



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Steeler for Life, Through Thick and Thin

Guest(s): Ben Roethlisberger

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Angela: I'm Angela with the Human Resources Department.

Andrea: I'm Andrea with the finance department.

Cyndi: I'm Cyndi from operations department. From all of us here at James Dobson Family Institute in Colorado Springs, thank you for your support. Have a blessed and Merry Christmas.

Roger Marsh: Merry Christmas season. You're listening to Family Talk. Thanks for joining us and making us a part of your day. I'm Roger Marsh. We are in the height of holiday party time, caroling, tree trimming, shopping, of course, and even the peak of football season. And while you may be watching the guys on the field, let's reflect on what makes a godly man off the field, to which the measure of a man is not determined by his physical strength or how much money he makes, or even by what he does for a living. Rather, it's the state of his heart and his relationship with Christ that truly matters. Well, you are in for a real treat today, our guest is legendary pro quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, who recently retired from the NFL at the start of 2022. He's a future Hall of Famer and a Super Bowl champ who holds many records and he will one day wear a yellow jacket in Canton.

But most importantly, he has come to realize through his relationship with God, that a real man is one who cares for the weak and walks in humility every day. Ben is a two-time Super Bowl champion. He's played quarterback for the NFL's Pittsburgh Steelers for 18 seasons. In his first year in the league, he was selected as Offensive Rookie of the Year and was a six-time Pro Bowl selection as well. He rose to fame after he led the Steelers to victory over the Seattle Seahawks in Super Bowl 40. Upon his retirement earlier this year, Ben Roethlisberger ranked fifth all time in NFL career passing yards, eighth all time in touchdowns, and fifth in completions among quarterbacks with a minimum of 1500 career attempts. Apart from football, Ben and his family of started a foundation with the mission of forging stronger families. He and his wife, Ashley, have three children and make their home in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

As we prepare to listen to today's interview, just let me express that listeners like you have such a huge impact on the success of our program. A special

opportunity happening just in this month of December is a matching grant. This grant has been provided by some ministry friends. This grant ensures that each dollar is doubled and will make twice the impact on our ministry programs and resources. If you want to take advantage of this opportunity, simply visit drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org or call 877-732-6825. Again, that's 877-732-6825. Friends, we always want to hear from you, your prayers, questions, and comments. Don't hesitate to reach out, especially during this holiday season.

Now, earlier this year, right after announcing his retirement, Ben Roethlisberger spoke at a Men's Ignite event in Lynchburg, Virginia. It's an annual event hosted by our own Dr. Tim Clinton, with the purpose of encouraging men to be strong leaders in their families and their communities. Ben shared some encouraging words with the men attending the conference. Ben joined his close friend, Dr. Clinton, backstage to answer a few in-depth questions. This conversation is also included in this year's 2022 Best of Broadcast collection. Let's listen now to Dr. Tim Clinton and guest, Ben Roethlisberger.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ben, I know we've been talking a little bit, one on one, about change. It's interesting for men when they leave something, they really need to be thinking about where they're going. And talk to us a little bit about what's going on inside of you, your heart, your mind, as you turn the page to a new chapter in life.

Ben Roethlisberger: Yeah, people have been asking me a lot recently, "What does retirement feel like?" And I said, "It doesn't feel like anything yet." But being my wife's personal assistant is way harder than football. You know what, it's been a blessing because I get up in the mornings, I have some devotional time, and then I'm packing the kids' lunches and I'm getting them breakfast, and then I'm getting them to school. Letting my wife kind of have a break and do things. And the next chapter's really just about being the best husband and father I can be. I always felt like I did a good job of it even during football, but now I can really focus on it even more. And so, I want to pour into my kids. I love trying to reach and teach them about Jesus. And so that's my main focus, is getting them prepared for the world and getting ready to go. And as we're doing that, we're transitioning into doing some things that are passionate to me, which is the outdoors and my connection with my boys. Obviously, I got a daughter, I'm not taking anything away from my daughter. Obviously, we know a father's love for his daughter.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Baylee's got some energy too, man.

