



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory – Part 2

Guest(s): Jonathan and Kanika Evans

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Hello, and thank you for joining us here on Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. None of us are immune to the human condition. Everyone experiences loss, grief, and pain in this life. It can come in many packages, but it's going to come. This was especially true in the lives of the Tony Evans family over the last few years. Many of you know Dr. Evans, as he's been a regular guest here on Family Talk over the past years. He is the senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas.

Now, the Evans family has endured a lot of hardship of late. Beginning in 2018, they lost eight different family members over the span of two years. The grief and loss of those deaths was sometimes suffocating, and after much time and leaning on God's love, the family has made their way to the other side of the season of grief and they would all say that they are much stronger for it.

Jonathan Evans is Dr. Tony Evans' youngest son, and today we're going to share the second half of Dr. Tim Clinton's recent conversation with Jonathan and his wife, Kanika. Now, if you missed yesterday's installment of their conversation, remember you can hear it when you visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. You'll be glad you took the time to hear the first part of their story.

Jonathan is a mentor, author, speaker, and a former NFL fullback who seeks to impact today's athletes, men, and young adults by equipping and encouraging them in the Christian faith. A graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary with a master's degree in christian leadership, Jonathan Evans also serves as the chaplain of the Dallas Cowboys and co-chaplain of the Dallas Mavericks. He serves with his pastor, friend, and father, Dr. Tony Evans, both in the local church and the national ministry.

Jonathan just published his most recent book called *Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory*. That book is the topic of our program today, as it was part one on yesterday's broadcast. Jonathan's wife, Kanika, holds a

bachelor's degree in health science studies from Baylor University as well as a master's degree in physical therapy from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. They are the proud parents of Kelsey, Jonathan, Kamden, Kylar, and Jade Wynter, and reside in the Dallas metro area.

Now let's join Dr. Tim Clinton, along with Jonathan and Kanika Evans in the second half of their honest, inspiring conversation right here on Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan, welcome back. Thank you for joining us.

Jonathan Evans: Glad to be here, Tim.

Kanika Evans: Thank you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And Kanika, welcome back. What a fun interview yesterday.

Kanika Evans: Thanks so much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As we get started, I wanted to ask you, I know a lot of people are saying, "Hey, ask them about the family." Your dad, how's he doing? We had a moving interview together here on Family Talk, right? I talked to him fresh after the loss of your mom, and it was a tearful moment together, it really was, and God moved in a powerful way. But how's he doing?

Jonathan Evans: He's doing well. He's an enterpriser. He went through his season, he accepted it. He believes what he teaches. And even though that takes time for your emotions to catch up, I believe that he's getting to a place now where he understands not only what he's called to do, because he's understood that, but he's latched onto it even the more. And so, when I say he's an enterpriser, he's out there. He won't slow down. He's out there running all over the place, teaching everybody, flying everywhere speaking. He let me speak in August for him because that's his one month off, and then he came back and he said, "Okay, you're back to second string now. I got to keep going."

Dr. Tim Clinton: I can hear him say that.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah. "You're back to second string now."

Dr. Tim Clinton: He is actually speaking tonight here.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As our plenary speaker.

Jonathan Evans: But he's enjoying himself. He's enjoying the ministry. He's at this moment, 73 and strong, and he's loving life and where he is now. And he talks about it, "I want to finish stronger than I even started." So that's he's what he's doing.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I also wanted to ask you about your sister, Priscilla, and your brother Anthony, both who we have had conversations with here on Family Talk.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, so I got to start with the oldest, Crystal. She's going to listen and say, "Wait a minute."

Dr. Tim Clinton: "Where am I at?"

Jonathan Evans: So yeah. She's the oldest, she's holding it down for us. So she's doing really well and helping in the ministry and continuing to do all the things that she does. Priscilla, she's doing great. People always ask me, "She does so great in the movies. How long has she been acting?" I always tell them, "Her whole life. You just had to be in our house." So that's my thing with Priscilla. But she's doing really good, taking care of her family. She's got kids, two sons that are at Liberty University right now. One's playing football and one's on the basketball team.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Nice. Not a bad little school.

