



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** The Bible Recap: Falling in Love with God's Word

**Guest(s):** Tara-Leigh Cobble

**Air Date:** August 6, 2021

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- Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and Family Talk is the listener supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Our guest on today's program is Tara-Leigh Cobble, the creator and host of *The Bible Recap* podcast. She's also the author of *The Bible Recap book: A One-Year Guide to Reading and Understanding the Entire Bible*. Tara-Leigh has a passion to help people fall in love with the word of God, and you will hear that passion in today's program. This interview is recorded at the 2021 National Religious Broadcasters Convention in Tara-Leigh's home city, Dallas, Texas. Our cohost, Dr. Tim Clinton, conducted the interview. Let's listen in now.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Tara-Leigh, thank you for joining us on this edition of Family Talk.
- Tara-Leigh Cobble: Thanks so much, Tim. Good to be here at Family Talk. I love all you guys are doing.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: You and I share a mutual love, and that is simply getting into God's word, and trying to make sure that we're not just spending time in it, that it comes alive in our everyday life. You've been involved and you've created a brand-new project called *The Bible Recap* podcast, you have a book, same name. Tell us a little bit about how it came about, and why it's important to you?
- Tara-Leigh Cobble: I grew up in a family that loves the Lord, in church three times a week. My dad was the head elder, just saturated in the Word. My family owns a Christian bookstore. I grew up in the aisles of that. That was my first job, and yet, by the time I launched into full-time ministry after college, I had not read the Bible. I had not read it. Certainly, didn't know fully who God was and didn't understand His character.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: I would think that's probably true of a lot of people.
- Tara-Leigh Cobble: I think it is. I think that's what breaks my heart, is that I was following a God that I didn't really know. And I wasn't approaching it as a relationship, I was

approaching it as a to-do list. And I started this podcast to help people read through the Bible and look for the character of God, not look for their to-do-list, not look for the promises that they want to claim for themselves, but to see who God was, because He's where the joy is, that's where the good stuff happens, it's in that relationship with Him. And I wanted them to know that the character of God, the person of Jesus, it's on every page of Scripture. I wanted them to see that, because I grew up in the church and never knew it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tara-Leigh, the issue of biblical illiteracy I've read that, we really have a problem. A lot of people don't really understand the word. A lot of people think maybe Joan of Arc is Noah's wife or something.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: They don't make the connection. Anchoring ourselves, I think most people desire to get into the Word, they want to know it better. When you think of Scriptures like 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and it's profitable for a lot of things, doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction and righteousness, that the man or woman of God may be perfect thoroughly finished on to every good work. What does that mean to you? Because I came through, I got trained as a pastor's major in undergrad. I minored in Greek. There were times when I think I was richly into God's word, trying to get my way through it. I think sometimes when people approach the Bible, they take, "Hey, I'm going to read my Bible through for a year. I'm going to get it done." They did it. I don't know that it did a lot for them.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Right. I think like you, I want people to read the Bible, but neither of us want it to stop there. We want them to understand the Bible and then we want them to love the Bible. We don't just want it read. We want it understood. We want it loved. And the way to love the Bible is to stop looking for ourselves in it. So I'll be honest. I spent my whole life dwelling in mostly Psalms and Proverbs, I would occasionally go to Song of Solomon, because that's the fun one. Right? And then I would read the New Testament books. I did not really dwell in the Old Testament. It felt foreign to me. And like a lot of people, it seemed like God got a personality transplant between the Old Testament and the New Testament. And so I didn't like to spend a lot of time there, except in the wisdom literature.

And when I started reading through the whole Bible, when I read through the whole thing, and I read it chronologically, the order that the story happened, not the way that it's laid out, I saw the story of God, I fell in love with the person of God. And that's why, when we talk about all Scripture being breathed out by God, and Jesus says that the Old Testament is all about him. And so, I don't have to wait to the New Testament to get to Jesus, He's in the whole Old Testament. He's all there on every page.

