



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Band of Brothers: Standing Together

Guest(s): Dennis Swanberg

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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: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Today's program touches on a topic that we are passionate about here at the Dobson Family Institute. We are going to be talking about the biblical mandate that men live out the word in every aspect of their lives and conduct themselves as godly men who are strong leaders. As it says in Proverb 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." And that is exactly what happens at a Men's Ignite event, which is where today's interview was recorded. Our guest is Christian comedian, public speaker, and ordained pastor Dennis Swanberg. Dennis spoke at the most recent Men's Ignite event in 2022. Now, the Men's Ignite Conference is held in Lynchburg, Virginia at Thomas Road Baptist Church. It's hosted by our own Dr. Tim Clinton, with the purpose of encouraging men to be strong leaders of their families and to serve and lead in their communities as well.

Dr. Dennis Swanberg, otherwise known as the Swan, is a popular comedian, motivational speaker, ordained minister and author. He had been a pastor for 23 years before he carried his message of faith with comedy across the country. He now speaks to over a quarter million people every year. He has hosted two successful TV series and created dozens of CDs and DVDs throughout his career. Dennis Swanberg earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Baylor University with a double major in both Greek and religion. He also earned a Master's of Divinity and a doctor of ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dennis and his wife Lori, have two grown sons, Dusty and Chad, and they make their home in Dallas, Texas. Let's go backstage now with our very own Dr. Tim Clinton and his special guest, Dr. Dennis Swanberg on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I'm honored to catch up with the Big Swan, one of the best Christian men and standup comedians I know. Dennis, thank you for joining us here on Family Talk.

Dennis Swanberg: Well, thank you, Tim. And I have been looking forward to this, and man, you know I love Ignite. I love this men's event, and I am glad to be back on the road. I mean, I'm so excited when I'm driving down the road, I almost break into Billy Graham, and I'm preaching like Billy Graham and I'm coming into this place and

that place. And millennials are looking at me going, who in the world is this man? I tell them I'm Dennis Swanberg. I'm sorry, but it feels good to be out.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dennis, it does. It feels so good. And you know what? This event has been special. There's something happening. I've always said this. I believe this in my heart, that when men get together and they press into the heart of God, I mean, something happens.

Dennis Swanberg: Men reach men, and men like to be with men. We want to be with men, but we work. We get married, we've got kids. We got this and that. When does a man get to be with some of his other buddies? Well, I'm going to go hunting, honey. Well, how long are y'all going to be gone? I'm going to go fishing. Honey, when are you going to be back? Well, we like to be with our buddies. And this event, I mean, I don't know how many thousands we've got, why there's a hunger of men enjoy being with men.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dennis, something that really stuck out to me or stands out to me is this is pretty tough time we've been going through, and in particular, I think for men, they feel pretty isolated, kind of lost and confused, and the truth is so, I don't know if you see this or not, but I think there's a real beat down on men and culture. When people talk about men, they pretty much see them as buffoons, cold, porn addicts, horrible fathers, terrible husbands, abusers or what have you. Everybody gets kind of lumped into that thing, and I'm tired of hearing that. I'm tired of this radical push to feminize men. I'm tired of this run to say masculinity's toxic. Yeah, Swan, masculinity's not toxic.

Dennis Swanberg: No, it's good to be a man. We want to encourage our young boys to be men. Rise up and be men of God. Rise up you old men of God. Nothing wrong with that at all. Matter of fact, when I think about it, some of my heroes that I talk about are men. Could bow up, could bow down, could bend when they need to bend, but they're men.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dennis, I'll tell you this. If you look at all the research, it's clear men matter. And people believe probably the greatest social ill of our day is the absence of dads, all have this godly fathers from the home.

Dennis Swanberg: Exactly.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And we need it, and I see there's good news in this discussion. I think there's a radical stirring going on among men.

Dennis Swanberg: I do too, and I tell you where I see some of it, people might disagree. I see it in some of many millennials. Deep down, these young men are going either, do I matter? Is it okay for me to step up? And my youngest son, he's manning up. And he named my grandson after my dad Floyd, put Floyd in there, which I couldn't believe he put Floyd in there as a middle name. I love my daddy, Floyd Leon, but Floyd, I mean, then my wife put her hand on my leg. Don't say

anything. You don't want to offend a millennial. And I'm going, I want them to come for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Well, they'll be there because they want our money, but anyhow.

But why didn't my son name him Floyd? Floyd was old school man's man, 36th Infantry Division, blah, blah, blah, because you know what he saw. I want to be to my son like my grandpa who gave me man talks. A man needs a man. We need to have a confidante. We need to have someone we can share our deepest failures, our deepest joys. I just think we need to do everything we can to encourage men, and so that's what I did with this new book.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You are listening to Family Talk a division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, your host. Our special in studio guest here at Ignite Men's Impact Weekend in Lynchburg, Virginia, one of the things you've shared this weekend is a special brand new book called *Breakfast Bible and Bull: 52 Weekly Devotions for Guys*.

