wrote, "I bought the Bible In Stories for our son because of the bright colors, and they were short and would keep his attention. I took a book to my parents' house for them to read to Dalton before he went to bed, when he spends the night with them. My dad has been reading them to him. Because of the books, my dad has now been asking questions about God and church. He has even started talking about going to church. He now hardly ever says a curse word and has just about quit drinking. I know with a little more encouragement, my dad will start going to church and someday take Jesus for his Savior."

Dr. Clinton: Glenn. That's what it's all about.

Glenn Ransom: Amen.

Dr. Clinton: Let me say this. I heard a line recently. "Don't fear failure, but be terrified of regret." Some of you out there may be thinking, "You know what? I've blown it, haven't done this, I don't even know how to start. It's too late or whatever. It's never too late to step into the heart of your family."

Glenn Ransom: Amen.

Dr. Clinton: It's never too late to say, you know what? From this day forward, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. As for me and my house, with my kids, I'm going to give them the memory of knowing that we looked to the Lord. We weren't perfect, but we looked to the Lord for guidance and direction. And maybe along the way we embraced a few of these stories and God gave us great life together that allows us to continue to deal with this thing called life, because it's tough. "Except the Lord," Glenn,

Glenn Ransom: "Builds the house."

Dr. Clinton: "Build the house they labor in vain that build it." Glenn, how can people learn more about this project and even purchase the Bible In Stories for their family?

Glenn Ransom: Just go to the website, Bible In Stories. It's bibleinstories.com. They could read a lot more of the testimonials. There's a way to take a Prezi slideshow, look inside. There's a short four minute video demonstration. And if they want a thorough one, there's a 19 minute one, but we'd be more than delighted to help them through our website.

Dr. Clinton: Thank you for joining us.

Glenn Ransom: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, that's a great reminder to prioritize reading God's word together as a family every day. I'm Roger Marsh and you've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Our host on today's program has been Dr. Tim Clinton and his guest was Glenn Ransom, the president of Bible In Stories Ministries. Learn more about his ministry and how to order his extensive family devotional by visiting our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, and then click onto today's broadcast page. Well, thanks for joining us each day this week here on Family Talk. We are so appreciative of the many ways that you are supporting our ministry. Have a safe and blessed weekend everyone, and join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. Dobson: This is James Dobson again. As we close today's program, I just want to thank so many of you out there who make this broadcast possible with your contributions. And I want to tell you how much your generosity is appreciated.