



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Seeing God as a Perfect Father – Part 1

Guest(s): Louie Giglio

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's the ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute, supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hello everyone and welcome into Family Talk. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host of the broadcast here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I also serve as President of the American Association of Christian Counselors, and I'm honored to serve alongside Dr. Dobson as resident authority on mental health and relationships here at the JDFI. We're so glad you've joined us today. Now, you've heard us talk on the broadcast a lot about the importance of fathers. Sadly, many people, even if they had a dad at home while they were growing up, still have father wounds. You don't have to come from a divorced home to feel a sense of shame, embarrassment, or maybe just to have an empty, gaping hole inside that you're trying to fill because of the disconnection with dad. Dr. Dobson has said many times that the family is at the bedrock of the foundation of the superstructure of our culture, and everything rests on it.

From the local community, your church, the government, even our entire culture, it all rests on the family, and the family is lost without a strong father figure. And father wounds lead to a repeated cycle of unfulfilled potential poor relationships that can be passed on from one generation to another. And of course, it can lead to alcohol and drug abuse, depression, divorce, increased chances of violent or criminal behavior, even incarceration, and so much more. Joining us to discuss this important topic is our guest, Louie Giglio. Louie is the Pastor of Passion City Church. In 1997, he, alongside his wife Shelly, established the Passion Conferences, which have drawn in hundreds of thousands of young adults since their inception.

Louie is a bestselling author of over a dozen books, including *Don't Give The Enemy a Seat At Your Table*, *Goliath Must Fall*, and *The Comeback*. His latest book, which is the subject of today's conversation, *Seeing God as a Perfect Father: and Seeing You as Loved, Pursued, and Secure*. He has an earned Master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Louie and his wife Shelly, call Atlanta home. We love Atlanta. A lot of good ministry friends down there. Strong station that carries us each day on WNIV.

Welcome to Family Talk, Louie. What a delight to have you. Thank you again for joining us. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley, they send their regards.

Louie Giglio: Well, to those guys, what a legacy, and to you as well, Tim. Thank you for having me on today. I'm grateful.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, Louie, congrats on your new book. We're going to going to spend a lot of time, and *Seeing God as a Perfect Father: and Seeing You as Loved, Pursued, and Secure*. But before we go there, you've got some things going on down Atlanta, you and Shelly together, Passion City Church, the conferences, the movement, really. Give us a quick update, Louie, maybe on what's going to happen in 2024 at the big event and more.

Louie Giglio: Yeah, well, we're building church day by day, week by week. That's primarily what we do. We have locations here in Atlanta, and we have a church in Washington, DC. And it is so exciting to see what God is doing there. There's so much news both ways coming out of DC every single day, but people need to be encouraged that a lot of young people are showing up to worship God, build community, getting the word together, and our church in DC has got great momentum. And so, we're pumped about that, and we're just a few months away now from Passion 2024. If people don't know what that is, every year we host a gathering for 18 to 25 year olds around the theme of the glory of God and living for what matters most.

And this year, we'll be back, Lord willing, at Mercedes-Benz Stadium here in Atlanta, Georgia. We're expecting to host 50 to 60,000 Gen Z, 18 to 25 year olds.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's amazing.

Louie Giglio: And I'm telling you, it is such a privilege. We've been at this for 25 years now. But to see the hunger in this generation of people who really want to go deeper with God and to live their lives in such a way that they really truly matter. This is what we say, Tim, to live for our lives for what matters most, and nothing matters more than the glory of God.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Louie, a lot of people have confidence, I know I do in this generation. But there's no doubt you see a lot of brokenness come in that room, Louie. I can't even imagine.

Louie Giglio: Well, Tim, sadly, for the last, I would say 15 to 20 years, we've been spending a lot of our time focused on 18 to 25 year olds, and it's a wounded generation, and I think that's a big banner that I'm not really willing to put over a whole segment of people. But they've been disappointed by a lot of people and challenged in a lot of ways in life. And I think, just all of us getting our eyes back on Jesus and knowing that he never fails, he never changes, that his love for us is trustworthy, the cross is proof that we can trust him with our lives. And I think that they're looking for something bigger than themselves to live for, something

to join forces with, and to make a difference in the world. And as much as they keep getting counted out by all the polls and all the statistics and all the headlines, I dare anyone to step into Mercedes-Benz Stadium on January 3rd, your mind will be blown at the potential of this generation to change the world.

Dr. Tim Clinton: My son Zach said, "Dad, it's legit." I mean, it's the real deal, man. It's happening down in Atlanta. Louie, again, congrats on your new book, *Seeing God as a Perfect Father*. I guess, jumping into this, Louie, I went through every page of the book.

