



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Outdated: Find Love That Lasts When Dating Has Changed

**Guest(s):** JP Pokluda

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Hello everyone, you're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

**Roger Marsh:** Welcome to Family Talk, I'm Roger Marsh, thanking you for joining us for today's program. It is the last day of January and that means February is right around the corner and you know what that means? Valentine's Day will soon be upon us. You probably have seen red and pink hearts in stores and card shops. Matter of fact, I saw one at a sandwich store the other day. Speaking of cards, this is a reminder to send a kind note or card expressing your love and care to your loved ones and family members. I am very fortunate enough to still have my mom and dad with me in my life and I'm going to be sure to send them my love and gratitude on that day as well. It can be a fun time for those who are in relationships, but if you are still looking for love, what does Valentine's Day look like for you?

You're out there dating and maybe you need a little help or encouragement, maybe some guidance or possibly even guardrails. Well, no matter who you are, how you were raised or what you might see and hear out there in the culture, God always has the answer. Today's guest here on Family Talk has a book for you called *Outdated*, a practical guide for you that shares what God meant for times of singleness, dating and marriage. Our guest is lead pastor, best-selling author, father and husband, Jonathan JP Pokluda. Jonathan is the lead pastor of Harris Creek Baptist Church in Waco, Texas. You might have read his bestselling book called *Welcome to Adulthood*, which provides millennials a roadmap to navigating their faith, finding a spouse and figuring out finances and being prepared for the future. Now, you might be thinking, "I haven't always made good choices, so how can anyone help me find what I'm looking for?"

Well, Jonathan, like many of us, took the longer way around to understanding the grace of the gospel. In his mid-twenties, he more fully began his spiritual journey. Jonathan is married to his lovely wife, Monica, she is his partner in ministry. They have been married for 16 years and together they have three kids, Presley, Finley and Weston. Let's listen now to Dr. Tim Clinton and his conversation with JP Pokluda right here on Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, such a delight to have you on the broadcast today. Dr. Dobson sends his regards. We're honored.

JP Pokluda: I'm so thankful. I am the one who is honored. I know I've told you this before, but just so grateful for this ministry and for the legacy of Dr. Dobson and just all that you guys have done to strengthen and encourage, meaning put courage in followers of Jesus all over this country and all over the world. So thank you Dr. Clinton for having me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, you are really widely known, you're best-selling author, God's got His hand on you, you've got a special passion for ministering to today's generations. I just want to step back for a moment and let our listeners learn a little bit more about you, the ministry you have down in Waco, and this passion that God's put down inside of you. Talk to us about today's generations and what you're seeing.

JP Pokluda: Yeah. For about 15 years, a little over a decade, I got to lead a ministry called The Porch, which was just thousands of young adults, twenties and thirties, mostly single there in Dallas. And four years ago, the Lord called us to Waco and a part of that calling was just the realization that Baylor's here and so we were going to get to pour into corporate missionaries every four years. And so we're out in the country, we're a good 20-minute drive from Baylor, but the college students drive out here and so we're about made up of one third college students.

And so a little over a thousand college students every week that we're just investing in and really deploying them and resourcing them, discipling them to go be on mission for Christ in the public schools they're going to teach in, in the financial institutions they're going to lead, in the buildings that they're going to take office in, and just to be on mission there. And so that's a huge heart. I became a Christian in my early twenties, as a young adult, that's after being exposed to churches of many different denominations. And so it is a huge passion of mine to pour into, resource and equip the next generation

Dr. Tim Clinton: In teaching today's generations, JP, you've had to address a lot of tough subjects. They tend to just put it all out there and say, "Let's get after it." JP, it's got to be a lot of fun

JP Pokluda: For sure, it's a lot of fun. And I don't like to play games, that was a big undoing that God did in my heart is I just had learned religiosity and churchiness and man, if I've got to pretend to be someone I'm not, that's not a lot of fun. And so what you see is what you get and I appreciate that about the next generation is they're not really very interested in playing games either.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, the book that's blowing everything up is called *Outdated: Find Love That Lasts When Dating Has Changed*. Let's jump straight into this, JP. Dating itself, I mean, more of a modern type thing, explain to us what you found out?

