



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Stories from The Storyteller: Life Lessons from the Parables of Jesus

**Guest(s):** Jonathan Evans

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a 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:** Welcome in to Family Talk, a division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host of the broadcast. I'm honored to serve alongside Dr. Dobson as the resident authority on mental health and relationships here at the JDFI. I also serve as president of the American Association of Christian Counselors. Thank you for joining us today.

As parents, we want nothing more than for our kids to know Jesus, to have a relationship with Him. This is something that's always weighed heavy on Dr. Dobson's heart, and he likens it to running a relay race, and that most critical moment in the race of passing the baton. The passing of the baton, or as I unpack the analogy, the passing of our faith to our children must be done with intention, with care, and it can't be fumbled. If it's wobbly, or worse, botched, the race is lost.

Done correctly, the runner on the team moves in stride and succeeds with great success. Mom, dad, don't fumble the baton. Don't cause your kids to drop the most precious gift that's theirs in the great race. The Great Commission is indeed the greatest assignment our creator bestows on us as parents. And with that, I can't think of a better example of a son of a godly man to discuss this topic with. He's dad to five beautiful kids. He's a runner and a doer in life with a strong sense of purpose, who does not plan to disappoint in the assignment of transference. Why? His mom and dad passed the baton to him and he and his wife are in lockstep on how to pass their faith onto their kids with accurate precision from generation to generation to generation.

His name, Jonathan Evans. He's an author, speaker, mentor, and former NFL fullback who treasures his relationship with Christ, along with the opportunity to use his life to glorify God. A graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary with a master's degree in Christian leadership, Jonathan serves as chaplain of the Dallas Cowboys, co-chaplain of the Dallas Mavericks. He also travels the country speaking at churches, conferences, men's events, banquets and youth and Christian athlete events. Jonathan serves with his pastor, friend and father, Dr.

Tony Evans, both in the local church and now in national ministry. He's the author of *Fighting Your Battles, Your Time is Now*, and the recent release, *Stories from the Storyteller*, which we're going to talk about today.

Jonathan and his wife, Kanika are proud parents of five children. They make their home in Dallas, Texas. Jonathan, what a delight to have you back. Thank you so much for joining us. Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, say hello to you and your family.

Jonathan Evans: Well, we send our love right back to them. They've been so instrumental in our family and so I'm just excited to be back.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah, Jonathan, last time you were with us, Kanika was with us. And you have five children. You have a football team.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, definitely.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow. Listen, what joy? I bet it's wild though.

Jonathan Evans: It is wild. It is wild. 14 to four.

Dr. Tim Clinton: 14 to four.

Jonathan Evans: Yep. Yep. It is wild, but it's fun. And I know people tell me all the time, these are the days I'm going to miss, so I'm soaking them in.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan, we're going to talk about a new book, work of yours, *Stories from the Storyteller: Life Lessons from the Parables of Jesus*. And it's really a gift to families. You want to connect them, you want the power of the word to come alive. But before we go there, I want to just talk about our kids, what they're up against, that digital device and more. Everything's coming at our children today. And it seems like everything's ripping and tearing at the Christian family, the home. What are you seeing, Jonathan? You're out in the front lines. This obviously is a passion of yours. You wouldn't have invested this much time into something if it didn't burn inside your heart.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, absolutely. With five kids, I'm thinking about the resources that they have, what they're watching, what they see with these digital devices and all of these different things. They have the world's information at their fingertips at a young age. And that's something that we didn't have to deal with growing up. And so I wanted to make sure that I'm not just complaining about a problem, but I'm being salt to the problem. And I really wanted to make sure that we created a resource that they love, that's exciting, that's fun, but that can really speak to their spirit. Your immortality lies in your children and their children and their children like theirs. There's nothing more important than that, and then having a legacy that's connected to Jesus Christ. And so if you attain the world but you

turn around and you look back and you see that your family is lost, then it's all meaningless. And so I wanted to bring the family together.