And when I started to see that, my heart was transformed. It wasn't just about a checklist item, this is not a box to check, this is air to breathe. This is the very source of my joy in my life. And I want people to not just view it as a bucket list

item like, "Someday I want to say I read the whole Bible." I tell them, I want you to read this every day for the rest of your life. And I want you to understand it, and I want you to love it. It is a relationship with the living God.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I like what you were saying about going to the Scriptures looking for myself, versus looking for God, and seeing God's character.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: So, every day on the podcast and at the end of every day's reading in the *Bible Recap* book, we do something called the God Shot, which is a snapshot of God and his character from that day. A lot of the things that I have read as I'm going through Bible studies, and I go to seminars and conferences, they end with this application point, what's your takeaway? What are you going to go? And how are you going to serve and honor God today? But I don't know about you, I don't want to serve and honor somebody I don't know and love. And so when we just teach people how to apply God's word, and how to obey a God they don't love, they're going to do it begrudgingly and not out of an overflow, out of a response, they're going to do it to try to earn something from him. They're going to view him wrongly.

And so, as I'm looking for application points and takeaways and all of this, here's what happens to me, Tim. When I fail at that day's application point, if the application point is walk in gentleness, but I get angry at the person who cuts me off in traffic, and I feel like I failed, then I come back to Scripture, if I come back at all, I come back with this burden, this heavy burden. But if I'm looking for God and his character on every page of the Bible, what He loves, what He hates, what motivates Him to do what He does, then I am buoyed through my day by the character and the person of God and the love that He has poured out and lavished on me, His daughter, and I live in that space out of my relationship with him. It is a response to love and not a task list. Now, absolutely there are things God calls us to do. There are application points.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sure.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: But I want to know him and love him and obey him out of that love.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee?" I don't know who said it, but sin will keep me from this book, and this book will keep me from sin. What's your take on that application for a moment? This word of God divides the soul.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: It reveals our hearts to us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It does.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: I think when I was looking for myself. I was serving as my own Pharisee. I was being the person who is setting about to attain my own righteousness. And Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, my burden is light. Take my yoke upon you." And

so I want to take his yoke upon me. I want to be following Him out of love, the spirit prompts this response of obedience in us. When we love Him, He prompts this love in us that we wouldn't have otherwise apart from His work in us. And I can't obey my way into that kind of thing. That is His work in me to transform my heart, and when I fall in love with Him, I'll do whatever He says. That is how the word lays me open, reveals my desires, reveals my ill motives. And then also transforms me as I fix my eyes on Him. He is the author and perfecter of my faith. He wrote it and He perfects it, not me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In today's culture we're flooded with all kinds of resources and tools. Things to help us "understand the Scriptures better and more." I don't have a problem with them, but when you only live in them and you don't live in the word of God, if you're not anchored in the Word of God. And when I look at today's generations, are you concerned about the younger generations and the instruction of Scripture?

Tara-Leigh Cobble: I'm concerned about all generations honestly. With the *Bible Recap*, we have listeners, today I met a 10-year-old who's doing the *Bible Recap* with his mom, and I met a 65-year-old who said, "I've never read through the Bible until now, until I did it with the *Bible Recap*." And so, people who've grown up in the church might be just as biblically illiterate as somebody who hasn't engaged with Scripture at all. But what I see in the younger generation that gives me hope for the younger generation, is I heard somebody say not long ago, that every generation asks a question that God uses to draw them to Himself. And so for my parents' generation, that question was what is true? And when they look for truth, they find the Lord. For another generation, the question is, what feels good? And you find a peace with the Lord that you don't find elsewhere in the world.

And for Gen Z, the question that they're asking is, what is beautiful? And so they're asking a question, what is beautiful? That's why Instagram is so slick and attractive. They want to know what's beautiful. And I'm telling you, the word of God, the person of God, the character of God, He is the most beautiful thing in the universe. And so, I know that He is using the beauty of who He is, and the beauty of His word. He's not going to give up, the church's not going to end. The gates of hell can't prevail against it then 2021 can't. And so, I know God is going to keep drawing people to Himself. This generation is not an exception.

And I'm excited about what God is doing through the church leaders that He's raising up in Gen Z. I've met them, I've talked to them, I'm excited. We don't need to be afraid. We need to boldly proclaim the love that we have for God and His Word. It's going to catch them and it's going to catch their friends, and it's going to catch whatever the next generation after them is called. The church will not be stopped.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Okay. So, let's go back to your passion, reading God's Word through in a systematic fashion.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tell us the process so we can begin to entertain that. And then I'm going to ask you some questions around that.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Okay. Great.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Like do you ever struggle reading, keeping your mind focused? It's like sometimes you have your phone on your table, you're in trouble. Right?

