



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Rise Up: The Dalton Risner Story – Part 2

Guest(s): Dalton Risner

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- Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.
- Roger Marsh: Hello, I'm Roger Marsh. So glad you've joined us today for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. On today's program, we'll be sharing the final half of Dr. Tim Clinton's interview with Dalton Risner, star offensive lineman for the *NFL's* Denver Broncos. On yesterday's broadcast, the two discussed Dalton's upbringing, his time at Kansas State, and what a quote unquote normal work week looks like for him during the football season. On today's program, Dr. Clinton will ask Dalton Risner about his faith and why his relationship with Jesus is more important today than anything else in his life. Here now is Dr. Tim Clinton on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Dalton, what a great conversation yesterday. Was so fun to hear the story of a boy growing up in small town, USA, Wiggins, Colorado, Wiggins High School. Growing up on a farm, four brothers. I can't imagine what that household was like. Winding up at Kansas State. God doing work in and through you. But Dalton, the story is just getting good. It's amazing how God was working in your heart, especially in your college years.
- Dalton Risner: Yeah, it truly is. I look back at where I'm at now and I look at how God has worked in my life and the blessings that I have had, the story is just getting started.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Dalton, I was watching Monday Night Football recently and was watching the Steelers play and Ben Roethlisberger was being interviewed prior to the game. And he said, "You know what I remember" and he said, "I do these interviews because I remember what it was like being a boy and watching Monday Night Football and thinking, what if I got a chance to do that?" And he said, "I'm doing this for all those young boys out there." You probably had that vision as a boy. And can you believe second round draft pick, Denver Broncos, the team that you grew up what about an hour or so away from your hometown?
- Dalton Risner: Yep. You're exactly right. And Big Ben saying that one, for every one out there, I'm a huge fan. Always was of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Big Ben Roethlisberger

in particular. I actually got to shake his hand this season and see him face to face, which was extraordinary. So good for Ben. I love athletes or people in the spotlight that can take time to realize what platform they have and use it to make a difference and him doing that for all those boys. I was that boy watching Ben. I really was. I watched him in Super Bowls. I watched him all the time. When I played Big Ben that day, I was going up against Cameron Heyward, one of the best defensive tackles in the league.

Dr. Tim Clinton: He's a beast.

Dalton Risner: He's a beast.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That was a war, is what that was.

Dalton Risner: It was a war.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Between the two of you guys.

Dalton Risner: Gosh. And I could've made it about look at how big my obstacle is, but I like to think about and look at how big my God is.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dalton, what was the biggest transition from college to pro level football? You mind sharing that?

Dalton Risner: Well, the talent is a very big transition from Wiggins High School to Kansas State was probably the biggest transition I've ever done, getting to that level. But when you get to the *NFL*, everyone's good. It doesn't matter if they send in their third string, he's still a very good football player. So, the talent level at the *NFL* is definitely different. And in high school, it really is all about having fun. When you're motivated, you want to go to college, it gets to be a little bit of a job in high school, but it's mostly just fun and it's tight knit. You get to college, no more mom and dad. Now you got to worry about bills. Now you got to get good grades in college, and you want to do work in the community, and be a good football player and make a career out of it.

So, it becomes more of a job, but you still have a social life. You still get to be in college and hang out with others. When you get to the *NFL*, it's just another step up. We do this 365 days out of the year. If you ask Big Ben, he'd tell you the same thing. Just because we're in off season doesn't mean you don't have to workout every day. Doesn't mean you don't have to watch your weight, eat the right types of foods. You got to do that 365 days out of the year. And when you're in season, I talked yesterday a lot about my schedule with you and what that entails. So when you're in season in football, you don't have much time for anything but the game. So, I just say that, that's probably been the biggest thing for me, transition wise in the *NFL* is just the workload continues to increase, the stress and the anxiety continues to increase.

And I think it's all about how we deal with that. How do you time manage that? How do you take care of your mental head space to deal with that? And people expect a lot in the *NFL*. Bronco's country expects a lot. Your underneath an even bigger microscope than college. And people expect a lot out of you. So you have to deal with a lot of people saying a lot of hurtful things.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Oh, they do.