That's how we were raised, we were raised around the table based on Psalm 128. And my dad and mom would always sit us around the table every single night. We would turn off the one device we have, which was a TV in the middle of the den, and it was like a spotlight on that table every single night for dinner. And so my dad said that a Jewish father would not use the table just for eating. He would use it for leading. And so he'd put us to the table. He'd ask my mom to cook for two reasons. Number one, because he couldn't cook. And number two, because he couldn't cook. And so he would use the food to get around the table. And we'd get around the table and my dad and my mom would start asking my sisters, which was always fun to me. "Who are you dating? Who do you like at school?" They'd start getting into their business.

They'd get into my business and my sisters would say, "Hey, you're getting into our business." And he'd say, "This is my house. This is my business." And so he trained us that way. And then at the end of small talk and having fun as a family, he'd open up the Word, have us all read a Scripture. He'd say, "What do you think it means?" We'd tell him. And then the great philosopher, and "let me tell you what it really means." He'd always correct us. And then we would play board games. We would bring out Monopoly and a different board. So we had this family time that we all remember. All four siblings can tell you about our family time. And family time seems to have been lost by the human trinity, me, myself, and I and what I had to accomplish.

And kids are getting stiff-armed today and we wonder what's going on. Our kids are coming out with no conscience more and more. They're just doing whatever they want to do, doing whatever is right in their own eyes. But there hadn't been that concentrated time of really pouring into their souls. And so we wanted to create a resource that's fun for kids. But it also goes back to the old school a little bit, begging for bedtime. It's tucking your kids in at night, reading stories to them. The book has QR codes where they can watch cartoons with every story in the book. And so it's just an enjoyable time to try to bring back what I had as a kid to more families.

Dr. Tim Clinton: John, I want to make sure and connect dots here for our listening audience. Your mom and dad are Dr. Tony Evans.

Jonathan Evans: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And your mother, Lois.

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And what they mean to you and that legacy that was given to you. Your mom went on to be with the Lord. And I've interviewed your dad many times, but it's

the power of familia, that family that lives on inside of you because it's transmitted generationally, the good and the bad.

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's what we're looking at here. And it's about making sure that we understand the good and give that beautiful gift to our children and our children's children. Talk about faith, why it's so important to you. You came in saying, "Tim, it's about making sure we get the Word into our kids."

Jonathan Evans: That's right. That's what it's about. It's about passing on the faith. We don't want to be like after Joshua passed away there grew up a generation that did not know the Lord. And so we want to make sure that we put them in an environment of faith, not because we're acting, but because we're actually passing on a baton that we actually hold. And so one of the things that I'm excited about when it comes to my parents is the people that they were on the stage weren't different in the house. And a lot of kids are experiencing a contradiction between what we do on Sunday and who I'm with on Monday. And if we can start being who we really are, start actually holding the baton that we want to pass, then it won't be confusing to a lot of our kids. I think that's number one.

I think the other thing is just making sure that we also understand as parents that the power of God is who saves. And so a lot of parents are stressing themselves out because they're like, Hey, I did everything. I taught them the word, I took them to church, but they've gone left or gone wayward or I don't know if they're saved. Well, then that's when you have to depend on the power of prayer. Because as human beings, we don't save anybody. We try to put them in the best environment. We try to pass on the baton, but we don't save anybody. And God is the one who does. And so you do the best you can and then you put it in God's hands. And that's what I tell parents. I tell them this. God put Adam and Eve in a perfect environment as perfect people with His perfect presence and they still messed it up.

So you can't create a better environment than God. You can't be a better father than God. And sometimes kids make different decisions than the environment that you put them in or the person or parent that you are, but you have to pray and put them in the hands of God.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We often heard that old saying that the family that prays together stays together.

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I expanded a little bit, Jonathan. I say now the family that prays together, plays together, and eats together, stays together. There's something that's happening about connection.

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That generational transmission is taking place. That's what people don't really get. If you can just get together, oh, we don't know what to do. Just get together.

