



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Jonathan and Kanika Evans

**Air Date:** September 22, 2022

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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.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Welcome into Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here at JDFI, the James Dobson Family Institute, and the Family Talk broadcast. We're here in Dallas, and we have a Dallas native with us here today. It's truly an honor. He is the youngest son of Dr. Tony Evans. His name, Jonathan Evans, and he's with his lovely wife, Kanika. They have a story to tell that I think will really touch your heart, inspire you, and lift your spirit. Jonathan, welcome to Family Talk.

Jonathan Evans: Excited, excited, Tim to be here, especially with you and on behalf of James Dobson, who's been a big part of our family.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And Kanika, it's great to have you join us.

Kanika Evans: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As we get started, Dr. Dobson wanted me, first of all, to make sure and send his regards. He has such a love for your dad and your mom. When they were doing ministry together, I know they spent a lot of time, and he would tell some amazing stories, but how God has raised up your family for such a time as this. And it's exciting to see what God's doing in and through the Evans family.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, absolutely. It's exciting to see what He's doing in our family, but it's also about the family of God and thinking about James Dobson and his family and what they've meant to our family. And the community of believers when we come together, what we can accomplish. And so that is why we've had such a great friendship. The story continues, as they continue to go strong in ministry, but we're doing ministry together, and when we do it together, it's never better.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's what family's all about. Jonathan, let me set the table here a little bit more formal. Jonathan Evans is an author, speaker, former NFL fullback, chaplain of the Dallas Cowboys. Seeks to impact today's athletes, men and

young adults, by equipping and encouraging them in their faith. He's a busy preacher, speaking now all over the country, anchored, by the way, at Oak Cliff Bible Church, founded by his mom and his dad, Pastor Tony Evans and the late, dear, Lois Evans. Jonathan's sermons, by the way, and teaching lessons are all over the internet, RightNow Media and more. Amazing, powerful, I mean some rich content. God's using it and using him. Jonathan played football. Fullback, right?

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Fullback at Baylor University. Not a bad school, down the street here. Then went on to sign with the Dallas Cowboys in 2005. Time in the NFL, played for the Chargers, the Titans, the Bills, the Texans, the Redskins, I guess we call them the Commanders now, right?

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And then he went on to Dallas Theological Seminary, much like his dad, getting his master's degree in Christian Leadership. He's a prolific speaker, again, at churches, conferences, men's events, FCA events and more. Jonathan's wife, Kanika, is a busy stay-at-home mom, to the couples, I love this, five children. They got a football team. That's nice. She holds a bachelor's degree in health science studies from Baylor University and a master's degree in physical therapy from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Did I get that right?

Kanika Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I'm going to tell you what? You better be on your P's and Q's there.

Jonathan Evans: I'm definitely on my P's and Q's.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yes, indeed.

Jonathan Evans: And she keeps me on them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a strong lineage of faith. Hey, as we get started, new book out called *Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory*. I guess we'd be remiss to say that it's been a tough go of it the last couple of years. Prior to the pandemic, we had a mess going on. But since then with the lockdowns, loss, loneliness, racial trauma, tension, the rioting, the sexual abuse explosion, the election mess. Listen to this, the race for the vaccine, the vaccine roll out, big tech suppression, censorship, Afghanistan, Ukraine. Now I'm getting exhausted laying all this out. You get down to money stress, inflation, abortion battles, fentanyl, chaos, and more. People are shot. They're exhausted. I think most of the people I talk with are looking desperately for help and hope. What are you guys seeing on the front lines? What's your take?

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, absolutely. It's chaos out here. And many people are struggling in a lot of different areas. And so that's one of the reasons why God led me to write this book is because I knew that my misery was just a great catalyst for ministry, which is the way it is in life as a whole. That's one of the things that my mom told me is that your greatest ministry will come right out of your greatest misery. And if you're not able to see what you're going to, but you're only seeing what you're going through, then what you're going through will be a blindfold that will keep you from what you're going to.