Dennis Swanberg: Well, I got this new book that I did call *Breakfast Bible and Bull*, and I gave a copy to my mama, Pauline Bernadine. I asked her, I said, "Mama, what do you think about it? *Breakfast, Bible and Bull?*" And she looked at it, she said, "I don't like that word bull." I said, "Mom, mom, it's for men."

"I don't care, you men, y'all talk like that." I said, "Mama, that's just, it's for men." Well, then about a week later, she calls me, "I love that book. I have read it. I love it." I said, "Well, have you changed your mind about the title *Breakfast Bible And Bull?*"

"I still don't like the word bull." I said, "Well, I'm sorry." She said, "You're coming in April to speak and we've got about 150 going to be here." I said, "Okay, well, that's good." She said, "Please bring the book for the boys." I said, "Well, even though it says *Breakfast Bible and Bull?*" "Yes."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dennis, tell us a little bit about this book because when men feel safe and they start moving in a direction, they open up Dennis. And what you're trying to do is take that opportunity to speak life through short devotionals.

Dennis Swanberg: Oh, yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Stuff that men, stories.

Dennis Swanberg: They can chew on. I mean, every man needs a good breakfast, good bible study, and shoot the bull with his buddies. We need that. I want to have time with my buddies. I want Bible. I believe there's truth in Bible, but I want buddies. I want friends. I believe that Jesus had them. If he needed them, we need them. That's why I wrote the book. Men are lonely. They have secret fears, regrets, sorrows, all that kind of stuff, and we need to man up, but we need to be encouraged, so that's why I did the book.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I found it fascinating In the book, you start taking on some pretty significant topics, subjects. I want to go to a little piece called Playing Hurt for a Moment. I love that thorough quote. "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." And in the midst of it's like pressing. They got to fight their way through.

Dennis Swanberg: And they're hurting. Every man that comes walking through there has hurts. We all hurt. You hurt. I have hurts. We all have hurts. Everybody hurts.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But you know what, Dennis? Men try to hide that.

Dennis Swanberg: They try to hide the hurt. We're okay, I'm good, no problem. Well, because it's like they think it's a sign of weakness. It's not a sign of weakness. When you play hurt, Mickey Mantle, one of my old heroes in his rookie season, he stepped on a sprinkler head. He and Joe DiMaggio going after the same foul ball. DiMaggio says, I got it. He moves out of the way, steps on a sprinkler, tore probably his ACL and whatever else in there. Back then, they didn't know how to do ACL. He played 18 years hurt, and Paul had that stake in his side, the thorn and the flesh, but he kept on going and it was never removed. Hey guys, you know what? I'm hurting. We're all hurting, but we can play and serve hurt.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love that, Dennis, because sometimes you just don't feel like getting up.

Dennis Swanberg: No.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sometimes you don't. It's like enough, had enough. And the tendency for men again is to withdraw, to isolate, to get control. You know that? And what happens is the more you isolate to get control, the more you have to isolate to get control. Dennis, you wrote another piece called Watch. Share some of that content.

Dennis Swanberg: Well. Watch. We've got to really watch for those little things that can easily beset us. We need to watch for the bumps in the road. We got to watch for stuff that can happen in our life, especially when we're in isolation. The word watch, you can say when you're alone for the W, A for alone, T, when you're tired, C, you're compromised. H, you're hurting. Watch out because when that happens, you just want to feel good. You just, if I could just have a little respite, do I eat more? I mean, what can I do that's sort of legal or all of a sudden, then you're tempted in other ways. But 1 Corinthians 10:13 gives us a way out, but we have to watch. We have to be on our best watch.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. It's interesting to me though, how men lose sight of the triggers and the things that so easily beset them, and we all have our own besetting sins.

Dennis Swanberg: We sure do.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And if we aren't on guard, it's easy to get into a pattern. See, these kind of devotionals are conversations really man to man. That's what I love about it.

We're talking about a brand new book by Dennis Swanberg called *Breakfast Bible and Bull: 52 Weekly Devotions for Guys*. In the midst of, you talk about being a keeper. I love this. I like to fish. One of the things, you make a decision, you catch a nice bass, four or five pounders, something like that. Dennis it's like, "Hey, do you keep her?"

Dennis Swanberg: Yeah. I guarantee you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You know a trout stream?