Jonathan Evans: Not a bad school.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I'm a little partial there.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah. Not a bad school. And Anthony is still doing well and singing and using his gift. And so, we're just continuing to go forward. Like I said, we're still on the field. My mom's gone.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Jonathan Evans: She retired, but we're still on the field playing and so we're just going to play hard.

Dr. Tim Clinton: My dad would say, "Keep on keeping on."

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I also wanted to ask you about Jonathan Pitts. Jonathan's been on here, and had some really meaningful time with him. How is he?

Kanika Evans: I'll jump in.

Jonathan Evans: Jump in.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kanika, please.

Kanika Evans: Jonathan is doing well. He and his family are doing well. And of course, his wife, Wynter, was one of my best friends. She was really like a sister to me, and so

losing her was very difficult, obviously, for the whole family. But they are doing well.

Jonathan Evans: And he has now since remarried. And so, Wynter passed in 2018, and so he remarried in 2021, October. And so, she's just awesome.

Kanika Evans: Yes. Mm-hmm.

Jonathan Evans: She's a great addition to the family, and so we're excited about what's going on in his life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kanika, I want to stay with you for a moment and go to your personal journey.

Kanika Evans: Okay.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Because we heard yesterday a little bit of the loss and the challenge in the family. When I say loss, I'm broadly speaking. We're talking miscarriages.

Kanika Evans: Right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We're talking family members, and how horrifying it was. I don't think people tend to allow their hearts to understand the depth of challenge or darkness that they sometimes go through. We want to pretend like it doesn't matter, but it does matter. And there are times when people feel like, yeah, tie a knot in the end of the rope and hang on. And those moments do come. We all have them. Even when you have a lot of mountaintops in your life, there can be some real low valleys. Can you go there with us and just again, I want to afresh, just talk about that journey. I want people to identify with you and then hear what God did in your heart.

Kanika Evans: Sure. I really think it's important to talk about miscarriage and what happened throughout our marriage. We actually had four miscarriages. And I remember when I had the first one, I didn't have anybody to talk to about it because I didn't know anyone who had had one. And as I started sharing my story with other people, then all of a sudden, people were like, "Oh yeah, I had a miscarriage." And I would hear from someone else, "Oh yeah, I had one, too." And for me I was like, "Wow. I don't want to not talk about it to where if someone else is going through this same thing later, that they don't have anybody to go to." And so, I feel like that's something that the Lord really put on my heart was, "This story is not just for you, it's for other people." So just wanted to start off by saying that.

But for us, we had two children initially, had no issues with conceiving them or carrying them, having them. Everything was fine, and so we felt like the Lord was telling us it was time to have another. And so, I had my first miscarriage. It was very shocking because I wasn't expecting it at all, obviously. And even the process of the miscarrying was very painful. I wasn't expecting that. Thankfully,

Jonathan was there when all of that happened. I got pregnant very close to after that happened and had a second miscarriage in a row.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Kanika Evans: And so, then I was like, "Okay, Lord. I feel like this was the plan you told us that was next. And so, what's going on?" And so, we just had to keep walking and keep going. He didn't change His plan for us. He didn't change His message to us. And so, then I got pregnant with my third child that's on Earth, Kamden. And if you ever meet him, you will never forget him. He's a ball of energy and he's just a really sweet kid. So we had Kamden, number three. We had Kylar, number four. And then, I felt like I wasn't done having kids, which really to me, I was like, "Am I crazy for wanting more kids? Because our life is already kind of chaotic and Jonathan's traveling."

Jonathan Evans: I was looking at you a little sideways myself.

Kanika Evans: Yes, Jonathan was like, "I think I'm good with four." But I did not feel finished. So we prayed about it. We were like, "Okay, let's just pray that the Lord will send us an answer on if we're supposed to have more children." And immediately, He started throwing up blinking lights basically and saying, "Yes. Number five. Yes, number five." We ran into one of his old teammates that he played with at Buffalo who had five children our same kids' age. And so, we were able to talk to him about, "How do you manage a husband..." I talked to his wife about how to manage a husband that's on the road and having five kids.