And so when you understand that and you understand that all of this chaos really is seeping out of the problem that people have of becoming an owner of the battle and not just a steward of it. And when you carry that burden as an owner, many people think the Bible says that God will not put on you more than you can bear. Well, it doesn't say that. God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear, and a temptation and a trial are two different things. If you read the Book of Job, you know that he had more that he can bear. Paul says that I was perplexed and I couldn't bear what was being on me.

And I think people have a burden, with all of the things that you just listed. They're carrying burdens that are too big for them to carry, and they will not, because they like owning, they will not give it to the true owner who is the one who has the legs to carry the burden. And they're carrying it and that just puts them in a position where they're losing their minds. We're losing our minds as a nation, as a world, as families, financially. We're just losing it, because we're carrying a burden that we were never meant to carry. We were meant to learn, but we were not meant to carry.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I was listening to a gentleman named Barry McGuire speak not long ago, and he walked up to the microphone, grabbed it just like belted, "75%, 75% of Christians are filled with fear." And I just stopped for a moment because he caught me by surprise and I thought, "I think he's right."

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I mean, fear is dominating our culture. People are stressed out, they're anxious, some people are depressed, that we're moving to a place of hopelessness and more. Kanika, what are you seeing out there too?

Kanika Evans: From a maternal perspective and having young children and we just started homeschooling because of the pandemic. Prior to that our kids were in school and then they all came home unexpectedly, never went back to school after Spring Break basically. It was the longest Spring Break. And then all of us were turning into teachers. And so even for us, specifically, we had these multiple children in different grades, and they're supposed to be on their laptops trying to figure out what their lesson is and we don't have enough laptops to put everybody on at the same time.

So even just the chaos of a lot of people having to shift what hat they're wearing, or wearing multiple hats that they're not used to wearing, they're maybe not trained to wear. Just all of the volatility with that, I know has affected a lot of people that I know personally. For us it's been good to be able to be in community with other people and be able to talk through the difficulties and pray for each other and things like that to kind of get through this time. Just being able to encourage each other and sharpen each other as we go through.

Jonathan Evans: Battle through.

Kanika Evans: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jonathan, I want to come back. This book that's put together, *Fighting Your Battles*. I mean it's not just rah-rah message, it's born out of pain. You guys, the two of you. That's why you're here together. You guys have been on a little journey and people would say, "Wait a second, this is the Evans family. Listen to everything they've accomplished and more." But take us back. There's been some tough spots in your life. I know we interviewed your dad on the loss of your mom. Miss Lois was dearly loved by Family Talk and the Dobsons and more, my wife Julie and I. But that's a piece of the story. Can you tell us a little bit about the backdrop of *Fighting Your Battles*?

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, so it comes out of all of that and just a personal chaos that we were dealing with that we had no control over. And you try to have control over it, which brings a little bit more chaos, but we didn't have control over it. We had eight family members pass away within a span of two years. And it was almost like in six month increments to where we started doubting, getting fearful, angry, all of the emotions. And really asking God, "What is going on?" Even starting to ask the question, "Well, who's next?" I mean we started, it was like Final Destination or something. We didn't know-

Kanika Evans: And even the children.

Jonathan Evans: Yes.

Kanika Evans: They were like anytime we said, "Hey, come here, we need to talk to y'all." They said, "Did somebody else die?"

Jonathan Evans: Yeah.

Kanika Evans: It was a lot for them to process.

Jonathan Evans: Kelsey would say, my oldest daughter, she would say, "Please tell me at the end of this story that nobody dies." Because that's what their reality has become in our family. And so pedaling through all of that was a mess. I was literally in a pit, like Joseph at the bottom, not understanding what's real, what's not. I mean just

total mess. So you're dealing with anxiety, you're dealing with depression, you're dealing with your faith, you're reading, you're praying, you're trying to do what it says. It doesn't seem like the outcomes are matching what you're trying to do and accomplish.

And so it was a total mess. And so when my mom passed away December 30th of 2019, I was fed up. I was out of there. I was totally fed up. Talk about going before the Lord with an unveiled face. I took the veil off and threw it to the side. And I really went after Him because there's was so many things I didn't understand and was wondering what is He doing? Which is the question why that most people have.