Dalton Risner: A lot of hurtful things. I've heard someone wanted me traded the other day. I said, "Man, I thought I was playing pretty good football." So you got to just find that balance, man.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dalton, what's it like being a Christian in the *NFL*? I know lot of people listening, wonder. You're known for being very outspoken about your Christian faith.

Dalton Risner: I'm a big believer in failing forward. I'm never going to fail backwards. I'm going to jump into something head first. I'm not going to mention the team, but I'm going to tell you a quick story. When I was getting drafted, my agents warned me about being very outspoken about my faith, because they are aware of the *NFL* and how some teams may not want that extra pressure or extra added attention to their organization for someone that's so outspoken about their faith. I walked into a meeting room, you do a lot of visits with teams when you're at the combine and the senior bowl, I walked into the room. The first question that this particular coach asked is what will your priorities be if you come to my team? I took a deep breath and I said, "I think Jesus is sitting in here." And I was not about to tell them football because truth be told that wouldn't be my top priority.

So, against what a lot of people may have told me, I said, my top priority will be Jesus Christ, wherever I go. That is my top priority each and every day. I went on to talk about family and football came in there as well. Let's just say the meeting went about five minutes. My job down here on earth is not to play football, doc. My job down here on earth is to be a disciple for Jesus Christ and to bring others to Jesus and glorify him each and every day. So I'm not going to lie to you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Dalton Risner: I ended up in the best spot possible for me. For three years, I have openly talked about my faith whenever I'd like to and that will always be me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Dalton Risner: And the Denver Broncos have fully supported me on that. And I have people throughout that organization that are role models to me, Ray Jackson, our director of player development, amazing. Sets up chapel for us. Our chaplain, Res, does an extremely good job. Justin Simmons is an extremely great man of God on our football team. A two-time Walter Peyton Man of the Year nominee,

I love that dude, look up to him so much. So, I could go on and on, but let's just say I went in the *NFL* ready to failing forward with my faith in Jesus Christ and he blessed me in a lot of ways.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dalton, I think people often look at you, especially your arms, they see a lot of Scripture all over them. I wish everybody could see it. I could see it. People probably are also wondering how does Dalton keep his spiritual life strong? How do you stay in the Word? How do you keep yourself anchored when you're so busy and there's so much coming at you and people can't even imagine how life has changed for you?

Dalton Risner: I would be lying if I got on here today and talked about how things are perfect. It's all sunshines and rainbows. And my faith is always at its high point, that I'm always anchored. And I think as soon as we as Christians, we as people in this world can realize that things will be imperfect because we are imperfect. And that's what I think has been so big for me is I realized that I am imperfect and I am going to go through hard times, but no matter how good things get, no matter how bad things get, I have a verse on my arm that says, "Seek the Lord in good times, seek the Lord in bad times for He will always be watching over you." And that has hit home to me so strong because there's going to be a lot of highs and lows in life.

Football is a rollercoaster ride, the *NFL*, the fan base, the microscope I'm under, the community work I try to do, trying to be a great fiancé and a great father to my little dog, Moco. It's a lot, especially that last little guy, Moco. The truth is, is that through all of that, I just am thankful that I have a relationship with Jesus and you have to set aside time. I haven't went to church all season. I haven't went to church. I play every Sunday, every Sunday. I have no time to go to church, but guess what? I'm still anchored in my faith. And I still take time to read with my fiancée, get in the Word, talk about Jesus every day with each other. Pray to Him. Take time, set aside time. Say thank you for just giving me this opportunity.