And then, we talked to someone else who was in ministry and had six kids. And so, we were like, "Okay, Lord. I guess you're saying yes." And so, then I got pregnant and had a miscarriage the week of Christmas, which was difficult because my kids were home. They were home from school. They were on Christmas break. And so, I couldn't really stop to process it. And maybe that was actually a gift, that I couldn't stop to process. I had to keep going.

And then, we got pregnant shortly after that and I miscarried the week of spring break. Again, my kids were home. And so, having another internal battle of, "I've got to stay strong for them and keep going," but also, "I'm feeling this loss and I'm also feeling like, 'Lord, you clearly told us that we are supposed to have another child.'"

And then, I get pregnant again. And during my pregnancy is when my cousin Wynter passed away. I was maybe four or five months pregnant at the time, and-

Jonathan Evans: She was the first person to know that you were pregnant.

Kanika Evans: Yes. She was the first person to know I was pregnant.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Who was very close to you.

Kanika Evans: Wynter was. Yes. And it was actually very beautiful, the fact that she was praying for this child that I was carrying at that time. And we never found out what the gender was of any of our kids before we had them. And so, after she passed, we both kind of together and even Wynter's husband, Jonathan said, "Well if y'all have a girl, y'all should name her Wynter." And Jonathan and I had already talked about that, but we didn't want to introduce it to the other Jonathan too soon. So when he said it, we were just like, "Oh." And so, my due date was December 20th. The baby ended up coming on December 21st. She was a girl. We named her Jade Wynter. And she was born on the first day of winter.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Really?

Jonathan Evans: December 21st was the first day of the season winter, which had to be perfect-

Kanika Evans: Timing.

Jonathan Evans: Timing.

Kanika Evans: Yes.

Jonathan Evans: In order to have the happiness, like God winking and saying, "I got this covered. I'm the God of losses, but I'm also the God of life."

Kanika Evans: Yeah.

Jonathan Evans: And so, He did that. And one thing that He taught me as we were going through that, first of all, supporting my wife because we're both losing, but that mother maternal thing, men don't, we don't have that. Okay? So we don't have it like women do. And so, being there to support her. But He also taught me that, "I didn't really tell you that I wanted you to have another child. I told you that I wanted another child that I was going to give to you. This is about me, not about you. This child will look like you secondarily, but I want them to look like me."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Jonathan Evans: And what happened is I had lost dependence on God for what's His, and I was saying, "Okay, we'll have another child now." It's almost like once we had the first two, there was a confidence there like, "Okay, it's time for the third one." And God was like, "No, no, no. This is much higher than you think." It's like Joshua ran up to fight Ai and got beat. He never even talked to God. He just ran up there and got beat because Ai was small, but Ai was high. And he didn't understand that that difference would be the difference in him winning and losing.

And so, it created a dependency on God to give Him what's His, not an independency from God to get what's mine. And that was the big lesson for me is like, "No. I've given you two kids. That was by my grace. And now you think you can just go win a battle. You think you can just have another kid by your own merit and by your own... No, no, no. You've done it before. You conquered Jericho. But that was me. Those stones of remembrance, you getting a new leader, all of that kind of stuff, in the book of...that was me. So don't just run up there thinking that you can just do whatever you want to do without me."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Right.

Jonathan Evans: And so, we learned a level of dependency on God, because sometimes you can win so much, you become independent. Then you become a loser, and then you become a dependent, and then you become a winner again. So you have to learn. So we had to learn to give Him what's His. And even in stewarding our kids, which is a battle, just raising kids is a battle. Through that we've learned, "Oh, these children, too, belong to you. We're stewarding this. We don't own this."

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's a perspective I think a lot of people don't really go there. They're almost afraid to go there, you know that?

Jonathan Evans: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But when you are able to have that kind of release-

Kanika Evans: Exactly.