JP Pokluda: It's about 120 years old. The word dating entered the English language as a euphemism for prostitution. And so a man was on the radio, he was doing a radio show and he was talking about his wife taking dates and... His ex-wife, sorry. His ex-wife taking dates and he was speaking specifically to her sexual conquest. And so now we use that word, you think now 2023, it hasn't come that far because it's still, to go on a date meant to exchange an experience for a sexual favor initially. And now you look at how the world dates and I think it is they're exchanging an experience often for sexual favors. And so now you're in the church, you love Jesus, you're reading the Bible, you want to do what God says, and you're turning Genesis to Revelation trying to find this word dating. Well, it's not there because most of the relationships that we see in the scriptures were arranged, arranged marriage was the practice then in the cultural and the context that the Bible was written.

And so then how do we take these biblical principles and apply them to us trying to find a spouse? And so I say in the church, "Dating is a path that leads to a promise." Meaning we date to try to identify if this person would be a suitable spouse. It's really no more and no less. And I will say, people say, "Well, so should I date in high school?" And I would say, "Well, it depends on what do you mean by date. Do you mean have a really sweet friendship with people of the opposite sex? Sure, you can do that. I'm not saying you can't go to prom and even to call that person your prom date, but I wouldn't in high school pretend to be married."

And this is how a lot of the world dates is they get in a committed relationship where they are emotionally promiscuous, at least, they just hand over their heart to someone, "I love you. I want to spend all my waking hours with you. I want to think about you all the time." Well, that's not healthy for a 15-year-old. And so we have to begin to think when we even use this word date, what are we talking about? And so this book, *Outdated* is trying to help people in the church navigate this cultural phenomenon of dating in a way that honors God and really has a positive outcome of finding the relationship that lasts.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, for years I taught psychology of relationships at Liberty. Thousands of kids every year went through the program and in it, an opening remark was, "A lot of you in this room are in relationships that you need to get out of."

JP Pokluda: Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: "You're in a mess and you're holding on, white knuckling it, thinking things are going to change and they're not going to change." I mean, that caught some kids by-

JP Pokluda: I bet.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. I mean, it rocked the house in there, but most of them sitting in there were saying to themselves, "I'm in that mess. I don't even know what to do." JP,

what drives us to hold on when we know better? What's wiring up down inside of us? You know a lot of people are getting in toxic relationships and the sad thing is they tend to think that there may not be anyone out there for them or anything better.

JP Pokluda: Yeah. They want toxic, they're addicted to it. And so we condition our hearts for the manic highs and the manic lows. I heard a friend say, "You want a marriage that's boring." And a lot of times young people hear that and they're like, "No, I don't want a marriage that's boring." And it depends on what you mean by that because following Jesus is anything but boring. But what he's saying is, "Hey, you don't want a marriage that's going to make good reality TV." Because reality TV things are being thrown against the wall, people are cussing at each other, they're about to fight, it's extreme emotions, and that's entertaining. That's what entertains people. And you don't want a marriage that is made up of that drama, you want some steadfastness in the person. But we have been entertained by those reality TV shows, we have been entertained by the things that are on TV, and therefore when we go to date, that's actually what we're looking for, is we're looking for someone that is playing games, they're not always truthful.