Ben Roethlisberger: She does.

Dr. Tim Clinton: She's special.

Ben Roethlisberger: But I'm close with my father still. Obviously, he's still around. And so, I want to do a lot of father-son things outdoors. It seems right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I want you to speak to our listeners out there. For a lot of us, what we do is who we are. It's our identity. And I want to go back to a statement you made that, your identity in Christ, if you don't get that stuff straight, you're right, we're going to go into a total spin. We're going to get knocked down so hard that we're going to struggle to get up and find our way. As you look to the future, these are tough times, but the beautiful thing is, I really believe this, God's at work.

Ben Roethlisberger: For sure. I've said it many times, football's what I do, it's not who I am. So, like you say, sometimes we get our identity from, I'm a banker, I'm a teacher, I'm a whatever my job is. But really, that's just what you're doing. It's not who you are. Our identity needs to be in Christ and who are we in Him. We know how He views us, but how do we see ourselves in His eyes? And so that's kind of my big thing is I want to help boys, young men. We've all go through trials, we go through tribulations, and none of us are out of that woods. We're all going to go through them at some point again. And so, I want to just equip people to be prepared and ready for it when the time comes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And as we press into Him, He will direct our paths. That's that Proverbs three, verses five and six, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not unto your own understandings, but in all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your path." You talked about accountability partners, and I know who it is in your life, but talk to that issue, how significant it is and who and what that is in your life.

Ben Roethlisberger: I've got some really close Christian friends, great group of guys, a small group at our house that we meet and this, that and the other and great couple stuff. And they're great men. But there's one specific person, Spencer Tao. He is a great, great man of God, great family man. Just had his first child and so he's actually about 10 years younger than me, which seems crazy that you could have someone in such an age gap, which it just shows that you don't need to have someone so close in age or someone that's just like you. We're 10 years apart in age, but he is wise, wise beyond his years. And so, he's my accountability guy and I'm his. We get together, we try to get together at least once a week, just he and I. And what we do, we'll sit downstairs in the basement, we'll watch a game and we'll talk about life.

It doesn't always get deep. It doesn't get emotional every time, but it's just, "Hey, how you doing? Anything going on?" And I think that's important. I think it's important to have that accountability guy, someone that can check on you, someone that you're not afraid to talk to. I've said many times, my wife is my best friend. We talk about everything. There's no real secrets that we have from each other, but there still needs to be a man that you can ... There's something different between talking to your wife, even though she's your best friend and talking to a man, a guy that you trust, that you can confide in and have that time with. And so, I've got a guy like that and I encourage people to find somebody

like that if you can. You have to be the same thing to them. They've got to trust you too and just pour into them and don't be afraid of it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That safety creates an opportunity for authenticity, transparency. And by the way, growth. I really believe that, two are better than one, for there's a greater reward for their labor. And a threefold strand, Solomon said, is not easily broken. The power of friendships, it's transformational. Ben, as you go forward, I know a lot of people going to have their eyes on you. They're going to see how you handle all this. And they're waiting to see what God's going to continue to do in and through you. And I know I here at Family Talk, our prayer is that God would do a great and mighty work, continued, in you and through you.

Ben Roethlisberger: Thank you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Especially for such a time as this.

Ben Roethlisberger: I appreciate it. We'll take all the prayers we can get. We're excited for the future and what it holds. And like I said, doing stuff with fathers and sons is going to be so exciting. I tell people I think that's missing in society, the outdoors and fathers.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ben, there's something that happens when men get together. Let's pray that God would raise up a generation of men who are bold and strong and courageous, willing to stand.

