



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Living for Christ, Whatever the Cost – Part 2

Guest(s): David and Jason Benham

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Roger Marsh: In early 2014, David and Jason Benham were about to launch a new kind of reality TV show. HGTV offered them a deal to produce Flip It Forward, a program showcasing their skills in home restoration as well as their heart for ministry. Their dreams of using this new platform to spread the gospel were dashed by LGBT activists who bullied the network into canceling the show before the first episode even aired. In spite of this apparent setback, the ministry of the Benham brothers has continued to thrive.

Welcome to Family Talk with your host, psychologist and best-selling author Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh. The Benham brothers are with us once again to continue their conversation with Dr. Dobson about how their lives and ministries have actually flourished in the aftermath of the sudden cancellation of their reality TV program.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay, David and Jason, let's pick up where we were last time, because the world had opened up to you and the opportunities on HGTV were just almost breathtaking. There's a lot of money involved too in that.

David Benham: There was.

Dr. James Dobson: Would have been.

David Benham: Why'd you bring that up?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

David Benham: Wish you wouldn't have reminded me.

Jason Benham: A lot of money and even more was the platform that we would get. When they actually sold us on the show because they were negotiating against TLC, they said, "Look, we have a hundred million homes and we're going to put you guys to the top of the network and all these things." And so we thought, wow, this is a great opportunity for us to exercise the principles of our faith and show America what true biblical Christianity looks like in a house flipping context. So we were super excited.

Dr. James Dobson: All right. I mentioned at the end of the program last time that GLAAD discovered you.

David Benham: Glad with two A's.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

David Benham: It's Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. That's what it stands for.

Dr. James Dobson: Explain again what it is and what happened.

David Benham: It's just an activist group.

Jason Benham: Yeah.

David Benham: It's not really just gays and lesbians because there are plenty that support us, the plenty that stood for our rights of religious liberty and all these other things, but it's just this activist group.

Jason Benham: And that's the interesting thing is that when David and I got fired, we got reached out to by so many different gays and lesbians saying, "Guys we're in your corner."

David Benham: They were coming out of the wood works on Facebook for us.

Dr. James Dobson: Why would they do that?

Jason Benham: Well, because they recognize that our freedom of religion was getting taken from us essentially, that it's the agenda that's hijacked gays and lesbians.

David Benham: Because the issue is not the issue. The issue is the revolution. So it has nothing to do with homosexuality or it has nothing to do with gender identity or these other things that we're fighting today that we're seeing happening in this country. The issue isn't the issue. The issue is the revolution, which is to remove God, remove individual freedom. That's what's taking place right now.

Jason Benham: So, that agenda will attach-

Dr. James Dobson: And change the definition of marriage.

Jason Benham: That's right. That agenda will attach itself to anything. That's why you see the Women's Movement and Black Lives Matter and all sorts of other different types of movements that may come up. And then oftentimes this agenda will just attach to it. And it's just an exploitation of good people.

That's why David and I, we sold 20,000 houses in a 10-year period all across the country. We never discriminated against anybody. We sold to anybody. That's just the way that we built our business.

David Benham: But they still created the narrative that we were these haters. HG fires us, they cancel the show, and then we end up finding ourselves in the crosshairs of the media thought mafia where we were, I mean, targeted and bullied by every major network you can imagine. But what was great was that CNN, Fox, TMZ, I mean you name it, Good Morning America, Nightline, they all had us on to talk.

And so for the next two weeks, Jason and I were all over national television speaking about that Jesus loves all people, but He doesn't love all ideas. And the fact that we believe that marriage is between a man and a woman does not mean that we hate people. And so we began to articulate these truths and it began to resonate with America. And I'll give you just a little background. One of our niches in real estate is that we sell foreclosure properties. So we sell for a lot of banks. Well, SunTrust Bank had given Jason and I a lot of business over a 10-year period of time, including our franchisees. Well, when they found out the firestorm that was happening, they pulled all of the properties that we were selling for them from our business as well as our franchisees. And we said, "Why on earth are you doing that? We're performing for you."

And we got a tip from one of the insiders that they had a board meeting that they were going to fire the Benham brothers because of what was happening with HG. So when that story went public, it hit the top of the Drudge report and there were 51 million Tweets delivered over a short period of time.

