



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Winning at Home: Tackling the Topics that Confuse Kids and Scare Parents – Part 2

Guest(s): Dan Seaborn

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

Roger Marsh: Well, greetings and welcome to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and I'm grateful that you have joined us today. On behalf of everyone here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thank you for making us a part of your day. Now, today on the program, we have our own Dr. Tim Clinton and his special guest, Dan Seaborn, as they continue discussing Dan's new book called *Winning At Home*. The two men reveal the impact of technology on kids, the ever present threat of bullying and the importance of parents maintaining healthy communication with their kids in order to be aware of what is going on in their lives.

The information these two men provide is detailed and the conversation was extensive but we believe it is so valuable. We've programmed it into three parts today. You'll hear part two. This short mini-series is entitled, "Winning at Home: Tackling the Topics That Confuse Kids and Scare Parents." Well, I've been there. Maybe you have too. So let's return there right now. Here now is Dr. Tim Clinton picking up with his guest Dan Seaborn, right here on Family Talk. The voice you trust for the family you love.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dan, so great to have you back on Family Talk. What a fun conversation yesterday. Again, talking about *Winning At Home: Tackling the Topics That Confuse Kids and Scare Parents*. The relationship piece, if we don't have a relationship with our kids, typically we're not going to have a platform or an opportunity to speak into their life. Can you address that?

Dan Seaborn: Yeah. I think it's probably the most critical piece of the whole thing. So often because of fear, because of the inability of ourselves to be able to move forward in a relationship maybe from something from our past, this is an area in a strain for many parents. So I think one of the things parenting does for all of us is it reveals a lot of things about our own identity. So often we push off and say, "Well, my kids. My kids." Probably a lot of that comes from us not having a good relationship ourselves with the Father. The better my relationship is with the

Father, the more time I spend with Him, the more I seek Him, the more I'm able then to relate and understand and talk to my children.

But I will tell you right now, I know a couple just this week, they encourage their child in an area that got their kid involved in some things that are immoral, things that are not aligning with God's Word. And when I addressed it and talked with them about it, they said, "Well, I just want my kid happy and I want to be a friend with him." And I said to them, "That's not what you're after. If you're trying to make your kid happy, you are going to literally destroy their life."

And even Christian parents sometimes will say, "Well, God wants us happy." I'm sorry, I don't see that in Scripture. If God wanted us happy, then He sure did His son over because Jesus' life was not always happy. God wants us joyful. Joyful means we have an ability to rely and trust God with a situation and circumstance we're in, even if it's not in our favor. So, parents today, I need you to think big and long-term about what your relationship is with your kids like. It's the parents who teach responsibility. It's the parents who parent for the long haul. I tried to tell my children the truth even when they didn't like it because I want to have a good adult relationship with them. I want to be friends as we get older. But I wasn't looking for friendships in those younger years.

And I think too often parents are wanting to be cool, be the cool parent fit in. Everybody wants to come to our house. I'm super cool. That's not what you're looking for. Parents are here to, in the end, lead your children into a stronger and more powerful relationship with the Lord. Now don't get me wrong, Tim, I know you have some fun. I remember back in the day you went out of your way to make sure there was a place to pitch in your backyard and some fun stuff with your kids and everyone at Zach's games because you love baseball. Same thing with me. I absolutely love having a ball in my kids. My goal is not to be their best friend, to be their pal, my goal is to be their dad. My goal is to be a role model and show them sometimes you got to make tough decisions. So parents check your own pulse and say, "What am I after here? Am I trying to lead my kids toward Jesus or am I trying to lead my kids toward me so they'll think I'm super cool?"

Dr. Tim Clinton: We ended the day yesterday, Dan, talking about the whole issue of gaming and the internet, social media. Dan, I want to go back to that conversation. A couple of words that really jump out when we have this conversation are sexting and cyber bullying. Let's jump into sexting real quickly because I don't think a lot of parents understand it or they don't want to understand it. But Dan, this is a serious issue. Very common. Very common among kids. And Dan, it's really concerning because it, there's some legal issues that show up right here too, and kids don't understand that.

