



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Truth Changes Everything – Part 1

Guest(s): Jeff Myers

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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.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, hello everyone and welcome into Family Talk. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host of the program here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We're so glad you joined us today. A psychiatrist friend of mine, Karl Benzio, often says this, "Truth, Tim, is dying." And no doubt you've probably heard that there's a lot of confusion about what is truth? Many people believe that they should live out what they think their own personal version of truth is. Well, what a mess. Let me be clear. There is a real truth to live by, and that's what we're going to dive into today.
- Now, even if you're listening and you know the truth, be sure to stay tuned because some of what we're going to talk about may surprise you. Our guest today is Dr. Jeff Myers, who is president of Summit Ministries, which focuses on transforming high school and college aged kids and tomorrow's leaders with a distinctively Christian worldview. Dr. Myers has written several books including the one inspiring today's conversation, entitled *Truth Changes Everything: How People of Faith Can Transform the World in a Time of Crisis*. Jeff and his wife Stephanie and their family make their home in Colorado. Dr. Jeff Myers, welcome into Family Talk. Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, send their regards. What a delight to have you. Thank you for joining us.
- Jeff Myers: Dr. Tim, thank you for the opportunity to be with you today. We love the Dobson family. Ryan Dobson came to Summit Ministries long, long time ago as a student, changed the course of his life, and Dr. Dobson had the grace to tell the whole world about it, and so we have had the opportunity to train literally since that time, 1 million young people in a biblical worldview.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: Oh, that's stunning. That's just so encouraging to hear. Jeff, I wanted ask you too about how you and Stephanie are doing and what's been happening in your household?
- Jeff Myers: Thank you. I really appreciate that so much. Well, we work together very closely for the work that we're doing here at Summit Ministries. We're doing very well

in our health. I don't remember when we talked about this maybe in the last show, but I had gone through a battle with cancer and as of this month, 23 months in remission from cancer.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Jeff Myers: So every day is a gift. Even if I wasn't in remission, Tim, and you know how this works, you work with a lot of people who are really hurting for all kinds of reasons, even if I found that I wasn't in remission from cancer, today is still a gift because God's made it and His mercies are new every morning.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, hey Jeff, we'll continue to pray for you that God strengthens your heart and continues to just bless you and touch you. Thanks for sharing that. Hey, Jeff, as we get started, take us back a little bit again on the history of Summit Ministries, touching a million kids. There's got to be some backwater, some story here that's absolutely fascinating.

Jeff Myers: The story is fascinating, and I don't think I've ever talked about this on the radio before, so here we go. But David Noble is the founder of Summit Ministries, one of the most brilliant philosophers I've ever known. Literally read a book a day and could remember the content of what he read, I tested him on a number of occasions. And he was a college student and had heard a talk about communism. He asked the college president about it. The college president said, would you like to teach a study group about communism? And he said he would. So to prepare for the study group, David Noble being David Noble, read the Collected Works of Marx and Lenin, 28 volumes, 500 pages of book, and he said as he read the book, he realized that Marxists have a plan to take over the world. They have a plan to take over seminaries and convince seminarians that God doesn't actually exist, that they should fight for communist revolution, take over the philosophy departments.

So he went down theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics, history, and then just started to ask the question, do Christians have anything to say about these things? Do we even realize that we're in a battle over ideas? Now, a lot of parents realize it, obviously. 70% of young adults who are significantly involved in church in their high school years aren't even attending church by the time they reach their mid-twenties. There are thousands and thousands of people within the sound of our voices right now who have had the heartache of a child walking away from their faith.