Ben Roethlisberger: Bold and strong and courageous doesn't mean I need to lift the most weights and be the biggest guy in the room. Being bold and strong and courageous means that I'm okay to be vulnerable. I'm okay to admit my failures, admit that I need help because we all need it. And so, I encourage people to do that listening is, don't be afraid to seek help, to seek the advice of a peer that you trust. It doesn't have to be a pastor. It can just be a good buddy that you trust, that you guys can just pour into. I don't know too many people in the world that, if I have a lot of problems and I run to them, that are going to run to me. They're going to run from my problems because they don't want to help you. Find that one good buddy. Jesus is always, he's going to come to you, he's going to help you. But find someone that can be there, that you can really you can pour into because that's what it is. Being vulnerable is strength.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Ben, such a delight to have you join us here and we pray God's special blessings over you, Ashley, and your family.

Ben Roethlisberger: Thanks, Doc, appreciate it.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Hope you're enjoying Dr. Tim Clinton's conversation with Ben Roethlisberger backstage at the 2022 Men's Ignite from earlier this year. Ben is now retired from football after his 18-season NFL career and was just sharing with Dr. Clinton his outlook on life after football

and what plans he has for the future. As we jump back into the conversation, you'll hear Ben's heart and passion for all men to step up and to lead their families.

This presentation is also included in the 2022 Best of Broadcast collection. If you'd like to order yours today for a suggested donation of \$50, simply visit drjamesdobson.org. Now let's rejoin the conversation with Dr. Clinton and Ben Roethlisberger right here on Family Talk.

- Ben Roethlisberger: Y'all trying to give me to come out of retirement, huh? They wanted me to throw footballs. I said, "No, I'm retired."
- Dr. Tim Clinton: How many of you were at the last event when Big Ben was here with us? Say give a shout out real quick. Give a shout out. That's right, you guys. I'm going to tell you what, Ben, you got some pressure on you. Probably a little nervous because-
- Ben Roethlisberger: A little.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: He has the boss in the room, y'all.
- Ben Roethlisberger: Oh yeah.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: And his son. Would you guys please help us? Welcome Ashley Roethlisberger and his son, Benjamin. Over here. Ashley, shout out. Stand up.
- Ben Roethlisberger: Oh, she said no.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Benjamin. There we go.
- Ben Roethlisberger: It's cool, because the last time my dad came.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Yes, he was.
- Ben Roethlisberger: My dad was here last time and this time my son came. So, it was kind of cool, the whole circle. I think my dad didn't want to come because he didn't want to cry again. And I know y'all going to try and make me cry again. Can't believe it's been 2017, how long it's been. We just talked about my kids being here now, my oldest son being here, and that's what it's all about, being a dad and a husband. Also, before we get going too far, I think, what did you say, 250 men raised their hands or stood up to give their life to Christ. To me, I tip my cap to y'all because that's being a real man. You can say what you want about being a tough football player and outdoorsman, things like that. To raise your hand, stand up, whatever y'all did, and be vulnerable. Being vulnerable in a room full of other men is not easy to do. And so, I just want to take a moment to say congratulations. Thank you. And vulnerability is not easy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ben, a few years ago, I got a phone call, you and I chatted for a little bit and we talked about where you were at in your life and God was impressing on your heart about baptism. And we talked back and forth a little bit. I want you to share a little bit of what was in your heart and what happened.

Ben Roethlisberger: Right. So, I was baptized as a baby, which we dedicated, called dedicated, but I was baptized. And so, growing up in life and everything, I never made the decision to be baptized myself. And as my faith grew over the last few years, coming to the conference and speaking to everybody and just realizing ... I'll go back. I left school early; I left college early to go to the NFL. How can I tell my kids how important school is if I don't graduate? So, I went back and got my college degree and felt like that was important. So same sort of thing. How can I tell my kids how important God is, baptism is, showing the outward expression of my faith if I don't do something like that? So, in 2018, gave you a shout, and I was blessed to be baptized by this man right here just because I wanted to make the outward expression to, very small, my family.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It was a moment.

Ben Roethlisberger: It was. It was special and it was just felt right. It felt like I was at a point in my life and my walk that I wanted to express to my kids, to my family, where I was and where I want to go. Probably a couple years ago, I said, football's about fourth on my list of importance. And that didn't sit well with some Steeler fans because it's football and I get it. It doesn't mean that I didn't care and I don't love it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's right.