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah. Distractions. So, the process that we use with the *Bible Recap* is we do the one-year chronological reading plan.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Okay.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: And again, that's not front to back in your Bible, but it is the storyline as it happened. And I didn't know that, I thought the Bible was laid out chronologically. I didn't know it was laid out like a library, with sections, history, wisdom. And so, you read through it chronologically, it's about 12 minutes of reading a day for most people, and it's about three chapters a day, you read that 12 minutes and then with the *Bible Recap* podcasts, it's about an eight-minute podcast where I tell you what you just read, why it's important, maybe some cultural, or historical context that didn't make itself evident in the text. And then I try to answer the questions that people have about the text we just read, because to me, that was what kept me from reading the whole Bible all along, was I didn't understand it. Why is it important? Why do I need to know this?

Dr. Tim Clinton: I think it's true for a lot of people.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: They get to struggling, you try to go through Leviticus or something, it's like argh.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: And so, what I try to do with the podcast is assume what their questions might be, and then get ahead of those and answer them. So the minute they finish reading, they come and listen to my eight to 10 minute podcasts, and I explain what they just read and try to answer their questions. And they can do the podcast eight minutes a day, or they can do two pages in the book. Now it's a big book, but it's two pages a day, that's bite-size, it's manageable. And so, what I want to tell people is you can read through the whole Bible in a year, in 12 minutes a day. And if you have 20 minutes a day, you can do the Bible and this podcast, or the Bible and this book.

Dr. Tim Clinton: When you explain it like that you can sit back and say, "I can do that."

Tara-Leigh Cobble: It's so doable.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But people often get behind and then it stacks up and then they feel like they have to catch up and they can't catch up. So they feel ashamed. They have shame, and shame is like guilt. And then I just, what?

Tara-Leigh Cobble: You quit. Yeah, I'll start again next January 1st, that's what they do. Right? I tell my friends who are perfectionists, and sometimes I tell this to myself when my perfectionism comes out, is my perfectionism hasn't served me, it doesn't serve me well. It doesn't serve my relationships. It doesn't serve my heart. All it does is promote arrogance, if I nail it, or shame, if I fail it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: True.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: And so, I got to get rid of my perfectionism, and I want to be drawn into this, and every day that I read it, that's a win. So some people it may take them two and a half years to do a one-year Bible plan, that's okay. Every day that you're in God's Word, you're right on time. And you mentioned earlier, the obstacles that we encounter, our perfectionism is one of the obstacles, but also learning style is one of the obstacles.

Dr. Tim Clinton: True.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: So, some people aren't visual learners, some people are auditory learners. So we have great things like the Bible app, Bible.com If you don't have a smartphone, you can have the Bible read to you if you are an auditory learner. It will read it to you if you're a slow reader, if you can't read. There are technologies that will help you to be able to get the Word in your heart even if you don't get it in your eyes. Even when you're trying to read through those genealogies and you're like, "I'm trying to pronounce these names and I cannot," use the audio version on that date. Let them read it to you. And then that's not an obstacle. I want to get all the obstacles out of the way that keep people from reading, understanding and loving God's word. And other technologies like audio Bibles are helpful for that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Pain and confusion can also be a deterrent, because we get to thinking too much, or wondering if God really is there for me? If He was there for me life should be different, we place expectations on God, we place expectations on what we think should happen if we're faithful. I think people often question whether or not God sees their faithfulness. Do you find that as a barrier, or a challenge for people?

Tara-Leigh Cobble: I do think it is. I think it's very crafty of the enemy to sometimes use our time in God's word to make us doubt His goodness. And that happens often-

Dr. Tim Clinton: It does.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: ... if we're looking for ourselves. If we're looking for ourselves in Scripture and like, well, God's supposed to make all my dreams come true if I'm reading His Bible, if I'm being faithful, He's supposed to make everything happen the way I want it to. We get to that conclusion because we pull passages out of context to make them mean what we want them to mean instead of looking at them in context, or we reach that conclusion because we act like God is transactional instead of relational.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sure we do.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Makes sense.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: It's very natural.