And at Summit Ministries, we continue the tradition that David Noble started for us back in 1962, and we believe that it is not inevitable that young people walk away from their faith. Rather they can develop a strong biblical worldview that keeps them close to God and their hearts, but also helps them to understand what a biblical worldview is in relation to everything that's happening around them. It isn't just how they feel about God, Tim. It's how they see everything in the entire world because of their relationship with God. And

that has transformed the lives of, as I was mentioning earlier, literally a million kids.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There's nothing more mortifying, I think, to a parent than to think about their child going prodigal on them, that abandoning what the family mission was all about, that they would walk away from the relationship with God and what they've been taught. Jeff, in the midst of it, you began to put together programs, efforts that you felt would influence today's generations. Talk to us about that journey, and by the way, putting together something that would resonate with the hearts of the younger generations because everybody tries to throw paint on the wall, but I'm going to tell you what, kids can sniff out garbage so fast. They can. And by the way, they'll do it and they'll push every button just to see whether or not you blink. Take us on that journey, Jeff, how'd this come together?

Jeff Myers: Well, Tim, the part about Summit Ministries that probably most people know about is this epic two week long summit course that David Noble started back in the 1960s that we continue to this day. So we'll have a bunch of those here in Manitou Springs, Colorado, where I'm speaking to you from and also in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. Those are our two main campuses. We have other programs around the world, but those two week programs are profoundly transformative. Today, Gen Z, 1% would have a biblical worldview. 1%. By the time they finished two weeks at summit, 85% of them have a biblical worldview.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Jeff Myers: So what happens during those two weeks? The first thing is we meet them where they are. We ask them, would you like to have some answers about life? We know that your generation, 75%, say they don't have a sense of purpose that gives meaning to their lives. 53% say they regularly struggle with anxiety and depression. Would you like to find some answers? Are you upset about your faith? What do you think about living as a Christian in the world? If you had questions for God, what would they be? Would you write them all down? Bring those questions with you.

So we start with a very high expectation that at Summit they're going to be able to help find a sense of purpose and also answers to some of their difficult questions about God and the world and their relationship to God in the world. In the process of pulling this two week program together, they connect with others, other young adults. Everything we do when we teach truth, we tie it together with relationship. Just think of two strands of a DNA double helix, connected like the connecting nucleotides, everything we do. So we have one staff member for every five students, we bring in the world leading experts. We had one of the world's leading scientists in our program today with us, the people who speak from a standpoint of experience and expertise about things young adults are wrestling with and helping them develop a biblical worldview about it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeff, what's fascinating to me is this truth with relationship piece. I think a lot of people miss that. I'm big on it. I think you've got to be able to "press in." We know this in parenting. The quality of your relationship will even impact the effectiveness of your discipline strategies. So if you are just out there and you're lost and you're just going at each other, you pretty much have lost your connection, your relationship piece. So the ability to open up their heart and for them to receive truth, that's where it has to be.

Jeff Myers: Yes, this is so fundamental to everything we do at Summit Ministries that if you ask one of our staff members, what is your job? They will tell you their job description. Then they will draw out a little DNA double helix for you. They will draw the connecting nucleotides between, so it looks like a twisty ladder, and they will say, my job is to connect truth and relationship for somebody every day. Whether your job is answering the phones, caring for customers, being with students, driving a bus, working in the kitchen, whatever it happens to be, your goal is to connect truth and relationship for people. If you have truth without relationship, people will think of you as arrogant. And we all know those people, the know-it-alls who know everything and nobody wants to talk to them. If you see them coming toward you, you find someplace else to go.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah, you tune them out.

Jeff Myers: You tune them out.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You shut them down.

Jeff Myers: On the other hand, people who are relational with no commitment to truth, they start to get on our nerves after a while too. They're always saying things like, well, maybe I don't see it quite right, but this is what's true for me. And I guess we all have our own fuse. After a while, you're like, would you just have a spine and stand for something? And even if we disagree, at least just have a viewpoint. So truth without relationship leads to arrogance. Relationship without truth leads to apathy. But when you tie the two together, it reproduces like crazy in people's lives.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeff, I think a lot of parents are turning up the radio right now thinking, boy, do we need this. We desperately need this. Jeff, let's go a little bit deeper here. The next five years, what's on the horizon when you think of Summit Ministries, where are you going?