Dan Seaborn: That's so true, Tim. The one thing that I'm fearful of for children and teens in this area is if you have a minor and they're doing some of these things, you need to know there are legal ramifications that you need to be aware of just being

younger, that sort of thing. If you send a picture of yourself, you're doing things that could get you in jail. I mean just the legal law allows the authorities to come after you because you simply can't text a picture of yourself and that sort of thing under the age of 17. I know here in Michigan probably different states have different rules and laws and most parents are unaware of that.

And again, going along with what we taught in this book, they're so scared to address it. The average kid is not going to hear this question from the parent, "Hey, did you get any sext today? Did you get anything sent on your phone today?" And a friend of mine does that thing. He goes around, travels and speaks at schools and especially at middle school. He was speaking in Iowa and he was speaking to all eighth grade girls. He took the eighth grade girls into a room by themselves and he asked the girls, "Have you ever received," and I'll be very careful here, but Tim we'll all know what I'm saying, "Have you ever received a certain picture on your phone in a text from a guy? Have you ever had a text like that?"

And every eighth grade girl in the room he was talking to, I think there were 25, 30 girls, he told me in that room, every girl had received a picture from a boy like that. And the parents were in another room and he asked them, "How many of your parents think your kids have ever received a message like that?" Only a couple raised their hand because parents were in denial on this issue. And it scares us. It scares us. That's why we wrote the book. It's scary. I want to tell you, it's reality. It's what's happening. Not every kid.

The other day I was sitting with a young girl, teenage girl, and I ask her if parents gave me permission. She had never received that. She had not. So praise the Lord, that's good. But in reality, you put a phone in my hand at 15, 16, 17, I don't understand the consequences of what I'm doing. So parents just simply know the legal law in your state, and make sure you at least communicate that to your child because they could end up doing something that gets them in trouble. Gets them in a situation where they're dealing with legal ramifications that is going to affect them long-term

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Because if they share a picture of another person with someone else who's under the age of 17, a minor, that is a violation of the law and kids are getting prosecuted for this. Dan, I remember when my kids were growing up locally, there was an organization called Blue Ridge Thunder and I had been invited over to see what Blue Ridge Thunder was all about. Shaq was a part of this and more, but it was about undercover police officers living in this online space looking for travelers. Those were people who were trying to recruit adults, recruiting kids for some type of sexual relations. And they would travel then to their community.

So think of some girl who's in a busted home, desperate for love online, looking for the love of her dad. Somebody loves on her in a chat space or what have you. Next thing you know, this guy's pressing in and then they want to meet. You hear what I'm saying? And it's that kind of thing. When I let my kids know

about this, what it did is it began to open up conversation about what's happening online. Have you ever seen this thing? Did you know that when pictures get shared, this is a legal issue and more. And those are the type of conversations here we need to have. You talk about an internet code of conduct, what it will help families do is have meaningful conversations, and by the way, help them develop this code of conduct of what we do.

I can hear some parents saying, "Well, I just bring the hammer down. I just tell them." And hey, listen, there probably are times when you got to have those conversations, Dan, but on the other hand, kids who may be shy are getting caught up in this thing and you have no idea. They've been spending a lot of time up in their room. That's what I'm talking about. How do we get there, Dan? What are your thoughts?

Dan Seaborn:

I would say to you that if you do the hammer down, you're just pushing your kids to maybe even fall deeper into that unhealthy relationship because that other person over there has a listening ear, wants to know everything they're saying. And as a parent, you also... I've many parents say this to me, "I don't understand anything about technology. I don't even know the first place to look." Well, I'm going to tell you something I did back in the day, Tim. I would take my computer to the tech guy at my office and you say, "I don't know that person." Somewhere in your world, somewhere in your life, one of your friends, somebody knows how to look at that stuff. And I would say to him, "Hey, look on the computer here. Make sure my kids aren't going anywhere." Lots of ways to do that.

But just be involved. Even to say to your kid, "Hey, every now and then I take the computer and I'm just being wise and safe for myself. And I have things looked at. Even our phones, I have a professional look at them every now and then." That's enough to let them know, "Oh, my parents are involved. They know what's going on." And at least it gives another barrier, if you will, for some of those things to happen. And the reality is, I have some police friends who were recently telling me of finding lots of guys in our area who are doing that very thing. They're preying on the kids. I have a nine year old grandson, he loves gaming. And I'll say to them every now and then, "Okay. Those rooms you're going, anybody ever ask a question? Did everybody ever talk to you about things? Anybody ever say anything that's weird?"