Louie Giglio: Wow.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Spent some time just, it's certainly in my heart. I love work around dads, because we know this, and Louie, let's start here. Dads do matter. I think young or old, male or female, we all look in the stands for our dad, and consider, by the way, his presence and his input in our lives is one of the most significant factors in life. Louie, to be seen, chosen, blessed, approved, whatever, to have the blessing from your dad, it means everything, really.

Louie Giglio: There's no way that we can minimize that impact of a father's blessing. And we say this in the book, Tim, and obviously every mom listening, every female listening to us today would understand this. Moms make the world work. They hold life together, they hold families together, they hold some of them companies together. You cannot function without a mom, but dad's blessing is different. And I know for me growing up, my mom was that constant in life, but my dad would pop in occasionally to my football game, occasionally to my tennis match in high school, occasionally to the important moment because he had a schedule and work and commitments. And man, when he came through the door, something changed, something shifted. And it's not just showing up, it's speaking that blessing over our lives. And I quote< in the book, a statistic from Psychology Today magazine, and they interviewed women, highly successful women who were crushing it in their fields. Grown, mature, achieving. And each one of them said that they still saw their accomplishments through the filter of their father's approval.

All these years later, decades later, success later, still wanting to know what does dad think? And I know that is a pain point for some people and others are nodding along. My wife Shelly lost her dad a few months ago. She'd be amening so loud right now because her dad gave her the confidence to believe she could do anything in life. But we all need it. And without it, we are either going to act like we don't and try to suppress that a million miles down, or we're going to search for that blessing and that approval somewhere else in life. But that cannot be replaced. And the beauty of it all is that God is a father. He's also spirit, he's also son, Jesus. But he's Father. And so every one of us can live under the waterfall of a perfect father's blessing.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Louie, in the book, you make a statement and I really appreciated, that we're hardwired, that there's something deep down inside of us. It's like in

Ecclesiastes 3:11 where it says, "He has said eternity in our hearts." That Jonathan Haidt, psychologist that said that we're hardwired for a relationship with a transcendent one. We really are. In the same vein, if you will, we're wired for that connection with our dads. We need that piece in there. What happens, Louie, when you don't get that affirmation, that blessing, that attaboy, attagirl?

Louie Giglio:

Yeah, I think it undermines our sense of worth and value. This is the whole heart of a lot of what we talk about every day, Tim. We are made in the image of Almighty God, and by our very creation and his image, we have intrinsic value and worth. It's not connected to how we look or what our gifts are or our accomplishments, our achievements. We are intrinsically valuable because we are made in the image of God. If you take the creator out of the equation, you have just erased our worth, and now we are in a free for all trying to define worth by a million different ways. But the pressure's all on us to keep our value up in our own minds and in the minds of other people. If we put the creator in the equation, I look at you and I go, "You're valuable. You're made by Almighty God. I am valuable, made by Almighty God."

Same with father. When you put that father's blessing in the equation, you immediately assign worth to that child, to that boy or to that girl. And the beautiful thing about it is a good father, no perfect father on earth, but a good father, he's telling that child how much he loves them before they've done anything. And when that blessing isn't there in our lives from our father, it undermines our sense of worth. And I think the beautiful part of it is with God, our value isn't based on our performance. And even with a good dad, not a perfect earthly father because there isn't one of those, but with a good dad, he's telling his son or daughter how much he loves them before they can walk, before they make an A in a class at school, before they have any notable success in life.

He's already telling them, "I love you. You mean so much to me. I'm so proud to be your dad." And I just think that when you take that blessing out of the equation, you rob that heart of the value that it needs, and now you've got a searching, seeking, striving heart to find that value somewhere else.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

There's something about that hole, Louie, that's left, that gaping hole, that father hunger or father thirst, is what a lot of the father research experts call it. But when it's filled with a loving father, it's everything.

Hey, you're listening to Family Talk, a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host. Our special in-studio guest, again, Louie Giglio. He's the pastor of Passion City Church and the original visionary of the Passion Movement for the Passion Conference and more, really impacting today's generations. Louie, as we continue on, you mentioned your dad earlier, but tell us a little bit about your relationship with him, and maybe early on, you understand what it means to have that kind of gnaw, if you will, in your gut, that hole in your stomach to an extent.

Louie Giglio:

Yeah. Well, my dad was an amazing dad. He's been gone for a long while now, but he was a good dad. He did his best to love my sister and me the best way he could. But the most interesting tension point we had, Tim, was the moment that I told my dad that I felt like I was being called to preach, and it was on a Sunday and my dad didn't normally come to church. But that night, I was going to go down, tell the church, tell my Pastor, Charles Stanley, that I felt the Lord calling me to preach. And I said to my dad, "I'm going to make this decision tonight, dad. I'd love it if you'd come." And it really caught my dad off guard. We didn't have common ground around our relationship with Jesus, and he just kind of looked at me, and I just saw it all go through his mind. "My son is going to be a Baptist preacher."