Dr. James Dobson: Unbelievable.

David Benham: And 30 million Google searches about the whole situation and overwhelming support from my brother and I to the point to where SunTrust actually had a little banner on their website that said, "Please don't email or call about the Benham brothers. We're giving them their properties back." We got a personal apology in writing from the president of the bank within eight hours of them taking all the business from us.

So, what that did that really encouraged us that there are far more people than we realize that really do hold to family values that do believe that God's boundaries lead to His blessings.

Dr. James Dobson: Now HGTV loved you, wanted you to stay.

Jason Benham: They absolutely wanted us to stay. And the three executives that were on the phone with us when they actually had to fire us, one was speechless. The other said she was having such a hard time with it and the other was crying. They didn't want us to go and they didn't want to release us, but they had no choice because apparently it was a top down from their board or whatever that

basically said, "We're going to lose advertising dollars because of what Right Wing Watch is doing. They're pushing so hard against these guys that we don't know if we're going to get advertisers" and of course they never told us that, but David and I recognized, and that's why on all these shows that we went on, we never had anything disparaging to say about HGTV. If you're a senior in high school and you see a bully picking on some young freshman, what do you do? You go yell at the little freshman kid, stand up for yourself, or do you go deal with a bully?

So we've never said one thing bad about HG. We simply said, they got bullied and we have no intentions of backing down from this bully. And it's not a person, it's an agenda. It's the exact same type of bully that was taunting the armies of the living God. And David had to go there and sling a stone at him. And so now our bully is in the world of ideas, and that's where God's men and God's women are called to. We are called to demolish ideas that go against God's best for people while at the same time we reach out with compassion to the people who hold those ideas. And only-

Dr. James Dobson: And yet you guys got fired?

David Benham: Yeah.

Jason Benham: We got fired, got the big ax.

David Benham: We got fired.

Dr. James Dobson: Jason, how'd that hit you?

Jason Benham: Well, about six months before we got fired, I remember getting a phone call from HGTV asking us some questions about, are you guys anti-gay or anything? And they just wanted to kind of clarify our stands on these things because of some of the media that was out there on us. And of course, as David said in our last show, we're not anti-anything. But during that time, both he and I, for about a three-week period had to really go through some serious fear that, we had a fear of man that was coming over us that was telling us, maybe you should just kind of be quiet. Maybe you should cool down a little bit so that you guys can have a show. And God got us through that. We discovered that boldness, apart from brokenness, makes a bully. We had to be broken over our man pleasing spirit.

And so by the time HG fired us, David and I had already been through that, and we really felt like Peter. Peter in Acts 4 was quite a bit different than Peter at the latter chapters in Matthew where he was a weakling. In Acts 4, he stood boldly that's because he had already been broken. And so David and I, in that moment when HG fired us, I felt like liquid courage coming up in my spine. I felt it coming from the Holy Spirit.

And one of the keys is, I remember that Scripture that said, "When you're drug before kings and magistrates, don't worry beforehand what to say. Your heavenly Father will give you utterance." When all of these news stations started calling us and wanting us to come speak, I recognized that the key to that verse, the key to unlocking the Holy Spirit to come in and speak through you, is when you feel love for the people who are accusing you.

And David and I felt genuine love for those people. And so when we opened our mouths, by God's grace, He gave us the words to say because we were willing to speak truth and love.

David Benham:

So, Dr. Dobson, one of the interesting things that Jason and I found was we were affiliated with a few ministries and had some other ministry partners that we were working with before we signed with HG. But when everything went down, we received some rather disturbing phone calls that were, "Hey guys, listen, we love you. We support you. We stand with you, but we're not going to make our support for you vocal or public because we don't want to find ourselves in the midst of this controversy." And I remember thinking to myself, well, you know what? I mean this is really an important issue here, is that marriage is being redefined right before our very eyes. This is an assault on the image of God, marriage and a man and a woman coming together for covenant, for life is the image of God.

And an unborn child because we were also very pro-life, and that's one of the reasons why we got in trouble as well. Unborn children need a voice, and yet for the sake of not wanting any controversy or for the sake of trying to build their own platform, certain ministries were distancing from us. And so Jason and I now are just trying to encourage Christian leaders, listen, we've got a lot of teachers and that's a wonderful thing, but the apostle Paul said, "You have many teachers, but few fathers." Fathers do not run when danger is on the line. If I've got my children around a campfire and I'm teaching them about Jesus and a rattlesnake shows up, I'm not going to try and find common ground with a rattlesnake.