Paul says in Romans, "Love must be sincere." A lot of young people out there, they don't want a sincere love. Now, they would tell you that they do, but they've conditioned their heart to not. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." He says, "Everything you do flows from it." When he says guard your heart, a lot of times we don't really understand what that means. He says, "More than you protect anything, protect your heart." Well, why is that? Because your heart's like a bloodhound, it wants what it's fed, it gets on a scent. And so when you listen to music and you watch certain kind of shows, you're telling your heart, "Hey, this is what I'm longing for." And so I think we have to be careful of our inputs if we want to change our outputs or our outcomes, if you will.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. That Bachelor/Bachelorette insanity. It's that modern day culture that we're living in and it's this mindset of hanging out, in other words, it's all about having fun and hooking up. And if you aren't doing that, you're lost, you're missing out, you're on the other side of the river. Jonathan, how do you counter that? How do you move from a place of mindset that's feeding that to a different place? And I know that's the heart of the message *Outdated*, but let's begin this journey of what you're trying to give through this book.

JP Pokluda: It's like grace in the sense that it's so simple. I think many people, I'll say go as far as to say, most people miss it. When you tell somebody, somebody says, "What do I got to do to get into Heaven?" And says, "You've got to believe in Jesus. You have to trust in his death and resurrection." And they say, "Well, what else do I have to do?" No, if you get that right, the other stuff's just going to follow. If you surrender your life to Jesus, the behavior is going to follow the belief. In dating, it's so simple. It's really knowing, first of all, what you're looking for. I can't find, Dr. Clinton, anything if I don't know what I'm looking for. And

most young people, if I was to say in one word what they're looking for, it's a feeling. I'm looking for someone who makes me feel a certain way.

Well, feelings are fleeting, feelings change like the wind. And so when my wife sends me to the grocery store for a gallon of milk, she's very specific because she has a certain kind of milk she likes, and she says, "2% organic, blue label, blue lid, this brand of milk." So when I walk into the milk section of the grocery store, I don't open those refrigerator doors and stand there and look at the gallons of milk and say, "Now, how do I feel?" I don't pick one up and say, "Well, how do I feel holding...?" No, I find the 2% organic, blue label, blue lid, the brand that she says, and when I find it, I commit to it, I say, "This is the one I'm taking home." Well, marriage and relationships are a lot of the same way, you've got to know what to look for so that when you find it, you're not so stuck on, "Well, how do I feel?"

Because what happens if you prioritize the feeling is you're going to get in that marriage and you're not going to feel that way and you're going to say, "Oh, I must have married the wrong one." And so you say, "Okay, do they meet this list?" And there's a great list in 1 Timothy 4:12 where he says to Paul, "Do not let anyone look down on you because you're young, but set an example." So you're looking for an example of a follower of Jesus. He says, "Set an example in speech and conduct and love and faith and purity." Now, those five things, speech, conduct, love, faith, purity, those are five great things to inspect. What comes out of their mouth? How do they act? What do they love? What do they believe? And are they pure?

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, what would you say to the question or the comment, "He's not a bad guy, he's trying hard. He's got a couple of issues, he doesn't make the checklist there that JP you gave and we're just trying to figure this out, but I really like him." What are the signs that say, "Hey, wait a second."

JP Pokluda: Yeah. The cool kids call it the red flags, that's a big hot topic right now. And so I would just say, you go to the great commandment. Does he love the Lord his God with his heart, soul, mind and strength? Is that there? If that's there, a lot of those other things are going to fall into place. But people who are looking to compromise will say, "Yeah, I mean he believes in God." Oh, great, even the demons believe in God and shudder. I'm saying, "Is the trajectory of his life that God is the most important thing about him? Whose authority is he under? Is he under the authority of the church? Is he a member there? Is he growing there? Is he being disciplined and discipling others there?" And so some people will say, "Well, that's too high of a bar."

And I say, "Well maybe you don't think high enough of yourself." Because marriage is an ultimate, we're going to be married forever and ever and ever and ever to Jesus and we can start that marriage right now. In fact, I wouldn't even consider marrying anyone that's not rightfully married to Jesus. And so marriage is not ultimate and Paul was single, Jesus was single. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 that singleness is a gift. Jesus says in Matthew 19, "Not everyone

can accept this gift, but those who can should," he holds it in high regard. And he says, "To be single for the sake of the kingdom." And so therefore believers, we really only have two options and one is our sexual outlet of marriage, intimacy within marriage. That's one option. And the other option is single for the sake of the kingdom. That we can be single so that we can leverage our singleness for the sake of the kingdom. We don't have, as followers of Jesus, any other options.