Just talk to your kids about it. Normalize that conversation. Again, you said it. It's so fearful because most parents are afraid, "Well, what if I get a yes, what am I going to do?" Hey, at least you've found out, at least you can take a step to try to help them. And parents, if I could tell you one thing today, don't be so scared. It's okay, even if you get the worst piece of information. Last night Jane and I played pickleball with this couple and they just had that happen. They just had the worst information you could want to find out. Went on the phone and it was awful. The mom, the wife, in this case of my friend and a friend of mine, she said, "It was the worst news I have all my life feared finding this out, that this was going to happen."

She said, "It's my worst fear ever." And I said, "And you're still alive and God's going to be with you and it's going to be okay. And we're going to walk with you. We'll get a counselor walk on aside you." So as a parent, just know that even if you get the worst news possible... I'm going to use a line here that won't make sense to somebody. But God always has your best interest in mind. You're saying what? Yeah, listen to me. God, always, even when you get the worst news possible. I can prove my point right there, Tim. We're having this interview right now. I'll tell you why. Because my daughter went wayward, was gone for five years, almost lost her life being beat to death by a baseball bat one night.

You think I as a dad wanted to get that information? Shoot, no. I didn't want to know anything about it, but it's why I'm doing this today because I care about parents and I was at the bottom and I needed somebody to love me. And the reason I wrote this book, the reason me and you were talking about Tim is because there's a parent out there scared or facing something, just found out some news that you did not want to know. And the reason I say God has your best interest in mind is because today, I'm a better dad than I was pre all that stuff happening. Whatever you're going through, God's going to use it.

And my brother came up with this line, he said, "God writes straight using crooked lines." And that's what's happened in my life. I got some crooked lines. But God is using that to make a mark for His kingdom. And if the purpose of your life, if the purpose of you is a parent is to bring honoring glory to God, then maybe He's going to trust you to go through something that you're not going to like that you're scared of. Because long term He's going to use that to make an impact on your life, your kid's life and other people who might be watching you.

So as a parent today, we just want you to know if you're scared and don't even want to dive into tech stuff, don't even want to see what might be on your kid's phone. We believe that in the long run it will be beneficial for you because you'll be able to possibly protect them from online predators, protect them from getting into some legal situation that's so hurtful to their long-term.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Most of these kids are coming across this stuff innocently. You know that especially our young kids. There's a lot going on here Dan. Let's keep going. We got so much to talk about. Again, you're listening to Family Talk, a division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here at JDFI. Our special guest today is Dan Seaborn. Dan is the author of a brand new book called *Winning At Home: Tackling the Topics that Confuse Kids and Scare Parents*. Having those meaningful conversations, Dan, that we need to have right now with moms and dads who are on the front lines and we're in alignment with Dr. Dobson. Parenting isn't for cowards. Let's step up and into these moments, hopefully bringing light to the tartness or the challenges of everyday life.

Dan, I want to talk a little bit about cyber bullying. It's got my attention. You cannot go up online and not read stories of kids who are just getting pounded by other kids. Kids can be so hurtful. They're mean. It's awful. And this internet

thing, you can with the push of a button just absolutely destroy somebody. Look at Twitter, look at what's happening up there. It's nothing but a cesspool of hate. Dan and our kids are on the receiving end often of this, and they already struggle with who am I? How do I fit in? Self-esteem issues and more. Can you address that issue for us as parents?

Dan Seaborn:

Yeah. And I want to start with helping parents understand something. Tim, I'm going to take you back to when me and you left school. Let's be 14. We left school at 3:30, 4:00 o'clock, got home. We were home for the night and we could get away from some of the things that happened to us all day at school. There was a bully. I remember a guy named Bill at my school that was a bully that scared me to death. He said things to me that made me fearful, et cetera. But at 3:30 when I got on the bus or my parents picked me up and I got home, I could get away from that least till the next day. Well guess what? That doesn't stop at 3:30 now. At 3:30 it actually intensifies.