And so, what I try to do with the podcast and the book is every day, looking for the goodness of God's character on those pages, and sometimes you have to zoom out to see it, because sometimes if you're a parent and you discipline your child and somebody walks in while you're disciplining them, they might view you as a bad parent. If you're withholding something from your child at the store that they want you to buy for them and somebody sees you telling them, "I'm not buying that for you," they might view you as mean and cruel and withholding, but when you zoom out and you see the whole lens of how that parent treats their child, how they love them well, how they serve them, how they sacrifice for them, how maybe they're withholding that present because maybe they already bought it for them and it's at home and it's waiting for them for their birthday. You never know.

So sometimes that little chunk of Scripture that we lean into and we're like, well, God, why aren't you being kind? If you zoom out and you see just His fatherhood over the whole storyline, and you see the beauty of who He is, that's where my heart gets unlocked from the lie that the enemy is trying to hold me captive with.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. And it's interesting, in the family we often struggle to get parents to spend time with kids, believe it or not.

I'm talking about meaningful parent child time. I'm not talking about dinner. I'm talking about I'm going to crawl in your world and spend 10, 15, 20 minutes a day with you. Same thing, I think spiritually, often people will come back and the argument is, "I don't have that kind of time."

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Or they don't perceive there's value reward on that side. How do you fight through that?

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah, on the days when you don't want to read, or you don't think you have the time?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yep.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: There are some days where I look at my Bible and I think, "Oh, I don't want to do that." Even after all this time, I'm on my 15th trip through. And even after all this time, there are days when I'm like, "oh," and you know what? I do it anyway. And there's always a joy for me in it. And sometimes all I learn is obedience. Sometimes all I learn is discipline. That's still good.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What have you learned about the character of God? Because I keep coming back to, I'd love how you say at the end of every devo, every piece, you're trying to teach me something about the character of God.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And in Proverbs it says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." I think a lot of people miss that piece.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah. So the verse that comes to mind, and then I'm going to go back to the fear of the Lord. The verse that comes to mind is Psalm 145:17. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and kind in all his works." He's not just doing what is best and right, he's doing what is kind. Sometimes no is His kindest answer to me. Sometimes if He were to say yes to the things I asked Him for, it would be less kind. And I don't have the omniscience to see that, but He does. And He knows, I'm going to be frustrated with Him in the meantime, yet He's still going to do what's best for me, even though I'm angry with Him, for what I don't understand and can't yet see, but when you said the fear of the Lord, that's also another thing that I have learned about looking for the character of God.

I once heard a pastor say that the fear of the Lord consists primarily of delight and awe. Every time we see that phrase, "fear of the Lord" in Scripture, the context of it and the particular word used in Hebrew has this different connotation than terror. It's this fear that is a fear that draws us near, it is delight and awe, it's like the way we feel about the Grand Canyon. We're in awe that we plan vacations to drive there and stand on the edge of it and look into it and be blown away by the magnitude of it knowing that if we fell in, it could kill us. It's powerful, it's magnificent, but we're drawn to this very powerful thing. Whereas the other kind of fear referenced in Scripture, totally different Hebrew word to reference it, I don't know what that Hebrew word is, because I don't speak Hebrew, but I've done the word study on it. And I can tell you that it's a totally different word, and it is the one that talks about terror and running from something.

The fear of the Lord actually draws us to Him instead of pushing us away from Him. It's a fear and a delight and awe, and that to me is what I see coming off



the pages of Scripture, the more I behold Him, the more I'm drawn to Him and captivated by Him, and the fear of the Lord is a, it's not a terror, it's a delight.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There's something also true about the written Word. Tara-Leigh, I could share something with you and it could mean something to you, but if you come back and it's written down and you're looking at the written Word, it's like a whole different value on it.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Thus sayeth the Lord. Here it is. So, as you go into these pages of God's word, you begin to realize, this is God's gift, his letter, his revelation of Himself to us. And then it's illuminated to us by the spirit of God. Can you speak to that too? About His spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and He illuminates the Scriptures to us.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah. So, He wrote it all. He wrote it all and He's so patient to reveal it to us and to help us understand what it means. The fact that the spirit of God dwells in believers, that we have this gift that nobody else has, that He helps us understand, He's like this translator making some of these very ancient, sometimes very confusing words, illuminating them. Like you said, making them make sense to us, making them jump off the page at us where they would normally fall flat. And maybe where they have fallen flat in the past, I'm sure you've had it happen, where verses that have never meant anything to you have jumped off the page, the verses that you've never understood and you're like, "What? How did I never see that?" And the Holy Spirit is the best teacher. And Jesus said, He will guide us into all truth, that the Spirit will guide us into the truth. And He does that. He's such a great teacher, such a great guide, so patient, and here's what I love about that besides just how awesome it is on its own.