And so as you look to that young woman, I would say, "I bet you do really like him. I bet your heart has chased after him, but that means nothing in regards to what you should do." That's interesting, that's a great detail, it's good to understand that you really like him, but then you've got to engage your head and say, "All right, now what should I do with these feelings?" Because we can't just follow our feelings, "Our feelings are not our God." Paul says that to the church in Philippi. "Their God is stomach, their God is their appetite, their God is their feelings, their destiny is destruction, they're enemies of the cross of Christ." That's a really harsh word. And so our God is not our feelings, we have to say, "All right, what should I do?" In addition to, "How do I feel?"

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan, you don't mind sharing the journey you were on. We're talking a little bit here about having to leave the past behind us, leave the luggage. Jonathan, how did you do that? How did you cross over? I know a lot of moms and dads or maybe young people who are wrestling right now in, they're dating relationships are dialing things up here and saying, "I've got to get this right."

JP Pokluda: Yeah. How do I leave the past behind me? Wow, I'll say this, my wife and I, we met as unbelievers and we became Christians. And so as unbelievers, we acted like unbelievers. And then when we became Christians and we began to attend church, join a church, the Holy Spirit worked on our lives. Then we were convicted of sin, we stopped acting like pagans, and then we got married shortly thereafter because I was like, "Wow, this is really challenging, we should get married." And so we got married and there I was, it was here actually in Waco at Truth Seminary there on Baylor's campus. This guy said some wonderful things about us, I said, "I do." "You may kiss your bride." We walked down the aisle and I held my new bride in my arms and Dr. Clinton, I said a prayer, I said, "Lord, thank you for allowing me to escape the consequences of my sin."

And when I said my sin, what I meant was my sexual sin, my past sexual partners, the hundreds of images of pornography on my computer, that's what I was thinking about, just all of my relationship baggage. That was the most naive prayer I've ever prayed because a year of marriage was the honeymoon, two years into marriage, the wheels fell off. I had no idea how to be married, I had conditioned myself for divorce. This is important, let me say this. The way that we date is not training for marriage, it is training for divorce. The way that the world dates, anyways. We get in a relationship and the second that relationship doesn't meet our needs, we get out and we get in another relationship and then when we don't want to be in that relationship anymore, we get out, we follow our feelings in and out of relationships.

That is like a systematic, psychological 101 class for divorce. And then we get to the altar. And so I'm two years in a marriage, I have no idea how to be married. I want out, I want a divorce, she wants a divorce, we don't want to be married anymore. And that's when all of that baggage came crashing down. And so the how, we were in a small group, we confessed our sin, we walked in the light, we had people praying, James 5:16, "The prayers of righteous person are powerful and effective." And we began to experience healing.

We had people come around us and coach us according to the scriptures on how to talk to one another, how to communicate, how to resolve conflict in a way that is healthy. What does it look like to not let the sun go down in our anger? What does it look like to talk through these ways in a method that's moving us closer to each other and not further away from each other? And so the church helped us. I mean, that is our story, is God working through the local body of Christ, healed our marriage and allowed us to move to a place where I would say I have one of the healthiest marriages of anyone I know today and that's the work that God did in and through us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

JP Pokluda: And I'm so thankful.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's the power of God.

JP Pokluda: Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: JP, you talk again about some pretty tough issues in the book. They're important issues like boundaries, for example. A lot of couples get to a place where they say, "Well, we love each other." And the boundaries begin to fade. You know as well as I do that cohabitating or living together is crazy common, even among Christian couples. What do you say to those couples right now?