Ben Roethlisberger: But God was first. My wife was second, my kids were third, or my family were third. And then football fell into it. And that doesn't mean I can't get on the football field and give everything I have and live, die, and breathe for it. But off the field, it has to fall into place. And so, I think the last five years, it really was easier for me to put into place because my faith had grown so much. And because I was able to do that, it made everything else that, as the trickle down effect happens, everything else just became easier. Football became easier. Being a leader and a quarterback became easier. Giving my testimony became easier. Talking to people about my faith became easier. And I think that's what it's all about, because I would say early on football's what I do, it's not who I am. I don't think I really believed it until more recently. Football's what I do. No, not anymore, but it's what I used to do, not who I am. That's kind of where my life is, has transitioned to the last few years.

Dr. Tim Clinton: 18 year career in the NFL, 2021 season started. And when they went through that three-game losing skid, social media, everything's blowing up. This guy's taken so many hits, he's old, whatever, blah, blah, blah. And all this gibber jabber's going on. All of a sudden, the win against Denver and things begin to turn. All of a sudden, Pittsburgh, everybody's starting to believe, "Hey, wait a second, who knows what's going to happen?" Let's fast forward to December,

setting the table up for a Monday night game in Heinz Field. Hey, the journey up to this point has been, is Roethlisberger going to retire? Could this be the last game? Could this be the moment? And at the same time, they've got to win. Hopefully, they'll get a win here against Baker and maybe somehow this thing will work out and they'll keep going on. But Monday night football, this is the deal.

And I'll tell you what, early in that week you and I talked briefly and we just chatted about that moment that was coming. And it was a big night. What was interesting to me was God was setting a table here for a second because I think something special was going to happen. Was there anybody who didn't watch that Monday night game, because everybody thought they're witnessing history and the end of an era. I want to ask you, Ben, leading up to that week, you love Pittsburgh. Man, Pittsburgh's done so much for you and you represent that Steel City in so many ways. Just hard-nosed, let's get it done, let's get out there and go to battle. But how do you get ready for that moment?

Ben Roethlisberger: I was nervous. I was scared. You have so many emotions running through because Pittsburgh is home and Pittsburgh is where we're going to live. We live there now; we're going to stay there. And so, I remember saying, "Man, what if I go out and don't play well? What if we lose?" There were so many, those doubts start to creep in sometimes. And it's like, yeah, I've had a great career, I've won Super Bowls there. I've won a ton of football games there. But to me, I felt like if I lost that one game, would it all be erased? And so that was just my insecurities there, creeping in, the devil, whatever it was, was creeping in, just telling me, man, you've got to go out and do this. And I think sometimes we worry so much about getting measured as men and as people by what we do and we don't live in the right here and right now. And if I'd lost that game, at the end of the day, who cares? Just understand what it's all about. And so going to that game, I tried to make it as normal of a football game as possible, but it's impossible when you know that it's probably your last home game in front of the fans that have just meant so much to me and my family. It was emotional.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That night, I really believe this is all my heart, America became Steeler fans. I'll tell you what, it was emotional because I think everybody knew this was the last time we're going to see Big Ben in Heinz Field. And we knew what God was doing in your heart and life and we were resonating with you. You know that, and saying, "Let's just celebrate this and may God use it as a platform." Let's fast forward. Game's crazy, all over the place. Naji Harris scores a touchdown.

Ben Roethlisberger: I thought, okay, when Naj scored, it was great on the sideline. We just won my last game at Heinz Field and it was against the Browns, even more special. And I'm just kind of standing there and guys are coming up to me and this, that and the other. And then the interception happens and it's like, holy cow, I have to go back on the field. Mason Rudolph the backup, he grabbed this helmet. I'm like, huh? No. No, sir.

Dr. Tim Clinton: No, not yet.