That's one of the major times in my life where the prayer became a dialogue and not a monologue. I mean it was a dialogue immediately because of how intense the prayer was. But He let me know that in all of the mess, I had lost sight of victory. He let me know that everything that I had prayed for, He had answered. He let me know, He said, "Jonathan, you prayed for healing. I just gave her that eternally. You prayed for her to be with family. She is. You prayed for her to be taken care of. She is. You prayed for her to live. She does. And she does eternally. Not resuscitated to where she'll die again, but eternal life."

And so He was letting me know that the reason why you're going through what you're going through outside of what you're literally facing is not simply because of these things are really happening. It's because you have lost sight of what I've done in my son Jesus Christ. And once you lose sight of that, you're going to be a mess. Once you lose sight of that, depression's going to win. Anxiety's going to win. What you're going through is going to win. Fear is going to win. All of these emotions that you're feeling, they're guaranteed to win if you have lost sight of victory, and have become a victim. And a lot of Christians have become a victim to what they're going through and they're fighting for victory and not from victory because their mess has been the blindfold to the promise. And so it was a teaching moment for me and that's why we're doing what we're doing.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kanika, I'm wondering what you were thinking while this was going on inside of Jonathan's heart. That's a tough journey. But you guys together had pain, you had a number of miscarriages that no doubt had weighed heavily on the two of you and your relationship and more.

Kanika Evans: Right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What's going on inside of your heart?

Kanika Evans: Really there was an even different perspective for me, as he was going through the trial with his mom. And of course I'm praying for her, and I love her as well, but I kind of felt divided because I had the faith that she could be healed. I also had this medical side, so I'm seeing what's happening, and I don't stop believing she can be healed, but I'm seeing the signs that it's not going.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah, she's medical. So that had her in a whole different, "We're praying, but I'm seeing, and I understand exactly what all this means."

Kanika Evans: I was just really trying to follow the Lord in what I should say, how I should say it, to be gracious, give them the grace to be able to sort through what they were going through as her children. It was a lot of things to process.

Jonathan Evans: And balance for you.

Kanika Evans: And trying to do it well.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You have this tension of wanting to believe God. God, we want to understand You. And it's so hard because humanly speaking His ways are higher than our ways.

Jonathan Evans: Right, right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We're not sure of what it's all about, but we know this in our hearts, we're grieving and we're afraid. And we want strength and we want hope.

Jonathan Evans: Yeah.

Kanika Evans: Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's hope deferred that makes the heart sick. You know that? You get lost.

Jonathan Evans: That's right. That's right. But God was teaching me though, Tim, now listen. He started hitting me over the head with this and He's saying, "Don't get the physical reality confused with the real reality. We don't mourn as those with no hope." And that sounds churchy and Christian and all those different things.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know.

Jonathan Evans: But He said, "Jonathan, this is the way it is." He said, "You played the game of football. Every player retires. It's guaranteed to happen. They're going to retire. And when you played with them for a long time, you're sad that they're retiring. But if you're not retiring, your job is to go out there and do what I've called you to do until you retire too. And whenever the game is over, you know how it works. You come before the head coach, he turns on the film, he turns on the overhead projector and he just wants to know, 'Did you bear the image of the logo on that helmet based on the playbook that I gave you? Or were you out there doing your own thing?'"

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Jonathan Evans: And I recognize that my mom got a, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." She retired. All the players that were still on the field were sad about it, but

we're still here. So we're going to keep battling and doing what God has called us to do so that when we see the head coach, we get a, "Well done, my good and faithful servant," too, just like my mom.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here at Family Talk. Our in studio guest here in Dallas, Texas, at the AACC, the American Association of Christian Counselor's Mega National Conference is Jonathan and Kanika Evans. Such a delight. Brand new book out. By the way, if you don't have a copy of it, man, you need to get your hands on this. It's called *Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory*. Dr. Dobson, a few years back wrote a book called *When God Doesn't Make Sense*. You guys, sometimes it just doesn't make sense. Sometimes you can't trace His hand. You know that? You want to. You want believe God's good, you want to believe God loves you, that He cares about that, that He knows your name, that He's going to be there, but you can learn to trust His heart.

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's a hard thing to do.

