



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** One at a Time: God Wants to Use You to Change the World – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Kyle Idleman

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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.

**Roger Marsh:** Well, welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of Dr. James Dobson and the entire staff here at the Dobson Institute, thank you for making us a part of your day. Remember, we are a listener-supported Christian radio. It's because of you and your faithful financial support that we are able to bring you quality content, like you're about to hear, each and every day. By the way, to find out more about how you can stand with us financially, visit us online at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

Now, most of us would agree that there are many factors and many people who will influence us over the course of our lives. The man of course historically, the one who has had the biggest impact on the world is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we live to serve and follow Him. Most of us have considered how we can make a difference in our own part of the world hoping that God can use us to do His work.

By the way, that's what we discussed yesterday here on the broadcast. If you missed that program, we had author and national pastor Kyle Idleman share with us how we can make an impact for God's kingdom. On today's program, Kyle is joining us once again to take us deeper into how God can work in and through you and all of us, if we are willing to open our hearts, receive His direction and do the work. Kyle Idleman is an author. He's also the senior pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. His latest book is called *One At a Time: The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change the World*. Kyle joins our own Dr. Tim Clinton for part two of this conversation. Let's join them right now, right here on Family Talk.

**Dr. Tim Clinton:** Welcome back into Family Talk, a broadcast division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton. Yesterday, we had a fascinating discussion on making a difference. I think everybody wants to make a difference, especially when it comes to standing strong for our Lord in this day and time. How do you do that? What are some of the key principles? Who should we learn from? Well, we started out yesterday on a journey learning about our teacher, our Lord and

Savior Jesus, the greatest influence this world has ever seen or ever had. Our special guest, Kyle Idleman, we're talking about *One At a Time: The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change the World*.

Kyle, welcome back, what a delight. What a fun conversation yesterday as we were talking about *One At a Time: The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change the World*, your new book. Kyle, wanted to pick up on where we were yesterday and just talking about the issue of influence in life. You did some homework, you actually went up online, you did a bunch of research and decided that the most influential person in the world was who?

Kyle Idleman: Well, it was not surprising to me. I'd already decided who it was, it was Jesus. What was surprising to me about my research was to see that that is largely agreed upon by pretty much everyone. Even *Time Magazine* had Him listed as the most influential person in history, that you can't write down today's date without acknowledging that all of time is divided between before His birth and after His birth. But what's surprising about that is that Jesus didn't have technology, never really traveled very far outside of the town He was born, never held any kind of political office. He didn't have television or an internet or didn't have a podcast, didn't have an Instagram account. He didn't have any of those things and yet the impact He had was one person at a time.

We see this model of Jesus, where if you want to impact the world sometimes you spend more time with less people, and He does that with His disciples. He understands that the way to turn the world upside down is going to be to invest in them one at a time and then teach them to do that, that's how the kingdom advances, that's how the kingdom multiplies.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kyle, in our eagerness to serve the Lord often we begin to pray, God, work through me, do something so I can do something, I want to have influence for Christ, but early on in your book you talk about the "in and through principle" for a moment. I remember when I was going through my undergrad studies, I was reading Oswald Chambers' *My Utmost for His Highest*. There was a devotional in there that really, in the heart of it, was about in and through that stopped me. Kyle, it's about God doing His work in you. "God, minister to me." There's got to be that peace first.

Kyle Idleman: Yeah. I'm sure you could testify to this as well, but anything good or significant or impactful that God has ever done through me, I think almost without exception, it's always been something He's done in me first. My tendency is to want to skip that process. I'll just want to begin by praying, "God, what do you want to do through me? How do you want to use me? What kind of impact do you want to have through me?" We all want to be able to tell significant stories of how our life made a difference in this world, but when we begin to put the focus on the work He's doing in us, we find that the work He's doing in us begins to overflow out of us. It starts to happen through us.

This is one of the reasons why in John 15, when Jesus is talking to His followers, His disciples, on the night He would be arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, He's talking to them knowing that He doesn't have much time left with them. But He doesn't give them a five-year plan or action steps or job descriptions instead, what He says to them in John 15:5 is, "I'm the vine, you're the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you'll bear much fruit. Apart from me you can't do anything." He gives them this picture, this metaphor of, I'm the vine, you're the branches. Just stay connected to me. In fact, in that chapter, I think 11 times is the word abide in me. And it's this idea of staying connected to Jesus as the vine, knowing that the vine is where we get our nutrients. It's where we get our strength. It's what God does in us that bears fruit. And for many of us, we've got this turned around.