Ben Roethlisberger: And so, I ran back out there. I was shaking. I was like, "Just don't fumble it. Please don't fumble it." Take that knee. But the coolest thing about that whole night, even more than the win and all that was having my family there. I had so many friends of family came to that game, but on the field, I didn't know you showed the picture. Out of the tunnel, all three of my kids came and ran and about tackled me. And to have them with me, and then Ashley was there, and then my parents, my sister, my agent, people that mean the most to me, that meant the most to me as having my family there. They were at every game. They're at every step of the way. But to have them on the field with me to walk off like that together, to get hugs, and it just meant the most to me because are everything.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It reminded me of my dad, one of my last times with my dad. He said, "Tim, remember this, it all started with my family." And he said, "It ended with my family." He said, "Remember that. Keep that in your heart." Ben, you're in retirement. A friend of mine, Jack Graham, retweeted a piece that you did and in one of your interviews. They said, "What are you going to do?" You talked about advancing the kingdom of God. It was it about ministry, my family, just some ministry work and advancing the kingdom of God. Ben, talk to us about what you're thinking. Where's this going?

Ben Roethlisberger: I feel like that's been my mission now for the last four or five years. And then about a year, a year or two ago, I really felt God was telling me that He wants me to do something with fathers and sons. I'm very close with my dad. Obviously, I've got two boys. And I feel like what's missing in today's society are two things. There's a lot of things missing in society, but a father, a father figure and the outdoors. I started thinking, man, I would love to take fathers and sons and let them reconnect together outside somewhere. And about a mile down the road from our house where we live now, a beautiful farm went for sale and we just felt like we should buy that and do everything there. Do a father-son retreat on this property so that I don't have to travel and be away from my family. They literally can just go and be right there.

And so, we're changing the Ben Roethlisberger Foundation. It used to do K9 dogs and we gave almost \$2 million to police and fire and rescue dogs. And it was amazing. Yeah, we loved it. It was special. It really meant a lot. And we're actually in the process of transitioning to the Roethlisberger Family Foundation because we want to help families. The family unit and fathers and sons are a part of that. We want to do marriage things. So, we have this beautiful farm, this beautiful property. Fishing. We have horses on there. We're going to have a big farmhouse my wife is redoing for people to stay at. And so, we want to connect fathers and sons because I feel like that's important. I feel like it's lost to a certain extent and it's what I feel passionate about.

So that's kind of where we are transitioning into. What you talked about, we all get knocked down and life is full of peaks and valleys and it's easy to give God the glory when we're on top of the mountain. It's, can we give God the glory even when we're in the valley? I told you guys that got vulnerable out here and raise your hand in front of other men. That's what I want to do at my retreat is, I want, as a father, to get up in front of other men and get emotional talking about my son, because there's nothing wrong with communicating to my son or to other men that it's okay to cry. It's okay to be vulnerable. It's okay to communicate. So that's what I'll tell y'all is just be vulnerable. Communicate with your spouses, communicate with your kids.

And the last thing I would say if I have a moment is, find some buddy in your life that's a friend that you can trust, that you can share with. We always talk about my wife is my best friend, there's no doubt about it, and we share everything. But there are things that you need a man in your life to communicate with, so if you have someone, keep them tight, be a close friend to them and let them into your life. Because as men, we need some buddy like that that we can be close with, we can be vulnerable with, that we can communicate with.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I celebrate that. Amen.

Roger Marsh: Inspiring words from Ben Roethlisberger, a godly man who models what it takes to be in service to others. As a dad, Big Ben wants to change the narrative for sons and men in order for them to become bold, strong, and courageous.

Now, earlier in 2022, Ben announced his retirement and now he finally has more time to spend raising his kids to be present with and to serve his wife and to focus on the mission of the Roethlisberger Family Foundation. Find out more about Ben and his foundation by going to our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

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Feel free to send us your prayer requests, notes of encouragement, and even your questions. We really love hearing from you. And remember, this month of December, we have a matching grant in place. That means any gift you give to

us here at Family Talk will be doubled. Thank you for making us a part of your day and for listening to another edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. God's richest blessings to you. Please join us again next time.

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