Jonathan Evans: Just be, yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It'll start happening. The dynamic that starts taking place is unbelievable. There's wisdom that starts developing about what you like or don't like. You learn how to begin talking together. And the things that are important, things that motivate things that encourage, the things that strengthen, these 10,000 strands that Dr. Dobson talks about, begin to take root in that relationship. It's everything. Jonathan, in this, I want to make sure our listeners hear what you've committed to in this new book, *Stories from the Storyteller: Life Lessons from the Parables of Jesus*. I loved it. You're talking about the parable talents, you talk about working hard, chores. I was reading through it and the gadgets and everything. But you talk about getting outside, seeing God and more. Tell us what you were trying to get done and how this has helped you strengthen your relationship with your children and their faith walk.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, so we used, like you said, modern stories. These are actually stories that already happened in our family.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah, your family.

Jonathan Evans: They give me so many illustrations. And so it's so fun coming up with those stories that we've actually had in our family. But a lot of the illustrations that we've had in our family tie back to the prodigal son. It ties back to the talents. It ties back to building your house on a rock and not building it on sand. It ties back to those stories of Jesus Christ. And so I wanted to bring those stories, those modern stories that parents actually deal with, with gadgets and kids not wanting to play outside like we used to play outside. They'd rather stay inside. So I've got all of those modern stories that families can identify with truly bringing them from laughter to God's lane. But it's really about using those stories to bring families together to where they can laugh and learn. And that's what it's about. And it's not only just a book, but as I said before, it's a cartoon series. It's a whole cartoon series where kids can go watch the cartoons, read the book. There's QR codes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: So you've built video related to the content in there too.

Jonathan Evans: That's right. A whole cartoons series.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Because some of us are visual, some like to read, some people want to watch and they want get into the story. Ultimately, all converging into that same nexus, that same point.

Jonathan Evans: That's right. That's right. So the cartoon series and the words on the book are co-laboring together. So it's really good. It's really fun. And I know that the kids like, I have five of them, so you can't tell me that your kids aren't grabbing at your gadgets all day. So they're grabbing at your gadgets all day. Well, now they can pick it up and hold it and we'll have the Stories from the Storyteller app where you don't have to worry about them being on YouTube. You don't have to worry about where they are online.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sure.

Jonathan Evans: They open up the app.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Straight to the app.

Jonathan Evans: They can just binge watch the cartoons and you know they're being fed something that's true.

Dr. Tim Clinton: By the way, your children help put this together, right?

Jonathan Evans: Yes, they did. They did all of the voiceovers. They helped with the script because of their lines that they have. And so they put a lot of work into it because I wanted the kids not just to watch me and Kanika do ministry, I wanted them to be a part of the impact. So I wanted them to learn, oh man, this is how you can actually use your gifts and skills to glorify God.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I was reading through Kids being Kids. There was a story in there about cleaning, cleaning up around the house.

Jonathan Evans: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Beautiful story. Just teaching responsibility and getting it right and how, "be sure your sins will find you out."

Jonathan Evans: Don't bury it in the sand, that's for sure.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Don't do that. Jonathan, when you look back and just reflect on these stories and maybe the connecting points with your own children, what puts that smile on your face?

Jonathan Evans: Well, just knowing, again, that we can use those kids. And I laugh when I read the stories. You got the prodigal son and you got Kamden and Kylar running off. They run off into the, I think, it was a carnival we went to. And they want, me and mom, spread the tickets out. We're like, "Hey, we spent our money, we got all the tickets. Let us take you through the park slowly." They said, "No, give me my tickets now." So they went and spent them all in 10 minutes. And so then they come back asking for their tickets and we're like, "Guys, you're done. You have to sit out because you weren't willing to wait. You wanted your inheritance

up front, so now you squandered it all." So those are the connecting points. And so I spend my time laughing through this book because I'm like, "Man, this really happened, but it really connects back to spiritual truth." And so being able to do that with your family, have those laughs, it's just fun.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan, I read that story and it made me laugh. What really made me smile was, you're not just putting a message in their heart, you're building a memory in their heart that, no matter what, it's family. That's what God wants to do in and through our family, this responsibility that we have. And was there any reason that you closed all these stories with, "and everybody jumped in bed with mom and dad?"