Jeff Myers: Well, for the next five years, Tim, our focus is at the end of a summit experience, whether somebody meets with us through our two-week program or through one of our other programs around the world or our curriculum courses, like I said, there's 70,000 of these young people every year, our goal is to be able to ask and answer the question, how do we say your experience with Summit is the beginning of your journey, not the end? So we kind of picture ourselves as putting the fuel in the rocket. We can get you into orbit.

What is your satellite? What is it you're going to do when you're in orbit? And that's what we've been thinking a lot about. In other words, preparing a generation of leaders. So for instance, when we talk about the Marxist worldview, a lot of people don't think about that very much anymore, but the way a lot of people who are college professors view the world is through a Marxist lens. If you don't understand that worldview, you're not going to understand or be prepared to respond to the things your professors are teaching you. Well, that's really important, but we don't just want to be known for what we're against. We want to be known for what we're for. What we're for is a biblical understanding of economics that elevates trust and private property and human dignity, and enables us to bring flourishing to our society, bring blessing.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love that. Jeff, I really love that. At the end of the day, we're in a battle for our kids. The truth is everybody's trying to get their hands on them, trying to influence their mind. And when I think about the church and her influence, it concerns me, Jeff, because I don't see a lot happening there. On the other hand, pick up a digital device and think about how much influence that device has in his or her heart on issues that they are getting pounded with every day, from sexuality, to love, to pornography, to whatever it is, it's coming at them, to how they view God, how they view money, how they deal with life, mental health, politics, everything's coming at them and they're getting crushed by it all. Jeff, in this battle, how do you see Summit and what you do for parents? Explain at that level what it is that you're really trying to get done. I know the biblical worldview, keep going. This is important to us.

Jeff Myers: Yeah, there are so many angles to this, but I think it's very, very simple. We view this as faith forward. What is it that you need to know and do about the Lord Jesus Christ and about Scripture that will open up reality for you? John 8:32, Jesus said, if you follow my teachings, you will know the truth. The truth will set you free. The word for truth in Greek is *alítheia*. It means reality. And knowing reality sets you free. So you know this from the counseling world, people who are suffering from an addiction or some kind of a mental health challenge, unless they grapple with reality as it actually exists, they can't get well.

But the same thing that's true for people in a counseling situation is true for societies. We have to grapple with reality. So a biblical worldview is not just one more viewpoint. I'm not interested in putting forward a biblical Christian worldview because I want power. I'm not interested because I want to be able to drop the mic and say, see, you're so dumb and I'm so smart. I'm putting it forward because through Jesus, reality literally opens up for you. And by understanding reality, you can be free from the things that plague you and you can be free to do the things that bring blessing and flourishing to other people. That's why I'm interested in this project.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeff, let's talk about our kids. A lot of people have real concern, rightfully so. You talked about how often when they move through high school and get into their

college years, they drift. Are you hopeful? When you spend two weeks with them, how do you see that generation?

Jeff Myers: I'm hopeful for a lot of reasons. Can I just tell you a couple of stories?

Dr. Tim Clinton: I would love that.

Jeff Myers: One of the things we do at Summit Ministries is talk with the students about the beginning of a biblical worldview in Genesis that God made us to be in His image. And I tell the students, I want you to stop thinking about, how do I get this in my notes? I want you to just let this sink into your mind and into your heart. I'm not saying God made y'all in His image. God made all y'all in His image. I'm saying, God made you personally in his image. You are identifiably His. Now, I know God does not have a body. He's got His spirit, but He has an identifiable presence. If somebody were to see God and they were to see you, they would say, I know your dad, you look just like Him because you were made in His image.