Jason Benham:

And that's what we appreciate about you and this radio program in your ministry is that you have been a father to the nation and a dad is willing to say the hard things and you're willing to discuss the hard things. Even though, I've got a young 7-year-old daughter, and if I say some hard things to her, there are times where she'll respond back, "Oh, you hate me." No, it's not true that I hate you, but I'm not trying to be your friend right now. I'm trying to be your dad and if you can honor me as dad, one day, we're going to be good friends. But you've been a father to this nation and we really do appreciate the fact that you have gone before us and plowed the ground. You were the tip of the spear. People think worse things about you than they even do us. You were the tip of the spear and you really have encouraged young guys like us to get out there and stand-

Dr. James Dobson: Well, one of the greatest honors for me is to carry the banner. At times I've done it better than others, but the greatest thrill for me is feeling like I make God smile.

Jason Benham: That's great.

David Benham: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: You ever had that feeling where you just know that He's saying, "I saw it."

Jason Benham: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: "I was paying attention. I saw it and what you did was right and you were representing Me." That's the greatest thrill in the world.

David Benham: That is.

Dr. James Dobson: Better than any honor, there is no financial reward. There's nothing greater for me than feeling like I have pleased the creator of the universe.

Jason Benham: That's great.

David Benham: Amen.

Dr. James Dobson: I wish I could do it every day.

David Benham: For sure.

Jason Benham: And you know something encouraging for your listeners, those of you who are listening right now, David and I have gotten asked this question a lot, and you probably have too, Dr. Dobson. If we were put in that same public situation, I don't know that I would have stood boldly for the Lord. I'm not sure if I would have, and David and I always respond with this, the way that you know that you'll stand in the big things is, are you standing in the little? Are you being faithful when nobody else is watching? Look, all you got to do is just be faithful, right where God has placed you. David didn't defeat the giant in front of everybody until he beat the lion and the bear when nobody was watching. So we tell people, you just be faithful right there. You're a stay at home mom. You feel bewildered right now. You've got very little feedback from your kids and you feel you're just down in the dumps. You are tending those sheep.

Dr. James Dobson: When you've been treated badly and you've been wounded and hurt. And we all have. Everybody goes through that. There's a little Scripture that rings in my ear and the Lord said, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." And it just calms the spirit. When you think about that. He's saying, "I'm paying attention here and I'm going to handle this. Don't worry about it. You don't have to do it all. Just stay close to me and do what I tell you."

David Benham: Oh, that's good.

Dr. James Dobson: And that is where the strength and energy comes from.

David Benham: That's exactly right. And that actually is so fitting for today. When Jason and I were studying for our second book, I stumbled on a quote by Dr. Elton Trueblood who was the chaplain for Harvard and Stanford universities. And he was asked later in his life, "What's it going to look like for the church in America in the later part of the 20th century?" And he said, "By the year 2000, Christians in America will be a conscious minority surrounded by an arrogant, militant paganism." And we find ourselves in that type of a context today.

Dr. James Dobson: That's where it is.

David Benham: Exactly. And so if we have the eternal perspective like what you just articulated, that our goal is to make God smile even if it makes others frown at us. We cannot concern ourselves with the frowns or even the flatteries of men, but we want the smile of God on our lives and it will cost us something now. It's going to cost us something if we truly abandon ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and we're willing to stand on His principles that lead to life. It's not a hateful or a mean thing to say that marriage is between a man or a woman or to say that sex belongs in the context of marriage or to say that an unborn child deserves life or any of these things that say that we have individual freedoms that God gives and no man can take.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell us what was hanging in the balance on your being fired and going out into the world without jobs? When you looked at all that, there's a lot of perks there. I mean, your names would've been known all across the country. You would've had every kind of offer, every possibility. You're good-looking guys, you're young, you're athletic, you've had a baseball career. There's just a lot that was attractive about you. And then you had also been very successful in your businesses, so you had a lot to lose. What was going through your head?