You're an athlete. Let me go there. You mentioned a little bit about playing in the NFL, speaking. You try to really strengthen the hearts of young men, athletes, who want to compete. Jonathan, I wanted to ask you, in your book *Fighting Your Battles*, no doubt you've got to have a game plan. Everybody has a game plan. You know that. And the game plan sometimes isn't clear because we're trying to figure out what God's doing. But there are some things that you can begin to do. There are some steps that you can begin to take to help strengthen you, especially when the storms come. Where do we start?

Jonathan Evans: Well, yeah. I think that that's a good question. And basically having a foundation. I remember the story of the foundation of the man who built his house on the rock versus the man who built his house on the sand. And you didn't know who built their house with instability until the storm came. And the storm reveals the foundation that you're resting on. Everything is built based on a foundation. But the problem with most people is they want to go to the foundation during the storm. And you can't fix the foundation during the storm. You can have it right before the storm or you can fix it after the storm, but during the storm is just going to show you what kind of foundation you had. And so most people want to raise their hand during the test. If you've been in any classroom, the teacher doesn't allow you to raise your hand during the test.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We don't have an answer for you right now.

Jonathan Evans: They taught you before or they'll reiterate after. But during the test.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Jonathan Evans: They want to grow you and see where you are and see what know. And so, I think right now there's a lot of people who've been through storms, we all have, who have come out of it, who can see, "This is where I need to set my feet foundationally." And that starts with God's Word. If you don't have God's Word, then you don't have a playbook to operate from when the defense shifts. If you don't have God's Word, then you don't know how to move when things get shaky. And one of the things that we had to do on the field of play is the defense would shift and move to try to confuse you before the snap of the ball. So if you weren't well versed in the word prior to getting out on the field, then you would definitely get sacked.

And a lot of us spend our time getting sacked because we don't know how to shift when the enemy moves or when the enemy calls a different play because we're not foundationally set. Not only are we not foundationally set, but we want to play a team game solo. We have no community. In a time where you're dealing with recession, in a time where you're dealing with you don't know what's going to happen in the world, practically, community is one of the strongest things you can have. And when Jesus says, "I will build my church," He's not just talking about a facility with brick and mortar. He's talking about His people. The church is the people of God. And we have subjugated that to just a facility we show up to once a week, when we're supposed to be the facility that people show up to every day. And so once we get foundation and we get community then we can approach the line of scrimmage, snap the ball, and hit the enemy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: They say in mental health that the antidote to trauma, it's like when the wheels come off the bus, the antidote to that is relationship.

Jonathan Evans: That's right. That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We need hope and we need each other more now than ever.

Jonathan Evans: No doubt.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Inside of it, good coaches are going to come out and say, "Listen, I know we got pounded on that play, but you guys are strong. Here's what we're going to do. We're coming back with this play and if we have to run an audible here and we're going to move the ball up the right side of the field."

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Whatever it is. Okay?

Jonathan Evans: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Probably comes out a puts a hand on you. In the midst of your message you're saying things like when things get harder, the body can get stronger. In other



words, hard times, they don't always last, but something happens in hard times that's different than what happens in good times.

Jonathan Evans:

Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

So God does stuff there in the pain that we don't want. The old message, "Pains the gift that nobody wants."

Jonathan Evans:

That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

But speak to that issue because I think it means something to us, especially when days are dark and we feel pretty rough and beat up.

Jonathan Evans:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean there's a couple of things. First of all, when you talk about community, it's not that people don't have people around them, they just have the wrong people around them. And you can't get in the huddle with people who are going in the opposite direction and think that you're going to score. So there's some intentionality about community.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

That's a message right there, by the way.

Jonathan Evans:

Yeah, totally.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

We need the right friends for the fire.

Jonathan Evans:

Definitely. But also the Book of James lets us know consider it joy when you face various trials because it's producing something. God uses everything and doesn't waste anything. So if it's not good yet, God's not done yet, because all things work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to His purposes. But I remember in Exodus 1, Pharaoh was trying to pound the Hebrew people. I mean, Pharaoh was coming up with a plan. He was intimidated. Because Pharaoh's goal was to manifest his image, not God's image through the Hebrew people. So he wanted to subjugate them to his power. And as he gave them harder labor, the Bible says that they multiplied even more. As he put more on them, they multiplied. It was almost like the labor and the hardship was an aphrodisiac to the people because they started having more kids.