What I felt actually begins to increase at 3:30 because I'm going home and he can get online and he can bring my name up and he can put me out there in social media and he can do this and that and the other, or him and his buddies can have a code name for me and he can use that code name to rip on me, put me down, and nobody even knows he's talking about me. So parents, first of all, you need to understand your children are living in a different world and growing up a different time with some of the social bullying stuff. And the social bullying, as Tim just said, can be even more intense because they're hiding behind the screen and they're able to say things that they wouldn't even say in person or say at school.

So, having the conversation with your children and just again, everything, Tim, today goes back to relationships, doesn't it? Because ask your children, "Hey, is there anything you're dealing with? Is there anything that's coming your way socially that is putting you in a difficult situation?" And Tim, I would tell you in the public schools in my area, okay. So growing up I would tell you that a person who maybe was same sex attracted, et cetera, that person probably got some bullying. It was wrong. Shouldn't not have been happening that way. Got it, et cetera. But it's almost reverse course now that if you're not trying out some same sex stuff... I had a teen tell me the other day, a 17 year old girl told me, if you're not trying out things that are same sex, et cetera, you're bullied now. You're thought of as "what's wrong with you? Why are you not trying this?" Et cetera.

So there's almost a flip and culture of these things. So bullying before was the opposite of that. Now bullying's this way. So what these kids are dealing with is really challenging. That's why the phone's ringing off the hook here because kids are struggling with their identity and knowing where to go with the anxiety they're feeling about that.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Dan, it's hard to believe we're at a place now where that's become mainstream conversation. Same sex attraction behavior, homosexuality, being gay to drag

queens in schools and are you trans? And how do we go about this? And it's like if you are not "sensitive," then you are a bully in this whole thing. And how do we approach this when you have sincerely held religious faith beliefs? Where you believe what God's Word says and how God... Well, He's the creator, the one who made both male and female in the midst of this. And God has an ethic, a sexual ethic on how we are to conduct ourself. And that sex and that relationship is to be confined to the relationship between a man and a woman in the bond of marriage. Dan, where do we go? I mean, how do we begin to have conversations with our kids who are getting absolutely pounded on this very issue?

Dan Seaborn:

First of all, I'm so thankful, and that's one of the reasons I love to align with you through here at Family Talk, Dr. Dobson and also the AACC, because you have stood strong foundationally on what God's Word teaches. And I agree with what you just said. Let's start with the fact that in the beginning God created them male and female. Now, anytime you move away from that, we move away from peace and we move more toward chaos. And what's happened, and I believe in our culture and I've listened to our counselors recently sit in a room and talk about the fact that now we base pretty much everything on feeling. Not much is based on fact anymore. We base everything on how do you feel, what are you feeling, et cetera. We all know that that can get you into trouble really quick because if I base, Tim, today what I want out of life on feelings, there'd be some people getting run over for me to accomplish what I want or whatever I'd want to fulfill in myself.

And I wanted to say, I pause here a moment just to say this to you. It's very likely, I'm not trying to bring something on you, I'm not trying to scare you, but I'm just trying to be a realist. Parents today, if you're raising children, if you have grandchildren, pretty good chance you're going to have one of them come to you and say, "I'm same-sex attracted." It's just the culture we're in. It's been, like you said, pounded into their heads. Tim, day after night after day after night.

So I go back to when I was young, Tim, I had thoughts and feelings about it. And if you had told me at the age of 10, 11, 12, I need to follow through on that, I don't know where I'd be today. So I'm thankful that my parents taught me the ways of the Lord. Not that I wanted to follow them when I was a teenager, but as I grew up and became mature, I landed at a really good spot. And I want to say to parents today, if you have a child who comes to you and tells you that they are feeling same sex attracted, are wanting to move forward at that relationship.

First of all, parents, what I'm about to say is going to shock a few of you. First thing I want to say to you is, wow, you must be a pretty awesome parent that your child with this thing they're feeling inside, they're may be anxious about, et cetera, that they would want to come and talk to you is a great gift to you. And it tells me you've probably parented really well that your child would trust you

with that piece of information because they're being told by society, even by their school, "Don't talk to your parents."