David Benham: Well, the first thing that was going through our head honestly was fear. But courage is not the absence of fear. It's doing what's right in the presence of it. The next thing that came through our head was that David and Gideon and Jonathan and Joseph and Caleb and Joshua, all of these faithful men in the Scriptures as we had been reading, they had to face their fears. And so Jason and I knew that Jesus said that, "If anyone wants to follow Me, he must deny himself and pick up his cross and follow Me. If he who loves his life must lose it, but he loses his life, for My sake and the gospel will surely find it." And so we knew that... Were you about to say something, Jason?

Jason Benham: Yeah. I'm about to say something.

David Benham: He's leaning into the microphone.

Jason Benham: I was about to jump in.

David Benham: Go ahead.

Jason Benham: Well, you know that verse that says, "A good name is to be esteemed more than great riches." What we have found after having gone through this is that one of the big strongholds in Christianity today is that we're trying to have a good name on this earth, as opposed to establishing a good name in Heaven. And you think about David and Gideon and these guys who stood boldly for the Lord. They're the great cloud of witnesses that are up there in Heaven cheering us on. Can you imagine? You get up into Heaven and David's like, "Man, I remember going out against Goliath. I was so scared, but I was willing to take him on." And he looks over at you and is like, "Hey, you weren't even willing to fight because you didn't want to get a bad reputation on Facebook." We knew in that moment that the one thing that we had to lose was a good name in Heaven. We didn't want to lose that.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you're also human, but tell me how heavily it weighed on you that you were going from something to nothing.

Jason Benham: Oh, my goodness. Because David and I have always had this sense inside of us that wanted to make a significant splash in culture for the Lord. We always wanted to have influence for Christ. And when HGTV, this secular company is saying, "Hey, we're going to put you in millions of homes and we're going to pay you to do it," we had already begun to make plans for preaching the gospel to people and using this as a platform to where if you recognize my name, I'm going to tell you the name that you need to know and His is Jesus Christ. And so when HGTV and we got down to the point where it was about time for us to get fired, that tendency was to focus on the platform that we would lose instead of the person who put it there in the first place. And anytime you're going to focus on that thing that God has given to you, even if it's a good thing, that's the thing that's now controlling.

Dr. James Dobson: So you wanted to hold onto this.

David Benham: We wanted to hold on.

Dr. James Dobson: We all do, don't we?

Jason Benham: We wanted to hold it and what we realized was if you're not willing to let it go, that's the very thing that you're enslaved to. You have to first be willing to let that go and die to what it is that you want first, at which point you can then face your fear. That's what David shows us. And when you face your fear, here's the beautiful thing about facing your fear, is that God's greatest blessings for you are found only on the other side of your greatest fear. And if you aren't willing to stand out there and face it, you're not going to get that blessing God's got for you.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's be honest, there are also huge questions that come in a moment like that. Satan will say to you, "Why would God have done this? You are going to reach millions of people. Why? Why? Why?" And you don't have answers to those. Usually the Lord doesn't come in comforting words and say, "I got a plan here. This is really better." Job begged for the answer to the why. And the Lord said, "Who are you to ask?" He never told him.

I want to tell you, I've been through that too because I was reaching 220 million people every day at Focus on the Family, and it was suddenly over. And I still to this day, don't know why. I can't explain that, but where the Lord leads, God will guide. And that's what He did.

David Benham: That's so good. And having gone through this situation, and you as well, I have discovered that anytime I ask the question what, where, why or how, God always responds with who. Who am I? And if I keep my focus on a who then the what, where, when, why, and how it's all going to work itself out. I need to be about a who and keep my focus on Him. And when I do that, I'll make Him smile.

Dr. James Dobson: All right. We've got five minutes left. I want to know what happened since. What happened after everything, every door was shut there?

David Benham: Okay. So all the cameras are then off. Okay, we get fired, the cameras are off. We are getting within five hours, 10 hours, we're getting phone calls from all the major networks, Fox and CNN and ABC and NBC and all these saying we want you guys on for interviews. We started doing interviews, but we knew at the same time we committed to 10 weeks of renovating houses for six families. Even though the cameras weren't around, Jason and I knew that, our dad taught us when we were kids that if you hit a baseball right back at the pitcher and he throws it over to first base before you even get out of the batter's box, you have a choice, walk back to the dugout or hustle through first base. And he told us, you always hustle through first base. So we knew, hey, we're out. We didn't even get out of the batter's box and we're out with HGTV, but we're going to finish these houses for these families.