Dr. Tim Clinton: ... then it can take a moment like the loss of Wynter, and somehow God takes that story, that narrative, and as the psalmist said, "Turns that mourning into dancing." Because you celebrate Him-

Kanika Evans: Absolutely.

Dr. Tim Clinton: ... and His goodness. That reframes everything. I want to mention a book that the family came out with, it's called *Divine Disruption*. It really is what we've been talking about for the last day and a half year on the broadcast, *Holding On To Faith When Life Breaks Your Heart*. I think the message in the book is all about joy. We know that verse that says, "The joy of the Lord is my strength." Can you just tell us a little bit about the heart of this message?

Jonathan Evans: Yeah. So, there was a movie out once that was called *Vantage Point*, and it was one story, but you got the vantage point. It's like the gospels, the different vantage points of what actually happened and how people felt and how they dealt with it and the position people were in. And so, what you get from *Divine Disruption* is our story of all of the, not just simply disruptions, but divine disruptions, where God was leading to destiny.

But you're getting all of our vantage points. You're getting to get at the table with our family because we have table talk often. And we're bringing all the readers and listeners, because we have it on audio form too, which is really cool, because we're reading it and you hear the different voices come in like a family conversation. And so, we're sitting at the table and we're letting people in on all of the vantage points, all of the vantage points of losing Wynter, losing my mom, how we saw our father as we were watching him fight this battle, because he loses his father November, 2019, flies up there, does his funeral, flies home to lose his wife December 30th of 2019. So 30 days apart, he loses his father and his wife. He gives his vantage point on all of that, how he dealt with that. We also give our vantage points on how we saw him deal with that and how the sturdy he was in the faith through that, but even his wobbly steps.

And so, just being able to use this that we went through as encouragement, but also to help people see it as not just a disruption, but a divine disruption, where we had to hold on faith with literally broken hearts.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

These past two days have been just mesmerizing, powerful. And as I think about it, a song's been popping up in my mind, "This is how we fight our battles. This is how we fight our battles. This is how we fight our battles." We win them on our knees. We win them aligned with a God who is there for us and who loves us. Sometimes we don't feel that. Sometimes we're confused by it, but nevertheless He is there. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." You are with us, God.

The battle plan, going forward. How or what do we do from this moment on? What do you say to those who are out there right now? They just turned it up and they said, "I'm in that. I'm in the fight. I'm in a fight right now. Somebody hear me. I'm in fight. God hear me, I'm in a fight. Please hear me right now. Help me win this battle."

Jonathan Evans:

Yes. Let's make a trade with God right now. He says in the book of Philippians, He says, "Pray, prayer with supplication. Make your requests known to Me and I'll give you a peace that surpasses under all understanding." So what I'm going to do is I'm going to pray. I'm going to fight on my knees. I'm going to recognize that this is a spiritual battle and I'm going to give Him my prayer. I'm going to make my request known. I'm going to give Him this burden. I'm going to give Him this battle and I'm going to let Him trade me His peace. And it's going to be a peace that surpasses all understanding. And you're going to know when you got there because you won't understand why you have peace. That's how you know have it.

And so, we have to learn how to recognize that the Bible says, "Come to me all ye who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Take this burden, because my burden is light and my yoke is easy." So the question is, "How do you know that you've given it to God?" Simple. You no longer are carrying the burden and you no longer are trying to manipulate the outcome. Once you give Him the burden, because you're no longer

manipulating the outcome, then you can rest while still watching the field get plowed.

That story is all about a big ox and a little ox. The big ox carries the burden while the little ox learns from the big ox. And the field continues to get plowed, but the little ox doesn't have to carry the burden while it gets plowed. And that's what God wants us to understand. The Bible is God trying to take responsibility, but He will not take responsibility from people who want to take His place. And so, it's time to give it to Him, learn from Him, plow the field with Him, and then let Him bring you to your destiny so that you can say not, "I did it," but "He did it and I'm happy to be a part of it."

Dr. Tim Clinton: This is how we fight our battles. Pain can be your prison or can become your passport. God help us. You guys are producing so much content, it's amazing. Where can people learn more about your book, the family book, and the Stories from the Storyteller cartoon series, right?