We think that it's production that allows connection to Jesus to take place, that the way I am more deeply connected to him is to do more for him, but it doesn't work that way. Instead, the more deeply connected I am to Him, the more he does through me. And that's something that we tend to skip over.

I sometimes have young ministry people ask me like, "Hey, what's what do I need to do? What's the plan here?" And I know it sounds simplistic, but this is where it's at. This is where our power is found. It's in staying connected to Jesus. And so the challenge here is to learn to pray first, "God, what do you want to do in me?" And then understand that God's going to take what He's done in you to do some things through you.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Kyle, I remember interacting with Dr. Diane Langberg and she is one of the leading trauma experts in modern day Christianity. She used to chair the AACC executive board. She's our board chair emeritus. Diane talked one time about loving God and loving people. We see that slogan a lot. "Love God, love people." One of the things she said that's jumped out at me, and I think it's echoing what you're saying is you need to love God first. A lot of people jump out and want to love people and we get that, but she said, "The order is love God first, then love people. Keep your order right." Because if you can keep yourself anchored, then He's able to do that work that He wants to do in and through you.

Kyle Idleman:

Yeah, that's good. I think loving people can sometimes feel fairly demanding, that there are people all around us with needs that can take a lot of energy and time, and we want to love those people well. But I think of Jesus and Mark, I think chapter one where He has lots of crowds. They all want something from Him, and He gets away to a quiet place. And then when the disciples find Jesus, they say to Him, "Hey, there's all these people who need something from you." And Jesus says, "Well, I've been with my father." And so when we're surrounded by people that have needs and demands on our attention and affection, God wants to use us, but we prioritize our love for Him and that fills us so that we can love others as well.

I got this email not long ago from a lady in our community who doesn't go to our church, but she told me in the email that she was on her way to the hospital

with her dad. She had to take him to the ER and she was driving home and she looked down, she saw her gas tank was about empty. She didn't get paid until Friday. And sure enough, she ran out of gas on the way home and she said somebody stopped and asked if they could help. And she said, "I just need to get home. I just want to go home." And the guy who stopped to help pushed her car two streets up to her house and then said, "Can I pray for you before I go?" And this woman wasn't connected to church, but she said, "Yes, just took my dad to the ER." And so he prayed for him right there in the driveway, and this lady was writing to me because he was wearing a shirt that said "Alive in it," which is a shirt that he was baptized in at our church.

And she said, "I found out that he was a part of your church, and I just wanted to tell you that what he did made me realize I was seen by God." There wasn't this huge dramatic ending to that email, but here's a guy in the church who I don't know, she didn't know his name, so she didn't tell me, but he pushed her car, prayed for her, and she felt seen by God. And I love that because in my mind I'm like, this is it. This is how we impact the world is by loving God first and out of that love for God, looking for opportunities to take that extra step to show some compassion, to demonstrate God's love to that person. And when we do that, His love becomes more contagious. And so I just thought, that story's not in the book, I just thought it was a really simple example of how it works. Here's somebody who's loving God and loving people.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, you were talking, I was just thinking about being in a relationship with a coach who actually thinks you have some talent, a coach who gives you some attention, someone who whispers in your ear and says, "I can't wait to watch you play on Saturday because you're going to play on Saturday," or "You're going to play on Sunday." And Kyle, that's the kind of connectedness that you're talking about here, right?

Kyle Idleman: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That investedness. When you feel seen and you feel safe or connected in that relationship, it's everything. Kyle, what do you say about those situations though too around us where there's some people maybe we don't like, I'll call them extra effort people where you call it going the extra mile. I mean, you've got to dig a little deeper and do a little more, but God calls us at times into those type of situations or I'll call them opportunities.

Kyle Idleman: I mean that's exactly right. In some ways they are the most profound opportunities to demonstrate the love of Jesus. When Jesus challenged his disciples, I want to say it's John 13, he said, "love one another." He says, "A new command I give you love one another is I have loved you." And love one another was not a new command. The that'd been around for a long time. What was new about it was loving others the way Jesus loved us.

And He is saying that to disciples whose feet He just washed. That's the context of that. So He washes the feet of Judas who would betray Him, of Peter who

would deny Him, of the disciples who would abandon Him. He knows all of that's about ready to go down, and yet He washes their feet. And that's how we show the love of Jesus most profoundly. It's not in loving people who are easy to love, it's loving people who are difficult to love, loving people who have frankly hurt us or have the potential to hurt us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You in the book gave a story of a friend of yours named Caleb. Caleb as a boy, his mom and dad divorced. His dad wound up choosing a gay lifestyle. His mother chose a gay lifestyle too, and he grew up in that environment. And he ran into a few people, Christian people who weren't too loving toward him and put a lot of anger in his heart. Can you unpack that for us here in this issue of loving and what happened there? It's a remarkable story.