And he said, "Well, this is a problem. I didn't give you this hard time so that you would multiply. I gave you this hard time so that you would go backwards. And what happens is a lot of times is the hardship is like an aphrodisiac to the people of God. We start multiplying. We start coming together. We start realizing that we're better together than we are separate. If you just think of it practically, when 9/11 happened, nobody was talking about race. When 9/11 happened, nobody was talking about divisions and all of these different things. When 9/11 happened, we were talking about the United States and what we were going to do. See, when something happens, family comes together, countries come

together, people figure out how are we going to overcome this situation. And I don't care about the class or color of the person in the fox hole next to me, as long as they're shooting in the same direction I am. And when you understand that, you understand why God allows these things not to pull the body of Christ apart, but to push the body of Christ together.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kanika, as we are fighting time here on today's broadcast, I want to close up by what started happening, not only in your relationship with God, but together as a couple? How did you see this pain begin to do something and maybe a lesson or two that you learned. Because tomorrow I want to talk more about the miscarriages and the responsibilities and the weight of home, et cetera, and balancing all that in the midst of these challenging times, but closing thoughts from you.

Kanika Evans: I would absolutely say that we have become a stronger home front throughout all of this. If you're both focused on the Lord and how He can help you work through things, then we absolutely became stronger. It's kind of like if you're going into the weight room with your friend, they're spotting you and you're spotting them, and y'all are both getting stronger in the weight room together. And I absolutely think just the trials we've been through, it gives us not only something that we've accomplished, but we can also look back and say, "Remember when we went through such and such? Remember when we almost didn't get the house we were in because something was going on? Remember just different financial or emotional things that we've gone through?" We're able to look back and say, "We were able to get through that and look where we are now."

Jonathan Evans: When you get out of the test, it becomes a testimony. And when you're able to look back, you can use that as power for where you're going.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Someone whispered in my ear, "Tim, God never wastes a wound." He doesn't. He's in the midst of it all. That's what Psalm 46 is all about. He is a very present help during times of trouble. Our special guests, again, today have been Jonathan and Kanika Evans out of Dallas, Texas. God's doing work in and through their life. New book out. You have to get your hands on this, *Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory*. Hey, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, the entire team at Family Talk, we salute you. Pray God we'll continue to do a great work. Can't wait for tomorrow's broadcast as we continue our discussion together. Thank you for joining us.

Jonathan Evans: Thank you for having us.

Kanika Evans: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and that was part one of our own Dr. Tim Clinton's conversation with Jonathan and Kanika Evans. Jonathan and Kanika are a strong and inspiring married couple.

Jonathan is the youngest son of Dr. Tony Evans, lead pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, the church in South Dallas that serves as a rock for faith and community to so many. Make sure you're listening again tomorrow to hear the conclusion of this powerful conversation here on Family Talk. Now to learn more about the Evans family or find out where you can get a copy of Jonathan's new book, it's called *Fighting Your Battles: Every Christian's Playbook for Victory*, visit [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). That's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

And while you're on our website's broadcast page, make sure you check out some of the photos that we've posted there of this very photogenic couple. Jonathan and Kanika wore matching t-shirts to the interview, as if we did not already know that they were meant to be. They are incredibly sweet and loving toward each other and you cannot help but like this husband and wife, mom and dad team. They don't just talk the talk. They truly walk the walk.

Now on the next edition of Family Talk, Jonathan and Kanika Evans will continue sharing more about how they got through the storms that their family has experienced over the past few years. They'll be discussing the losses they've endured, plus the blessings they've received as well. Now this includes the pain of loved ones being called home to be with the Lord. Also, miscarriage, which is an often under discussed and underserved hardship that many couples endure. There will be much more to discuss and learn, so make sure you join us again tomorrow for the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Till then, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening and may God continue to richly bless you and your family.

Announcer:

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