And I said, I understand that a lot of people feel triggered by that because their relationship with their earthly father is not good, but we've got to flip it around and stop seeing God from the perspective of people on earth. Start seeing people on earth from God's perspective, which we can do through scripture. And so I shared this with the students and they let it soak down in their hearts. And afterward a young woman walked up... This was just two days ago. She walked up, she's a woman with some significant disabilities, and it was even very difficult to communicate with her. And she said, I never knew my earthly father growing up. And she said, everybody in my life thinks, well, you can't do much because you have so many disabilities. And I say, I'm made of God's image.

He made me for a purpose. You say I can't do much. Just watch me. That kind of transformation is worth everything for the entire summer, and we see it happen over and over and over again every day. As young people who are craving a sense of purpose find that they're in a community where they're safe. It's not like a safe space to be safe from thinking. It's a safe place to think. You can think and grow and you can get to know the Lord better, and you can share what's going on in your life with other people and let them pray with you to knock down those barriers. So when I see these students at Summit, I'm tremendously hopeful.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen. You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here, and our special guest today is Dr. Jeff Myers. He's the president of Summit Ministries, focuses on transforming high school and college kids into tomorrow's leaders with a distinctively Christian worldview. Jeff talked about a million have gone through their program. It's just amazing what God's doing in and through Summit Ministries. But Jeff, I wanted to ask you, can you give us an example or two about a couple of students who have come through the program making a difference in culture right now?

Jeff Myers: Absolutely. There's so many stories. I'm always thinking, well, what's the most recent one? Because it's cool if I tell a story from 20 years ago, but even cooler if I tell a story from two days ago. So last week I was at a conference in Florida training elected officials biblical worldview, and a young woman walked up to me and said, I got trained in biblical worldview in high school by you because I read your book, *Understanding the Times*, and now she's an elected legislator from a very liberal state.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love that.

Jeff Myers: Just a fun example. Michael Porter Jr.

Dr. Tim Clinton: MPJ. There it is.

Jeff Myers: A lot of people know him who just played for the NBA Championship for the Denver Nuggets. He's a graduate of Summit Ministries. A lot of fun to watch him growing his career. It's very difficult to be a young man in the NBA and to stay strong in your faith, but I've been very proud of him. We see a lot of people like Lila Rose come through our program. Lila is one of the top 50 pro-life leaders of the last 50 years.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We've had her on the broadcast.

Jeff Myers: Yes you have. And Dr. James Dobson is also one of those top 50 all listed in the recent book that came out. So Lila developed her pro-life convictions, came to Summit Ministries. She's 14 years of age, I believe. Usually our students are 16 to 22, but those are examples. John Stonestreet, a lot of people listen to John Stonestreet's program maybe on the station you're listening to right now, the BreakPoint Broadcast with John Stonestreet. He got his biblical worldview training through Summit Ministries as well.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeff, I want to step back again. Probably people are asking, okay, wait a second, Summit Ministries, help me again, understand who they are and what they offer. Jeff, let's go back and tell them, again, you have camps, you have curriculum. Walk us through, if they go up on your website, what type of programs are there available to young men and women?

Jeff Myers: Tim, if you come to the summit.org website, the main thing you're going to find is the two-week-long course of study that young adults come through between 16 and 22 years of age that can shape the entire course of their life. As I mentioned, 1% of Gen Z has a biblical worldview. By the time they finish the summit, 85% have a biblical worldview. We study our graduates one year out, five years out, 10 years out, their biblical worldview remains strong. Why? Because at Summit, they don't just learn to feel differently about their relationship with God. They see everything differently because of their relationship with God. So they can go confidently into the military, into politics, all these different areas of life confidently representing a biblical worldview

knowing that it's not just a power play. It's not we're Christian, so we're better. It is, let me show you a worldview that brings flourishing and blessing to the nations of the earth.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know this, Dr. Dobson has a very special affinity for sending students to the Summit. And Jeff, I don't know what you've done in him, but boy, you've done something special. Everywhere he goes, he's recommending Summit Ministries. Tell us a little bit about your relationship again with Dr. Dobson and that connection.