Kyle Idleman: Yeah, Caleb. Yeah, he's a wonderful pastor and author today. He wrote a book where he shares some of this called Messy Grace. But we went to college together and his exposure to Christians or people who called themselves Christians would be those who angrily and hatefully expressed their beliefs and thoughts to his parents who were both in same sex relationships. And so that's how Caleb first heard about Jesus, is that way. And so he just thought that Christians hated people. That was his understanding. That's the only exposure he had really had. And then when he was in high school, there was a man in the church, again, somebody that I know, his name's Joe, he's a pastor in Dallas now. But Joe invited Caleb to be a part of this Bible study and Caleb thought, well, I'm going to go just to prove them all wrong.

And they just loved him and they took care of him and they reached out to him and kept welcoming him even though he... And he just suddenly got a very different picture of what a Jesus follower could be. And so what I love about his story, a lot of things I love about his story, but Caleb now has his PhD in theology, but what drew him to Jesus was a gesture of kindness. Somebody who just said, this is what Jesus looks like and is hospitable and welcoming and kind and patient and gracious. That's what had the impact on him. And that story now gets used by Caleb to challenge Christians all over to how are you loving the one at a time people? To use your reference earlier, Tim, if the way you treat someone is really their only exposure to Jesus, what did they learn about Him by the way that you love them, by the way that you speak to them and interact with them.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In the midst of this conversation, Kyle, it gets a little difficult because people then begin to struggle with, everybody hears the "love everyone. I'm just going to love everyone." And then at the same time, they get confused about maybe affirming someone, which I think is different than loving someone or affirming a lifestyle or what have you. We also know that sin is sin and it's a dance, an important dance that we need to navigate here. Because the Scripture does say to us, warn those who are living a life that is not acceptable or pleasing to the Lord and more. And so Kyle, as a pastor, how do you navigate those waters? What do you say, especially in these challenging times when you're seeing a lot

of people get beat up if they're calling out some darkness. And just because you speak truth and love doesn't mean you're a hater.

Kyle Idleman:

I think intuitively we all recognize that speaking truth to someone, it's how you do it. If you're warning someone about a storm that's coming in and you happen to know it and be aware of it, but they don't, going up to your neighbor's house and warning them about a tornado warning is the loving thing to do. The unloving thing to do would be to say, "Well, I don't want to bother them or I don't know how they'll take it. Or maybe this'll be offensive to them or they had other plans." That's not loving is to warn them. But the question that you have to wrestle with is your motivation. Is it out of love or is it not? Because if it's not, then you need to be quiet. Is it really out of love and is it out of compassion or is it out of self-righteousness? Is it out of judgment? Is that out of fear?

Because if it's not out of love, then it's better to shut your mouth. If it's out of love, then you should speak and you should speak compassionately. And my experience is that people know the difference. Not always. The Bible says that we shouldn't be surprised when we find ourselves hated by the world. Some people will take offense no matter what. But what I have to do as a follower of Jesus is to examine my own heart and make sure that I am genuinely doing this speaking and acting out of love and. Really the way that is things like what do you give your money to? What do you give your time to? How are you demonstrating compassion? Because if all you're doing is I love that saying it, then it's kind of cheap.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Yeah. Kyle, as you were speaking, I was thinking of the scripture that says, behold he eats with sinners referencing our Lord who said, I didn't come to save the righteous you know that, and so he opened his arms. He had dinner with those. And Kyle, you spend a lot of time, the latter part of the book here as we wrap up on the significance of having influence by a party at a time, a word at a time, an expression at a time, a conversation at a time, a meal at a time, a need at a time. You're taking us on a journey and you're saying that no matter where we are in our lives, God wants to use opportunities to have that influence for Him, for the kingdom in and through each of us. That's what this is all about, isn't it?

Kyle Idleman:

Yeah, that's right. At the end of this book, if all you do is learn about the one at a time way of Jesus, we kind of missed the point. The point of these stories and the point of this book is for you to be able to tell your own stories. Is that when somebody asks you about this, that you'll have a name, you'll have a face, you'll have a story that comes to mind that it won't just be you saying, "Well, I heard about this guy who pushed somebody else's car." But that would be your story to tell, that God would give you eyes to love people one at a time and that you would do something.