And for his poker buddies and his golfing buddies, this is not going to be what he wants to share next Friday night around the poker table. "This kid's going to be an attorney and this kid's playing football at Auburn and this kid's going to run the family business and my boy's going to be a Baptist pastor." And he didn't make it that night. It really wasn't my dad's fault. I kind of caught him off guard, didn't give him enough chance to process before we get into the Sunday night meeting. But it did sting a little. And I know for a lot of people listening to us, they're like, "Man, if that's your biggest issue with your dad, wow, how lucky are you? My dad would've thrown me across the room." And I get that. I hear that.

But it stung a little. It created a little gap in our relationship because here I am pursuing the Lord and pursuing ministry and pursuing this call on my life, and I know all the while, my dad didn't know how to deal with that, and we can't really even talk about it. But interestingly, Tim, really quickly, my dad became disabled because of a brain virus later after this season. And he ultimately was disabled, mentally, physically, emotionally, didn't ever go back to work, play golf, drive a car, dress himself. But he did come to church. My mom brought him to church on Father's Day, no less, when I'd been invited to preach for Charles Stanley at First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, I was so nervous to stand in that pulpit that I had seen Dr. Stanley in so many times, and I was preaching the message that is in this book, *Seeing God as a Perfect Father*. Not fully developed of course, because I was a young youth speaker at the time.

But my dad came, he was in his wheelchair, looked amazing. My mom had him looking fantastic. My mom hadn't been in church in years because she was taking care of my dad. I preached this message. I'm so nervous, I never looked over at my dad the whole time because I was just so nervous. And the message ended. I walked over to my mom. She was surrounded by church people, and my dad was just kind of sitting there, kind of hanging out. And I walked up to him and reached out my hand, shook his hand and I said, "Thanks so much for coming today. It means so much." And man, my heart just in my throat. And he looked at me and he said, "Are you kidding, Ace?" He said, "That was the best thing I've ever heard in my life."

And it was such a redemptive moment. My dad was never against me in life. He just never fully knew how to be for me in some areas of life. But in that

moment, A, I learned later that my dad had no relationship hardly with his dad, so he's hearing about the perfect father in that message. He's affirming me, and he told me a few times later before he died, how much he appreciated my teaching gift, my preaching gift, how proud he was of me. He did his best and he left a mark on me for sure, and left a mark on the world. My dad created the Chick-fil-A logo in 1964.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I read that, Louie. Yeah, it was amazing. You held an event there in the stadium, right? On top of the logo, right, midfield?

Louie Giglio: Two different times, and most recently, two years ago, we have done an event, days after the Chick-fil-a Peach Bowl, and they cover the field with this thick plastic covering right after the game is over. Leave all of the painting on the field, visiting team names in the end zone and the Chick-fil-A logo. And two times, Tim, I have spoken to this Passion gathering, literally, not figuratively, literally standing on top of a logo that my father created in 1964. And I'm telling you, this pastime two years ago, walking up the steps onto that stage that was at midfield and looking around in that stadium, I could just hear my heavenly Father say, "I got you. I got you."

My dad's disability, the hardship of that, multiple brain surgeries, a very difficult season for my family. I don't have answers for that, but I knew walking up those steps and standing on that logo that somehow, God is in the story, and that's really all the confidence and encouragement that I needed.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I read also about your dad sharing with you how he often didn't feel loved.

Louie Giglio: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And the pieces started all coming together. And amazing how God works. Louie, I put down in my notes Psalm 27:10, "Even if my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will deliver me up." And I love this statement, and I want you to expound on this as we were pressing toward the end of our first day. But God is not a bigger version of your dad. He's the perfect version of your dad, and more. Bring us home with that, Louie. What does that mean to all of us?

Louie Giglio: Yeah. Well, I think for anybody struggling today, even with this concept, Tim, "Oh, they're talking today about God being a father. Well, if God's a father, and if he's anything like my dad, then I don't want anything to do with God." And that is a fair assessment for people who've been wounded and hurt and abandoned and left behind. But for them to know today, God isn't the reflection of your earthly dad. He's the perfection of your earthly dad. He's everything you wanted your earthly dad to be, and more.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Louie, my heart goes out to those who cry out. They yearn, they search. In a lot of ways, they medicate. They self-medicate the hole in their soul. Again, what do you say to them, even in this hour when they want to reach toward their

heavenly Father, but they just don't know how? They just can't piece it together. But they're overwhelmed or flooded with the emotion when they hear someone talk about dad, and then they may quickly go into feeling anxious or angry or what have you, but pour something into their soul.