And we finished all of the houses. They all flipped them. They all did very well financially. Fox and Friends had us on and said, "We heard..." Because we didn't tell anybody what we were doing. Somebody had told Fox and Friends what we were doing. So Fox and Friends had us on and said, "We heard guys were finishing these houses, and we said, "We learned this when we were kids. You always finish what you start, you hustle through first base." And then we continued to grow our real estate company and we're out there, we're doing our dead level best to create jobs, but we also wrote a book called, *Whatever the Cost*, and that outlines the whole HGTV story and then Jason and I as we've been traveling-

Dr. James Dobson: Is that available now?

David Benham: That is. It's available on Amazon or Barnes and Noble anywhere-

Dr. James Dobson: Hit it again. Tell us.

David Benham: The name of it is, *Whatever the Cost: Facing Your Fears, Dying to Your Dreams and Living Powerfully*. Then as Jason and I have been traveling the country, we recognize that there are millennials that are terrified. They're believers, but they're really scared in this generation right now to take a strong stand for what they believe. And we note that, we know the feeling ourselves, so we wrote a second book called *Living Among Lions: How to Thrive Like Daniel in Today's Babylon*. So we don't have to just survive as believers. We can thrive and Daniel's story points to that. And then our third book is the *Miracle of Shreveport* to show that God is working behind the scenes. Even when you can't see Him, you can trust Him.

Dr. James Dobson: In my book, *When God Doesn't Make Sense*, I quoted Reverend Reuben Welch who has been a friend for many years, and he used a quote that I included in my book, and it was this, "With God, even when nothing is happening, something is happening."

David Benham: That's good.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that great?

David Benham: That's excellent.

Jason Benham: That's great. We should have had that in our book, but it's already done now, so... But that's an excellent quote. And we have since-

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. When you just feel like it's all falling apart...

David Benham: That's true.

Jason Benham: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: No, He's there.

Jason Benham: And we don't ask the questions of why. All we got to do is just keep moving forward and then let God open the doors as He sees fit. And David and I, since that time, travel the country. We speak a lot. This is the message David and I have to young millennials is get into God's Word. Jeremiah says, "Your Word is like a fire shut up in my bones. I'm weary of holding it in." When you get God's word inside of you and the devil comes along and tries to extinguish your light, you'll be like a coal inside of a fire pit burning embers that the very act of that wind blowing against you to try to extinguish it is what will ignite it.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I knew I liked you guys when you walked in. We didn't meet until yesterday. But the fact that you are trying to serve my Lord and doing it with everything you've got, and you've done it because of a godly mother and father that have led you to the cross, you are now spreading that news to as many people as you can. He's not through with you yet. Who knows, it may make pale the HGTV offer that came to you, and I'd rather think He will.

David Benham: Praise God.

Jason Benham: It's an honor to be on your show. Thank you for sowing into us all those years.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay, good to have you here. God bless you guys.

Jason Benham: God bless you.

David Benham: Thanks so much for having us.

Roger Marsh: Well, to live for Christ requires courage and faith, whatever the cost indeed. You've just heard the conclusion of a two-part conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his special guests, David and Jason Benham. Now the Benham Brothers are authors, entrepreneurs, and popular speakers. To learn more about David and Jason and their book called *Whatever the Cost*, you can visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And while you're on our website, check out a helpful new resource created by the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute in partnership with Dr. Owen Strachan. It's all about affirming what God's design for women really is. The brand new free download is called "What Is a Woman, According to God?" The role women have in our world is incredibly important. So be sure to go to our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk today.

And keep in mind, we're very excited to announce our brand new short feature called the Dr. Dobson Minute. It's designed to help reach the next generation of families, and we have remastered many of Dr. Dobson's biblically based transforming truths into 60 second audio messages that are easy to listen to and then to share. You can visit drdobsonminute.org and check out these new resources today, providing young families with practical insights that will strengthen marriages and build better parenting skills. Again, you can listen to the Dr. Dobson Minute when you go to drdobsonminute.org. That's drdobsonminute.org.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for making Family Talk a part of your day, and be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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