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, because it's being together. For us, it was being around the table, but for you, it may be bedtime. Or for you, it may be something different that your family comes together around. But we wanted to come together and we knew that this was a resource that would have kids begging for bedtime, that would have kids saying, you know what, I know when it's bedtime. Mom and dad are going to crowd around, or mom or dad, to really have this family time. Like you said, it's about the memories as well. All of my siblings, we remember vividly most of all, number one, being around the table every single night and the laughs that we had, the board games that we played, the sermons that we got. And then number two, when we jumped in the car and drove two days to Baltimore from Texas to visit my dad's parents. And so those memories were all about connection and that's what this resource is about.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan, what do you say to the mom, dad, listening. They're thinking, "you know what, we've got some bad patterns in our home. I don't know how to even begin. I don't know how to break that. I feel so disconnected." It's interesting. I read a piece on family meals and they were talking about teenagers, and they found that teenagers who ate three or fewer meals a week together as a family wanted to have more dinner time with their family. And then they began to look at the research and they found that the more teens ate dinner with their family, the more healthy they were. And they didn't mean that it was all about food and being healthy. It was about something was being transmitted, something was happening-

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Something was impacting them. And they were showing up, in their grades at school, how they handled peer pressure, what they did was substance abuse and so much more. As you anchor this up and you build it around God and His Word and putting His Word deep into their hearts, you can see the benefit. But what do you say to the mom or dad? What do they do?

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, I think that it's important to remember that the Lord gives you the years back that the locust have taken away. You feel like you haven't done enough. You feel like you've lost time. And not even just parents, you got aunts, uncles, you have grandparents who want to be there more, who feel like they haven't.

And it's simple. You just start taking one step at a time. And then when you look back over the years, you'll see that you climbed a mountain. And a lot of times, people look at the mountain and they're afraid of the first step because it's so big, it's so high, it's so tall. Man, this is such a tall order that I just won't do anything at all. And then four years later you look back and say, "Man, I could have covered a lot of ground in four years, but now I'm more discouraged than I was four years ago."

And so if you're 40 and your kid is, like mine, 14, then four years from now you'll be 44 and that kid will be 18. And you either will have a better relationship, the same relationship or a worse relationship. Either way, four years is going to pass by.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's going to go by quick.

Jonathan Evans: And it's going to go by quick.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Quick.

Jonathan Evans: So either way it's going to happen. What do you want after those four years? And I just think baby steps. I think just having dinner together, or for husbands taking your daughter out on a date night or for moms taking your son out on a date night or just going together on Fridays, making that your Friday day out for dinner or whatever you want to do. You come together, you make decisions and you take baby steps. Huge leaps may be shocking, but baby steps can climb a mountain over time. And so whatever you come up with practically, especially if it's things that they enjoy, getting into their world, sitting down, which is hard for me, I'm an outdoors guy, so my son wants to sit down and play video games. And I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, here we go with these video games", finding success in a virtual world. I'm like, you know, can actually be on the video game if you've practiced.

But jumping in there from time to time and saying, "All right, son, let's get a game in." You just have to get in their world and not act like or allow your feelings as if they're just infringing on your time and on what you're trying to accomplish. They don't want to be a sidekick. They want to be in there with you. So take those steps, take those baby steps, come up with practical things. And in four years, three years, two years, one year, you'll realize that, man, you covered a lot of ground just by small steps at the beginning.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Building those strands of relationship connection.

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Let me close out. We're fighting time here. *Stories from the Storyteller: Life Lessons from the Parables of Jesus*, new book from Jonathan Evans. Amazing illustrations done by Todd Hampson and more. But the parables, the stories,



that's how often we learn. The master storyteller knew that, that's why He told stories and we're trying to give that gift to our children. But Jonathan, at the end of the day, the most important thing is that they know the storyteller Himself.

Jonathan Evans: That's exactly right. It's all about the storyteller. And so yes, it's the stories. Yes, it's the family time. Yes, it's the memories and ministry and all of those different things, but there were many in the crowds, but then only a few disciples. And so we want to go from, we're a fan to we actually have faith so that we can actually have a spiritual future.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I hope every mom and dad out there will get a copy of this new work and I think it'll really deeply impact your relationship with your own children as we seek to bring Christ into our own families. No doubt, a lot of people might be interested to get a copy of this book and the illustration videos and all that comes with it. Where do they go?