Jeff Myers: Well, Dr. James Dobson arranged for his son Ryan to attend Summit Ministries many, many years ago, and Ryan came kicking and screaming. The way his dad puts it is he left skid marks all the way across the Rockies from California to come to the program. But in the course of just a couple of days, Ryan realized, I am getting truth here. I'm being heard. When I have an opinion, I get to share it. And he began to grow in his faith in a way that so surprised his father, that his father asked him, would you like to come back?

And he said yes. And he got five friends and immediately turned around, came back for another two weeks at Summit Ministries, and that changed the course of Ryan's life. Well, then Dr. James Dobson communicated with millions and millions of people and he told them about the Summit Ministries two week program, and it opened up opportunities to do something that had never been done that I know of in the history of the world, which is we intentionally and specifically and intelligently train the rising generation to embrace a biblical worldview and to champion a biblical worldview in every area of life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I think of that Scripture where John said, "I have no greater joy than to know my children walk in the truth." And we really believe Christian education, worldview education, getting that piece right. It's everything. Jeff, if people want to learn more, are you taking registrations now? Do you have any openings left for the summer? Are you guys already booking for 2024?

Jeff Myers: We are booking for 2024, and the program, it'll be half full by the end of 2023 for next summer. So you want to take a look at summit.org and then just pray about how God would arrange things so that your young adult could come to the program. Sometimes young adults come based on the trust in their parents or some other authority alone. They don't want to come and study the program like this for two weeks, but by the time they finish, they say, this is the best thing that ever happened to me. The best two weeks of my life is what I hear from students all of the time. So you can arrange for that, for the summer of 2024, make that the summer where you help your children develop an unshakable faith.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And that website again is summit.org. Mom, dad, go up there and check it out. Also, encourage your son or daughter. This is primarily, again, Jeff, for high school and college age students, really for God just to pour something special into their heart and life. Anchor them as they begin to embrace what's ahead of

them. And God knows for such a time as this, we need this to happen. Jeff, you've been so gracious to agree to join us again tomorrow. Here on the broadcast we're going to talk about a book you've written called *Truth Changes Everything: How People of Faith Can Transform the World in a Time of Crisis*. And I know there's a lot of application to today's generations, but this is for all of us. We're in a battle. Jeff, can you tease it out and tell us where we're going to go tomorrow?

Jeff Myers: I think a lot of people who are listening right now think that America's going in the wrong direction. 70% of people regularly say it's going in the wrong direction. We live in a time of crisis. Nothing like this has ever happened before. And the good news from history is in times, just like the one in which we live, Jesus followers who did a couple of things different, changed the course of history and things like science, art, politics, justice, and so many other areas of life, and we'll talk about as many of them as we can get to because we want to know this for ourselves, not just for our children. Of course, we want our children to go out and get involved in things where they can make a difference, but we can too.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, Jeff, I can't wait for tomorrow. Hey, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, the entire team at Family Talk, we salute you and pray that God will continue to embolden you and strengthen and put courage in your heart for such a time as this. Thank you so much for joining us.

Roger Marsh: Truth is something that can be clear cut. As you know, truth comes from God and it does not change, but the truth can change everything in our world. That was Dr. Jeff Myers here on Family Talk, along with our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton. You'll definitely want to join us again tomorrow, as Dr. Myers returns to the program, he'll explain how God can show us how to live out the truth in our everyday lives.

As we've been hearing about truth today, one area that is especially under attack is gender. So how can Christians effectively engage with and address the rising tide of transgenderism? Dr. Owen Strachan wrote the book called *What Does the Bible Teach about Transgenderism?* He has a unique understanding of the complexities involved and his insights can help deepen your perspective on this crucial issue. In collaboration with Dr. Strachan, The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has compiled a wide range of helpful resources for you on this topic. To access them now, all you have to do is visit drjamesdobson.org/transgenderism. I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of everyone here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for listening today. May God continue to richly bless you and your family.

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