I love that I'm going to be reading this book every day for the rest of my life, and it's never going to get boring. The Word of God is living and active. And this is every day has a transformative power in my life, because the Holy Spirit keeps teaching me. He keeps showing me new stuff. It's amazing. We wrote the *Bible Recap* podcast, we started in 2019. Do you know many episodes I've gone back to edit because I learned something new, even though I spent a hundred hours a week for 15 months building this content? And yet as I keep reading through Scripture, I'm like, "Oh, how did I not see that before, I got to go edit that episode and drop that in." That is the beauty of podcasts, is I can edit it and I can beef it up with the new knowledge.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I can't tell you how many times I have looked at certain passages, I've never seen it before.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Spiritual intimacy in marriage, our relationships. I think if there's a challenge, boy, that's a big one. I think it's partly because it demands such vulnerability. It's tough to pray with somebody, to read Scripture with somebody you don't like, or you're mad at. You know what I'm saying?

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And so, but nevertheless, there's something about when the Word of God intersects with human need, healing can take place. They say in marriage, you should never use Scripture to change your spouse, but you should always engage Scripture together because it will result in changed lives. That's the end game.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: And what he initiates He will sustain, and He will fulfill, not me. What I initiate, I will have to sustain, and I will probably fail at trying to fulfill it, but when God begins a relationship with a person, He will continue to work in them, to change them. And so, as the more we engage with Him, the more we become like Him. They say, you're the average of the five people you spend the most time with. If God is a person that you spend time with every day, you're going to become more like Him. You're going to be conformed to His image simply by being around Him. You're going to start to talk like He talks, you're going to start to recognize the words He uses. You're going to start to act like He acts just by being around Him more.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You are who you spend time with.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah. And so when you and your spouse are both doing that, guess what? You don't have to do the changing, because God is doing the changing. God is the one who's making your spouse more like Himself. I've heard from countless people who said, reading through the Bible together, they did the *Bible Recap* together, but I don't put the credit to the *Bible Recap*, I put the credit to the Bible, that because they decided to do this plan together, where they read through the Bible together, God saved their marriage and changed their life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Okay. I'm out of here, I'm listening, and I've just raised my hand, I want to know how to do the *Bible Recap*. What can I do? Where can I go? I want to be a part of the process.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: All right. Perfect. [TheBibleRecap.com/start](http://TheBibleRecap.com/start), gives you everything you need to know. Here's why we have that page built out, because there are people who were auditory learners, because there are people who are visual learners. So we give all the options. We have a plan on the Bible app, if people like to do technology, but if you don't like to do technology, I have a book, you can buy the book. There are just loads of options, free and costly. We have it in Spanish. We have it in American Sign Language. So the [BibleRecap.com/start](http://BibleRecap.com/start), tells you everything you need to know.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Tara-Leigh Cobble, our guest today. What a delightful conversation. It's all about getting back into God's Word. A lamp to our feet, a light to our path.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Yeah. I learned that a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, those are two different kinds of light. You may know this. I may be preaching to the choir here, but a lamp unto my feet is this foot lamp, it illuminates the very next step. And a light into our path is this blazing light of a thousand suns. So it is the personal intimate truth, but it's also the universal truth. It is everything personal and intimate to you and your relationship with God, the foot lamp, but it's also Jesus Christ, the light of the world illuminating everything.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow. What a delightful conversation. Thank you for joining us.

Tara-Leigh Cobble: Thanks for having me.

Roger Marsh: What a great reminder to not only read, or listen to Scripture every day, but to really study it and to know it. Now to find out more about Tara-Leigh Cobble and the Bible Recap, visit our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). That's [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). Well, our time is coming to a close for today. And now for Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, Dr. Tim Clinton, and all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, I'm Roger Marsh. God's blessings on you and your family. Have a great weekend.

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