So, I'll end with this. I could talk for a while about this, but what's most important to me is that every day I make Jesus a priority. I mentioned it earlier, but this life is fast. This world is busy. We can get lost in it, but I feel like what I've done very well and how I stay anchored in my faith is just making Jesus a priority every single day, making sure I talk to him, making sure I pray to him. I get in the Word. I open up the Bible. I talk to others about Jesus. When I go to a community event, I'm going to mention Jesus. When I'm at the facility, I'm going to talk about Jesus with my teammates and go to chapel on Saturday night and Friday morning at 7:00 AM. That's what's really helped me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, your host. Our special guest today is Dalton Risner. You see him play on Sundays for the Denver Broncos. He's an offensive lineman. He's a pretty big guy. Don't mistake this. He's pretty tough guy, too. Dalton, I'm looking over all the awards you won in college. It's ridiculous. I mean, seriously,

there has to be 25 or 30 here. I don't know if there's a college award maybe you didn't win. Let me share something that I read about you that I really love. And here's the statement, "Even as a highly decorated player, Dalton is better known for his work off the field through Special Olympics, The Big Brothers Big Sister programs, Camp Hope, his own foundation, RisnerUp and more. Because he believes life is measured by the joy you bring to others, not your own individual accomplishments." Dalton, speak again to this calling on your life, to bring kindness, and encouragement, and hope to others.

Dalton Risner:

Well, you nailed it, man. And it sends shivers down my back, but all those individual accomplishments, they're great and all, but those things will never last. They will never last. That is not what defines us. What I'm such a big believer in is in a legacy. And that legacy is exactly what you said, is life is measured by the joy you bring to others, the joy you have in your heart. Happiness comes and goes each and every day. Happiness is an each and every day thing. Joy is something you can have pure joy in. You could be pure joyful person. You might have an unhappy day, but you can still be joyful. So what I'm getting to is that in life, what I see as important is how you impact people, the joy you bring to other people, the joy you have in your own heart, how you can make other people joyful.

And in 10 years, if I talk to you in 10 years, doc, you're not going to say, "Dalton, you were the best left guard I ever watched." In fact, you haven't talked to me one time about any type of my play, other than mentioning some awards in college. You're more intertwined in who is Dalton Risner, the person. And that's what I've come to realize is that's what matters. And when I sit on my recliner in 40 years from now, maybe 50 and I'm eating Cheetos, I want to be proud of the man I was in my life. And I want to be proud about how I impacted people and how I was a disciple for Jesus Christ. What matters to me is who I am as a man and the people I've impacted along the way. And all I can hope is that I've done that thus far and that I continue to do that.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Dr. Dobson is famous for saying, "Life will trash your trophies." It's all about who you loved and who loved you vertically between you and God and horizontally between you and those closest to you. And are you making an impact? I like to say this, you cannot not have an influence. You do. You're having one every day.

Dalton Risner:

Yep.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

So you need to think about what you are doing and the influence that you are having. Dalton, a part of your journey of having influence is you have put together a book called *Rise Up*. As a dad, as a young dad, I was always looking for books that I could read to my kids. It's really a special tool. And I think a lot of parents are going to benefit from this kind of work, especially with boys. They need this, but this is for boys and girls. Tell us about *Rise Up*.

Dalton Risner:

Yeah. Well, thank you so much for mentioning it. I couldn't have done it without Jefferson Knapp and Tim Ladwig who helped me create this book and publish

and edit this book. I did not write it by myself. I had a huge part in it, but I had a lot of help as well. So for anyone interested after you hear me talk about it, you can find it on krakenbooks.com. It's called *Rise Up*. I think you'd really thoroughly enjoy it. With this book, I feel like I was talking to Jesus and He wanted me to, how can I make an impact my first year in the *NFL*? How can I impact people that were really young? And I wanted to write a book that talked about things that were important to me and in my journey, what's helped me get to where I'm at today.

And one of those was hard work, I mentioned that yesterday. The second one was how you treat people along your way and your journey, the kindness and love you treat people with. Three, was to dream big. And then four, talk about my faith in Jesus Christ and how none of it was possible without him. So writing this book, I wanted to put all that together in one book. I wanted to have illustrations of people that have impacted me. Not only have I impacted them, but they've impacted me greatly in my life. So there's illustrations of a lot of important people in that book. So a lot of great reads. It's really short. A great book to read to your children at night that hopefully they see, "Hey, there's this *NFL* football player talking about Jesus and dad look, he had a big dream too. And man, he said, he worked really hard and he was good to people and look at where he is at today, maybe I can do the same thing," because that's what I would've wanted to hear as a kid. So that's what I tried to piece together there.