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tell us, where can they go and learn, find all this information?

Jonathan Evans: Definitely. So full name, Jonathan Blake Evans. So you can do that on Instagram or you can go to jonathanblakeevans.com. But if you look up that name, you'll be able to get everything there. We have link trees to all of that stuff, where you can get *Fighting Your Battles*. You can see the cartoon series for your families, your children. All of it is available at jonathanblakeevans.com or Jonathan Blake Evans Instagram.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I want to close with, I'm looking at your t-shirts, "Game day at Grace." Tell us a little bit about that. They're amazing shirts. You can probably go up online. Hopefully we'll post a picture up there of what they're wearing here as we do this interview. But tell us.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, so Game Day at Grace, first of all, it's got dual meanings. Our kids go to Grace Prep, which is a school here in Arlington, Texas. It kind of has a homeschool model. They go two or three days a week and come home the other days. And game day means we show up for their football games, volleyball games. It's a community, so we show up for all the games. And it's Game Day at Grace. But this is also the game we play in life, where it's like by His grace, we work. By His grace, we conquer. By His grace, we overcome. By His grace, we hold on. And by His grace, we never wave the white flag of surrendering, because by grace we're already delivered, we're already conquerors, more than conquerors. And so, every day is game day in this life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Love it.

Jonathan Evans: And it's game day by grace.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's generational legacy going on right here. Our special in-studio guests again, have been Jonathan and Kanika Evans. What a delight to have you both. The book, *Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory*. Get a copy of that book. Go up online right now and pick it up, *Fighting Your Battles*.

Well, hey, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, again, his wife, Shirley, the team at Family Talk, we again do salute you and pray that God would continue to do a great work, that he'd expand your borders in this great fight of life, bringing a message of hope and encouragement to people who need it. Thank you for joining us. Thank you.

Jonathan Evans: Thank you.

Kanika Evans: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and that was the conclusion of Dr. Tim Clinton's recent conversation with Jonathan and Kanika Evans. To learn more about the Evans family, their ministries for children and families, or where you can get a copy of Jonathan's new book called *Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory*, visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And when you're there, make sure to check out some of the cool photos of the Evans family along with Dr. Clinton taken during the interview right there. Now remember, you can also email our team with any questions about Family Talk or today's program or the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Our email address is constituentcare@dr.jamesdobson.org.

As always, thank you so much for your continued prayers and your faithful financial support. It's because of your generosity that we are able to continue to work in helping families thrive. You can make a donation to the JDFI online. It's all secure when you go to drjamesdobson.org. Or to learn how to give a gift over the phone, call (877) 732-6825. And remember, you can always send your tax deductible donation through the US mail. Our ministry mailing address is: The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, PO Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado. The zip code, 80949.

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And while we're on the topic of mail, did you know that Dr. Dobson also writes a free monthly newsletter that you can receive in the mail? In it, he tackles noteworthy topics and offers advice and encouragement for families in every season and stage of life. Now to sign up to receive a physical copy of Dr. Dobson's newsletter through the mail, or if you'd like one through email too,

simply visit us online at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Of course, if you'd prefer, you can also call us with your request at (877) 732-6825.

I'm Roger Marsh, and for all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute in Colorado Springs, Colorado, thanks so much for listening today and every day to Family Talk.

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

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, everyone. Did you know that radio is more popular now than ever? A new feature here at Family Talk we're excited to announce, it's called the Station Finder Feature. This is Dr. Tim Clinton for Family Talk. I want to tell you how you can listen to our daily broadcast on a station near you. Go to the broadcast menu at drjamesdobson.org. Then click on the Family Talk Radio Station's button. Once you're there, you're going to see an interactive map of radio affiliates, which by the way is growing every day. Simply click on your home state and then you'll see where our broadcast is airing in your town. Stop randomly spinning around the dial hoping to find Dr. Dobson and Family Talk. Go to drjamesdobson.org and take advantage of this brand new Station Finder Feature.