Jonathan Evans: Well, we have our app, Stories from the Storyteller, and so you can download the app, watch all of the cartoons, you can order the book there. We have other resources there. Everything is in the app. So download that app now, hand it over to your kids and they're going to enjoy the book. They're going to enjoy the videos. They're going to enjoy it all. And so that's where you can find it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Speaking of stories, the stories that go into your heart and your mind are everything and the ability to bring back stories of connection, especially one-on-one connection with your dad, with your mom, it's the heart of everything. Do you have a story or two of maybe how your dad, whom we all know and love, just connected, wired something deep inside of you? Was there a couple of moments or one particular thing you can think?

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, absolutely. And that was we shared something in common. We both loved sports, so that was easy. So I was 13 when I finally beat my dad in one-on-one, but it was a lot of years leading up to that. And he was very consistent to beat me in horse. He was very consistent to beat me in one-on-one, and he was very consistent to talk noise about it every time we hit the court. But he took the time to come out there with me and to play with me, and I wasn't out there practicing by myself. Sometimes he would train me and from teaching me how to dribble all the way to me winning my first game at around 12 or 13, that's just a lot of fun. And that's etched into my mind all those times we had shooting the basketball out back. And so that's a memory that I have and something that I redo with my sons and my daughters now with whatever they love to do, trying to jump in there and create that same memory.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Talk to us about your dad, the significance of fathering in this culture.

Jonathan Evans: Well, the gift that was given to me is a consistent father, someone who was there, a man of God, and again, what he produced outside wasn't any different than what I got inside. It was consistency, being steadfast, unmovable, always

abounding in the work of the Lord, even though not perfect, I was not confused. And so we want to be consistent men in the home. We want to be men of God that God has called us to be, which is to be consistent, to be surrounded by His word, to live it out. And when it gets tough, when the going gets tough, we don't stop going. And a lot of men today are passive. They're not doing what God has called them to do and their legacy is falling apart because of it. God will give you the years that the locust has taken away, take it back so that you can receive the promise that He has for your family, your future, and for your legacy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In Malachi, it says that one day, that's that prophetic verse, that He would turn the hearts of the fathers back toward their children, the hearts of their children back toward their fathers.

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan, what a delightful conversation for you and Kanika, your kiddos. We pray that God would continue to use you, raise you up for such a time as this. Keep you close. May the word of the Lord be strong in your household. I pray that God expands your border to have influence for the kingdom. Hey, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, the entire team here, we thank you for joining us and pray again that God would give you great courage and boldness for such a time as this. Thank you for joining us.

Jonathan Evans: Thank you for having me. It's been great.

Roger Marsh: Well, what encouraging and inspiring stories today here on Family Talk. You've been listening to Jonathan Evans, one of the sons of Pastor Tony Evans and his wife, Lois Evans, talking with our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton here on the broadcast today. As Jonathan said, he grew up with Psalm 128 on his heart. I want to share verses one and two with you of that Psalm. "Blessed are all who fear the Lord who walk in obedience to Him. You will eat the fruit of your labor. Blessings and prosperity will be yours."

Friends, instilling the word of God in the hearts of your own children will guide them on their faith journey through good times and bad times. Strength in the Word is essential. Parables are a great way to start. Now, if you missed any part of today's program or if you'd like to learn more about Jonathan Evans or his book, *Stories from the Storyteller*, you can visit our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). That's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

Now, friends, before we go, want to let you know that because of your prayers and faithful financial support, we will soon be embarking on a new initiative for how you can get involved and come alongside us to support expectant parents, young families, and new mothers in need. Now, there is still so much work to be done to protect the pre-born and as we stand together, we can save lives by

changing hearts and minds within this challenging culture. So keep it right here on Family Talk for more information in the upcoming days.

Thank you for making Family Talk a part of your day today. I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you get a chance to rest and relax over the weekend. And I pray that God continues to richly bless you and your family as you grow deeper and stronger in relationship with Him.

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