Dr. Tim Clinton: One of the key pieces in that book is a focus on friendship too. In other words, relationships are at the heart of life. Get them right, you're blessed. Get them wrong, it's going to be a tough journey for you. What are you seeing out on the front lines when it comes to kids? Because a lot of kids are picking up and following after you. There's a message coming through Dalton Risner that's resonating with them.

Dalton Risner: Well, love and relationships is the cure to everything in my opinion. The world is going to a more technology based world as we can see. And I think that we've got a little bit lost in having an online presence and learning how to talk to people online and being someone that we're truly not online. I think it could go on and on. But I think that what we forget is what truly matters is the people you love, people that love you, and the relationships you have in your life. And there's nothing more satisfying than having a relationship with someone face to face and being able to talk to someone. And more importantly, there's no greater feeling than loving yourself and being truly authentically yourself. Me growing up, I was bullied. I was always overweight, always. Something I battled with. My parents had to help me. But I've got to a point in my life where I love who Dalton is.

I'm never going to be anything, but who Dalton is, whether that's online or in person. You should love yourself and you should love the part that you're beautifully and uniquely made. We're all different. We all may be similar in some ways, but truth is you look at the billions of people down here on earth, and we all are unique and beautifully made in our own way. And no one can

take that away from us. And never underestimate the power of relationships with people and talking to people and get away from that social media, get away from staying in your room. I know that in these times with COVID, it's been hard, but as things hopefully continue to get better, just remember that the love and relationships in your life, those are the things that you'll hold onto forever.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dalton, a lot of people talk about out owning your influence. As a personality in culture like yourself, how do you look at all that when you think about kids watching you, everything you do? I mean, after an interview like this, people are going to be following you up on television. They're going to be checking out your Twitter account. They're going to be looking hard. Talk to us about at owning your influence. And also if you wouldn't mind speak a word to mom and dad, sometimes mom and dad feel disconnected. Their teenage kids, for example, are kind of like hugging a porcupine. They're not comfortable with mom and dad, or they're looking for influence from someone else, but this is important stuff, Dalton, this stuff matters. And I know it's the heart of this book, at least that's what I got from it.

Dalton Risner: Yep. You're exactly right. And owning your influence and owning your personality and who you are is extremely important. And with that comes great responsibility. And you have to uphold that and you can't just talk about it. You have to walk the walk. You can't just talk about who you are, what you value, who you are, impacts you make. You have to be about that. But it's all about continuing to do that every single day the best we can. So, when I'm thinking about this and what I wrote in the book in *Rise Up* and who I am in my life, if I was speaking to parents out there, what you just said, nails it. What you just said, nails it. Teach your kids to own their personality, teach your kids to love themselves, support them, love them, show them that. We forget at a young age, how important it is for these kids to have love, to feel supported.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's everything.

Dalton Risner: To feel like they were believed in. You wouldn't believe how many parents I'm around that they say things to their children that limit them. But one thing my parents did so amazing is they believed in me. They told me I could do anything and they loved me unconditionally. That whole love unconditionally thing, we say that word a lot. What is love unconditionally mean? My fiancée, Whitney Marie Clampitt, little curly haired girl I love so much taught me a lot about how to love someone unconditionally. There is no conditions to love. You love someone through thick and thin, through flaws, pros and cons, on and off.

Dalton Risner: So if you parents out there with your children, I encourage you guys to love your children unconditionally. And not just say that, but truly do that and believe in them, let them go shoot for the stars. Let them go for it. There is no dream too big. It's okay to push your children. I think some parents may push their children too hard, but I was pushed extremely hard by my parents. But with that, they didn't just push me hard. They loved me. They believed in me. I think those all

come together as key components for kids in today's world. And that's where I tried to convey in the book as well.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And you're not afraid to use Scripture. It's all through the book. Dalton, I want to close this way. We're fighting time here now, but you mentioned a little girl named Whitney in the broadcast yesterday and today. Someone who is your fiancée. Do you mind sharing a little bit about her and what's happening with you guys?