Louie Giglio:

I think that it's good for us to be honest with the way we feel. And so many times, Tim, in the spiritual realm, we feel like we have to get it all together before we come to God. And I would just say today, if you've been wounded by a father, if you were left behind, if you've been hurt, just bring all that to God. He already knows the way that you feel and he understands. And here's the thing, Tim, and I know this, it sounds like a big theological idea, but when Jesus was on the cross taking on all of our sin and shame, he was separated from the love of his father. And he cried out, this is what he cried on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In other words, in that moment, in that instant, Jesus felt everything that you feel.

And so he knows that pain, he knows the isolation, he knows what it means to have a father's back turned on him. And yes, he was a son of God and it was only for three days, and yes, he was raised from the dead, but he understands your pain. He understands what it feels like, and moreover, he knows how to get in the midst of that and begin to heal your heart. It might not happen overnight, but he has wounds in his hands and feet, and they're the proof that you can trust him and that he loves you and considers you valuable. And that's the starting point is to see the cross, to see who you are, to see the price that was paid for you, and to see the one that you can trust to restore and to heal and bring you to life again.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

If that's the cry of your soul or someone you love, I hope you know that your father is standing there waiting, beckoning you to come home. I think that's what Louie's saying. Come home, come home. Come to the Father. Hey, something special we'd love to get in your hands. Louie's new book, *Seeing God as a Perfect Father: and Seeing You as Loved, Pursued, and Secure*. Louie, on behalf of Dr. Dobson and his wife, Shirley, and the entire broadcast team here, we're praying that God would continue to embolden you, strengthen your heart for such a time as this. Thank you for joining us.

Louie Giglio:

Thank you so much.

Roger Marsh:

Most of us don't make it out of our childhoods unscathed in one way or another. We pick up emotional wounds in the journey from early childhood into adolescence, and then seems like even more so as teens grow up to be young adults. The body, mind, and spirit are changing, and hopefully evolving, but we need to remember, a lot of parents are not equipped to raise kids up in the way of the Lord. We don't have perfect parents, and sometimes, there are deep wounds left, especially if Dad was not around. As we just heard from Pastor Louie Giglio, if we can lean into a loving relationship with our Abba Father, those wounds will heal and we can have peace. Now, that was only part one of this special conversation featuring Louie Giglio and our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton today

here on Family Talk. Be sure to join us again tomorrow as Louie returns to share how forgiveness sets the foundation for the future.

You know that we face many challenges in today's culture. Many God-given gifts and principles are under attack, especially when it comes to gender, so how could Christians effectively engage with and address the rising tide of transgenderism in our culture, especially as it pertains to our kids? Dr. Owen Strachan is the author of the book called *What Does the Bible Teach about Transgenderism?* And his unique understanding and perspective on the complexities of this topic can help deepen our perspective on this crucial issue as well. Now, Dr. Strachan has collaborated with us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute to compile a wide range of helpful resources for you on this topic.

It's easy to access this list. Just visit our special website, drjamesdobson.org/transgenderism. That's drjamesdobson.org/transgenderism. Thanks so much for joining us today. I'm Roger Marsh, and I pray that God will continue to bless you throughout the rest of this day as you grow in your faith. I'm also praying that you would have a deeper relationship with God, your Heavenly Father, and be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. James Dobson: One of the most poignant songs ever written is *Cat's in the Cradle* by the Late Harry Chapin.

Roger Marsh: Dr. James Dobson for Family Talk.

Announcer: The lyrics of that sad song tell the story of a father who has good intentions toward his young son, but there are always planes to catch and bills to pay, and the father finds himself making excuses. "When you coming home, dad?" "I don't know when, but we'll get together then, son. You know we'll have a good time then." Despite the disappointments, the boy loves and admires his father. Again and again he says, "I'm going to be like you, dad. You know I'm going to be like you."

But time passes and the boy becomes a young man. The father's priorities have changed now. He'd like to visit with his grownup son, but now it's the son's turn to offer excuses. "You see, my new job's a hassle and the kids have the flu, but it's been nice talking to you, dad. It's been nice talking to you." As the father hangs up the phone, the tragedy hits him. "He'd grown up just like me. My boy was just like me." I sincerely hope that all fathers who hear this wonderful song take its message to heart. The years with our growing children are all too precious to squander. Let's use them wisely so that when the time comes to look back on our lives, we can do it with gladness instead of regret. To the memory of Harry Chapin, I say, thank you for this timeless reminder.

Roger Marsh:

Hear more at drjamesdobson.org.