So I love getting notes or emails or messages about the impact that this book has had on people, but my favorite message to get is somebody who just tells a story where they share with me, "Hey, I read your book. I got to tell you what

happened to me." To me that is the beauty of it, is applying it and having a story to tell about a conversation or a meal or a word of encouragement or a prayer at just the right time.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Everyone listening right now, if you know Christ, that means someone took a moment and shared Jesus with you. Kyle, you tell a beautiful story toward the end of the book of a guy named Orville Hubbard and Dick Wolfe. Those are very important people to you, aren't they?

Kyle Idleman: Yeah, there those are two men that I've never met, but my dad was 10 years old playing with a truck on the floor of the family room when he heard a knock at the door. My grandparents went to open the door, and those two men, Orville and Dick were standing at the door and asked if they could talk to my grandparents about Jesus. They invited them to church, and my grandparents up until that point had a pretty rough go of it. It had been pretty tough for them.

They didn't know Jesus at all but these two guys decided they were going to walk across the street. And listen, I'm sure they had other things to do that day, I'm sure as they walked across the street to knock on my grandparents' door, they felt some nerves in their stomach, but they decided that they were going to reach out to them. I don't think I've recorded this in the book, but the reason that they knew them is because one of their wives had met my grandmother in the hospital and befriended her, and that gave them the opportunity to go knock on my grandparents' door and share Jesus with them. And that conversation, that knock on the door changed their lives forever and consequently, of course, has impacted my life greatly. Almost anything good and beautiful in my life, I could trace back to the day those two men walked across the street and knocked on my grandparents' door.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And this is the entire journey of sowing seed. However, whatever opportunity God gives you to be the hands and feet of Christ, what a beautiful conversation. The power of life and death are in the tongue. We have the opportunity to communicate words of life. God help us to do that very thing. Kyle, in closing, a devotional that goes along with your book, *One at a Time: The Unexpected Way God Wants to Use You to Change The World* is the *One at a Time* devotional book. Tell us a little bit about that and what you're hoping to get done through it.

Kyle Idleman: So it's called *One Day at a Time*, and it just goes on a 60-day journey of living this out. So it's a little different than your normal devotional book because it's full of challenges of putting this into practice. So it kind of takes you on a devotional thought, but then challenges you to do something with it that day. And my prayer is that if the church, the followers of Jesus, just decided to take up this challenge of showing love to people one at a time for 60 days, the impact would be huge.

Dr. Tim Clinton: That devotional, again is *One Day at a Time*, a 60-day challenge to see, serve and celebrate the people around you. Again, the author Kyle Idleman, he's senior pastor at Southeast Christian Church, Louisville, Kentucky. Kyle, if people want to learn more about you, maybe follow you, hear some messages from you, et cetera, what's the easiest thing they can do to go find you?

Kyle Idleman: I would love to have them connect with me on Instagram, Kyle Idleman, and also they can check out some content on [kyleidleman.com](http://kyleidleman.com).

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a delight to have you the last couple of days here on the broadcast. I know people are going to be moved, and you know what our prayer is that God would touch the hearts of people so that they would open their hearts and be maybe that Jesus, that someone so desperately needs to see. That's what this is all about. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, again, his wife, Shirley, our team here, Kyle, thank you for joining us. We'll pray that God continue to strengthen your voice and raise you up for such a time as this.

Kyle Idleman: Thank you, Tim. I'm grateful for you all. Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Wow. That was Pastor Kyle Idleman, and you've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and the entire staff here at the Dobson Institute, thank you for making us a part of your day. Please remember, we are a listener supported Christian radio outreach, and it's because of you and your support that we're able to bring you quality content each and every day.

To find out more, just go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Now, I cannot help but marvel at the inspirational message that Kyle delivered today and yesterday on the program. Did you notice that love is a key element to making a difference in the world? As we read in John chapter 13, verse 34, a new command I give you, Jesus says, love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. Imagine a world where everyone truly lived out that principle.

That was the conclusion of this two-part conversation featuring Kyle Idleman here on Family Talk, and if you'd like to share either part of the conversation or if you'd like to go back and listen again for yourself, simply visit us online at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). That's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for tuning in today. Be sure to join us again tomorrow to hear a special heartfelt program about doing difficult things through God with special guest Jennifer Rothschild and her conversation with Dr. Tim Clinton. That's coming up tomorrow right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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