So if they're willing to do that and push through that, what a great blessing because it gives you the opportunity to speak truth into them. And I want to say something, one of our counselors here told me, "Dan, if I can give parents one piece of advice," she said, "First of all, tell them their facial expression when their kid shares it, keep it calm. Receive it, even smile, show love, show kindness. Don't do what everything inside you is wanting to do because you're probably going to freak out." She said, "Just stay calm." She said, "One of the reasons teens love to come talk to me, they can say anything to me and I don't overreact." And she said, "As a parent, first of all, when a child tells you they're feeling something, your mind's going to go to the worst possible scenario." She said, "Don't do that. Just listen." They're grappling with it. They're confused themselves. They're being told 15 different things and they need to be able to express what they're feeling on the inside. Allow them to share that.

Then secondly, have already... Tim did this in our previous show we had yesterday. He had these three or four or five questions. Parents, this is doing a little bit of homework, but go ahead and have your homework done where you begin to ask them a few questions. "Well, what's making you think that? Where are those feelings coming from? Who's influencing you to maybe have those thoughts? What's your foundational belief as a person?" Asking your own teenager, "What do you think God's Word says about that? How do you think God would want you to move forward with that?"

Now here I'm going to tell you, a lot of kids are going to say, "God wants me happy." You're going to have to have a hard conversation with your kid about life's not about happiness, life's about purpose and finding their joy in the Lord. And I'm telling you, these conversations are coming. There is no perfect answer. The guy who joined me in writing this book is Brad Klaver. Brad is a gentleman who from his very youngest days, struggled with same sex attraction. And Brad would tell you, "I wasn't abused. Nothing happened in my life. I have always desired same sex relationships." And he can speak with such wisdom. And that's why this chapter is going to be so meaningful to parents because he speaks with great wisdom on what it means to align with God's word and some steps he personally took to grow in this area.

And Brad's comment is this, "There's no perfect cookie cutter answer in these situations." He says, "I can speak in a group to a hundred teens, but then I need to have one on one appointment's to walk with them through each of the scenarios they're facing. So this is going to be a process. It's going to take time. And I will say this, Tim, "We have done a poor job in the Christian community. We have not loved people well. We've called names. We've done things that are very wrong and appropriate." I will never condone a behavior, but I will come alongside and walk along the side someone and try to show Christ like love, because that's what Jesus did. He sat at the table with everyone. And I want to

make sure we as parents are willing to do that with our children and continue to walk alongside them.

Roger Marsh:

What insightful and practical advice from Dr. Tim Clinton and author Dan Seaborn today here on Family Talk. Now let me tell you a bit about Dan to reset us for tomorrow's conclusion. Trust me, you will not want to miss it. Dan Seaborn is the founder and president of Winning At Home, an organization that supports marriages and families. He also serves as the Director of the Marriage & Family Division of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He's the author of 13 books, including *Winning At Home* and also *Parenting With Grace and Truth*. He holds a master's degree in Christian Ministries from Indiana Wesleyan University. And Dan and his wife Jane, have been married for nearly four decades. They have four adult children and seven grandchildren.

Dan Seaborn is uniquely qualified to talk about winning at home and tackling topics that confuse kids and scare parents. We encourage you to join us tomorrow for part three of our miniseries on *Winning At Home*, or just go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk and you can access all three parts from this week's program right there.

Now to support the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute and Family Talk, you can go online to drjamesdobson.org and make a donation through our secure website or give us a call at (877)732-6825 to speak directly to one of our customer care representatives. Again, our phone number is (877)732-6825. Remember, we remain on the air because of the kindness and generosity of our listeners just like you. We are extremely grateful for your prayers as well as your financial support. So please reach out to us today.

Well, that's it for today's program. Hope that you found this to be just what you needed to love and support your family, and of course to stay close to God and anchored in your faith. Until next time, I'm Roger Marsh. For Dr. James Dobson, Dr. Tim Clinton, and the rest of the family here at the JDFI, God's richest blessings to you and your family. We'll see you again next time.

Announcer:

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