JP Pokluda: Yeah, so I'm going to be a little bit more delicate with this discussion in a pastoral conversation, in a one-on-one conversation, I would be more delicate than I am going to be on this broadcast, on this one to many communication. But here's what I would say. "What you're doing is statistically foolish, it's biblically foolish, it's not honoring to God." But let me just show you the wisdom of God and say that statistically the success rate of a cohabitating couple is about 2%. That means two couples out of 100 couples make it. And the way that I get to that number is 90% never get married. 90% of couples at some point, if they're living together, they don't end up getting married. And then of the 10% that do get married, the divorce rate amongst those couples that cohabitated is actually higher than the national average, which is somewhere around 50%.

There's some debate whether it's in the forties or if that reaches 50, but we know that it's about half. And so the divorce rate is around 80% for those that cohabit. And so you're left with a success rate of people that stay married at

two out of 100. Now, we don't know how happily married they are because I think success in marriage is not just staying married, there's a lot of people that are just roommates, they're sleeping in different bedrooms and there's no intimacy, there's no love. And that's a pretty miserable situation. And so I just would tell you with worldly wisdom, what you're doing is statistically foolish. And then I would just say, "The scripture tells us to avoid even the appearance of evil, that we are to flee sexual immorality." People will say this, Dr. Clinton, they'll say, "Well, we're not having sex. We're living together, but it's purely financial, we're not having sex."

I'll say, "Oh, man, don't you understand? You're not supposed to do that, you should be having sex." And what I mean by that is your body was designed for it and so to be under that roof and to withhold from that, you're training yourself for something not good. Because you're not going to be able to walk down that aisle and then flip that switch and say, "Oh, okay, now we can." And so I'm not saying that you should have sex prior to marriage, but I'm saying your body is designed for it and you shouldn't cohabit, you shouldn't put yourself in that situation of temptation that you are to flee, run fast from. 1 Corinthians 6:18 to 20 says, "Flee sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body." He says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you've received from God? You are not your own, you've been bought by a price, therefore, honor God with your body."

Dr. Tim Clinton: In the end, I think the cry of the soul has been and is, all I've ever wanted is for someone to love me. That's a journey. It's a journey that drives us to seek love. At the end of the day, Jonathan, I know you would say this, there's no man or woman who will meet the deepest longings of our soul, only one can do that.

JP Pokluda: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And that's a relationship with God through Christ.

JP Pokluda: Yeah. Greater love has no one than this.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Our special guest again today has been Pastor Jonathan JP Pokluda out of Waco, Texas. Fascinating ministry at Harris Creek Baptist Church. Loves today's generations. Our topic again has been his book called *Outdated: Find Love That Lasts When Dating Has Changed*. What a conversation, Jonathan, we're going to have to have you back. I know Dr. Dobson's going to be very overjoyed about our conversation together and the ministry that's been done through today's broadcast. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, our entire team, we salute you. Pray God's continued blessings on your life and ministry. Thank you so much for joining us.

JP Pokluda: Thank you so much, friend, for having me. I'm so honored to be with you. I'm grateful.



Roger Marsh:

Well, I hope you found today's conversation to be a benefit. Seasons of singleness, dating, courtship and ultimately marriage, all have their own unique blessings and purposes. You're listening to Family Talk and we'll have JP Pokluda as our guest again tomorrow as he will discuss his newest and soon-to-be release book entitled, *Why Do I Do What I Don't Want to Do?* In this book, Jonathan discusses how God has given us principles to help us become the people we were meant to be. So you will not want to miss this. If you enjoy our programs, I'm sure you'll enjoy adding our 2022 Best of Broadcast collection to your home media library. For a suggested donation of \$50, you can order yours today. Simply visit our website, [DrJamesDobson.org](http://DrJamesDobson.org). That's [DrJamesDobson.org](http://DrJamesDobson.org). Remember, you can also order by phone as well, the number to call is 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

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Announcer:

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