Dalton Risner: Oh yeah, of course. Thanks so much. Whitney Marie Clampitt is from Chillicothe, Missouri, really Chula, Missouri, town of 300. So she beat me on the population size from where I was from in Wiggins and her amazing father Corey Clampitt is a soybean farmer, providing food to the world. Her amazing mother, Christie Clampitt is a middle school teacher. They were high school sweethearts. They raised Whitney in a way where they showed her what love looked like. And Whitney in her journey in life has not always been loved the way she deserved. And I think that's the same with me as well, but what makes life beautiful? We mention all the time to each other, how we wish we met each other in high school, but we've also gotten to a point where we're just so thankful for the time that we did meet, because we were able to experience a lot of different love and relationships in our life to know what we truly deserved and what we wanted.

And as soon as I met Whitney, she was just getting out of college. Whitney was a stud basketball player. She went to Fort Hays State, played basketball, stud out of Chillicothe, broke records. Amazing track athlete. She won state at track. She beat Ezekiel Elliott's, sister in the high jump. I mean, she's a stud. So one thing about Whitney is I met her at a time in her life when she didn't have much. She was trying to transition from being a stud athlete to her next phase of life. Whitney could've been the person that didn't like the platform I had and the attention Dalton had and how many people looked up Dalton and wanted his autograph. Whitney loved that about me. She wanted to push me up. She wanted me to accomplish the world. And that meant so much to me, because for someone that was struggling in life and didn't have that opportunity at that moment, most people would be like crabs in a bucket in my opinion, and say, "Hey, come back down here with me, come back down here with me because I'm not there. I want you here with me."

No, she said, "I'm in this bucket, but I'm going to push you out of it. I'm going to throw you out because know what Dalton? You deserve it." And that's one of the things I love about Whitney the most is she loves who I am. She loves who Dalton Risner is. She knows who I am better than in anybody does. And Whitney Marie Clampitt has just supported me from the day that I met her. We have been together for three years now. She played at Fort Hays State. I played at Kansas State. So I got to watch her play in college. And she had a different boyfriend at the time. So I had to kind of wait my turn and tell her you figure your stuff out. But when that doesn't work out you come back to me and we'll

see if we can make things happen. So she finally got her head on straight. I'm just making jokes, but we-

Dr. Tim Clinton: I thought you just kicked him to the curb.

Dalton Risner: No.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You just sent him packing down. Okay. I know. I know, know. Hey Dalton, we certainly will pray for you and Whitney on the road forward. I can't let you go though, without asking about the Broncos. I mean, we got to talk a little bit of football. Big win over the Cowboys not long ago. Dalton, where do you see this thing going?

Dalton Risner: The season has been a rollercoaster, but truth is we won our first three, lost our next four, took a loss in the Steel City, unfortunately. But anyways, we won our last two against good football teams. We'll take it one week at a time and see where we end up.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Our special guest again today, Dalton Risner. You watch him on Sundays playing for the Denver Broncos. He is a man of deep faith, and we're going to watch a lot of football with Dalton Risner in the middle of it in the years to come. Dalton, what a delight to have you. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, the team at Family Talk, we salute you and pray God's blessing and great favor over you and your life going forward. Thank you for joining us.

Dalton Risner: Thank you so much. God bless and go Broncos.

Roger Marsh: To learn more about Dalton Risner, his nonprofit organization called RisnerUp and his book, *Rise Up* please visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. That's drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Remember, you can always give us a call as well. Our number is (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. Well, Thanksgiving is just a couple of days away. And so I'd like to give you a challenge for some time this week to make a list of 10 things that you are truly grateful for. Now, the items on your list can be big or small. They can be people in your life, or maybe an activity you enjoy, or perhaps even your favorite food. Just take the time to write down 10 things, and then thank God for each of those things one by one.

The Bible is full of Scriptures about giving thanks and showing gratitude to the Lord. In Philippians chapter four, verse six, we read, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition with Thanksgiving, present your requests to God." It's easy to tell the Lord what's going wrong in our lives. And we should definitely pray to him about those things, but giving thanks to God for his steadfast love and faithfulness is just as important. Well that's all the time we have for on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. As we enter this holiday season, please know, we are so grateful for you, our listeners. May God bless you and your family today and every day.

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