Dennis Swanberg: I'm going to keep that one. This one's not a keeper or I'm fishing this lake, but we don't keep anything. We're just, we enjoy fishing. Bottom line is, are you a keeper? Thanks be to Jesus Christ. We can all be a keeper. Have you settled it with Jesus Christ? At the final judgment, you want to be a keeper. Nicodemus, oh, Nick, at night he had to be born again to be a keeper, and that's good news is that we can all be a keeper. And here's a good thing for us, men in the book. Is the one you're going to marry, is she a keeper? Are your kids keepers? Are your parents keeper, your brother-in-law, your friends, are they keepers? You want to keep them. You want to hold on to them. Your whole life is to keep that which I have committed under him against that day, which includes all those he places before you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It reminds me of a conversation I had with a man not long ago, and it was, how you doing as a dad? He pressed in and said, "Hey, I think about it every day." Virtually every man I talk to, there's some stuff going on. He may not say it to you, but he's thinking about these things, and he's wrestling. And he's looking at taking stock inventory of his life. It's whether or not Dennis, we can help him pry again that soul open so that he can do the inward look that he needs to do the inner excellence work that needs to be done, because that's the end goal here. And it's a part of some of the workshops that were going on here. I had one we did on prayer. And then I think it came from Richard Foster. One of the greatest threats or deterrence to a healthier, effective prayer life is the belief that everything has to be right before I can pray to God.

You talk about a deterrent man, especially for a man who's looking inside. I go back to that statement. Virtually every man I've ever met doesn't believe that God loves him. If he believes that what he's saying is, I've got stuff in my life, my history, there's no way God could love me. Yet Christ didn't come to save the righteous. He came to save sinners. Men who would, by the way, be transparent enough to say, woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips like Isaiah did in Isaiah six. And when that happens, part of the journey here is dealing with sin and brokenness in my life. As you did a piece on sin, your sin's bigger than mine. Great chapter. You're trying to engage men, and invite them into that kind of a conversation.

Dennis Swanberg: Exactly. When I went off to Baylor University, when I was leaving, I was a brand-new Christian. My mother, Pauline Bernadine, she said, "Promise me you won't do the big sins." And I said, "Mama, sin is sin." I knew that much as a new

believer. She said, "I know, but don't do the big ones." I said, "Well, what are the big ones?" She said, "You know what the big ones are." Well, we categorize our sins and all because some have greater consequences. Then all of a sudden, I start living a life where as long as you're seeing as bigger than mine, I'm fine. Matter of fact, the bigger you're sin, the better I feel about myself. To borrow from my title of my book, well, that's a bunch of bull. The reality is we're all sinners. We've all missed the mark an inch or a mile.

You missed it. We've all come short of the glory of God, but we need to seek God's forgiveness and repent and find His grace and mercy and like the old song, what can take away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Man, when he deals with my sin, I'm able to deal with it and move on. I'm able to not let it be that habitual, just a denominator of my life. I can have that broken in the power of the Holy Spirit, and I can develop spiritual muscles. And if I want to get rid of that stronghold, I've got to confess it. I've got to turn from it, and I've got to lean forward or lean into, let the Holy Spirit take over within me to say no to that and move on. It is possible. It can happen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dennis, I want to say this. You cannot not have influence. You have to dial that thing in. And what that means is own your influence. Know that in the midst of being a dad today, being a husband, being a man or servant of God, Dennis, you had influence. You said something to your kids today, whether you spoke it or not, you said something to Lori.

Dennis Swanberg: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Today, whether you said something or not, you said something about your walk with Christ today whether you said something or not. Dennis, how or what do we need to do to encourage men to step up into this moment?

Dennis Swanberg: Well, men, you're not alone. The Lord is with you, and you need to find some like-minded men. The church is God's dynamic for you. And I know that may come across a little scary to some men, but listen to me. Find a men's group, a brother for adversity, someone who can keep their doggone mouth shut, someone who can be confidential, someone who'll come alongside of you and hang in there with you. The kind of guy that if your mom dies, he's probably going to come to your mom's funeral. Instead of waiting on everybody else, say, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to take the initiative. I'm going to be aggressive to go and be a friend to a buddy or someone. That guy at church seems, I don't know if he's my kind of guy, but you know what? I'm going to go befriend him.

The book, at the end of each little chapter, it has suggestions for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. It's great for a men's group. They can have one chapter a week for 52 weeks, or you can do it just yourself personally. But I'm telling you, get involved in a Bible study, a devotion with some men, and I tell you, it can change your life, and you'll have those buddies forever. All the passages of one another, one another, and who was with Paul? Luke, Silas,

Timothy, Onesiphorus. I mean, a man in my opinion, likes to hear truth from another man. I would rather have a man, a buddy correct me than my wife, than my sons, than my mother-in-law. I would rather have a buddy say, Swan, Swan, you're gone too much. You need to be home more. Swan, you talk too much. Swan, chill. Well, I need that balance.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It reminds me of Proverbs 27:17. "As iron sharpens iron."

Dennis Swanberg: Exactly.

Dr. Tim Clinton: So one person sharpens another. I think that sums up exactly what you just said. Let me say this kind of in closing. Do men matter? Dad, men, grandpa, you spit, he spits, you cuss, he'll cuss, you fight, he fights, you hate, he hates, you love, he loves, you pray, he'll pray. And let me say this too. Since men matter, all hell will be against them. These are tough times, and the days are evil. God help us and be with us.

Dennis Swanberg: Amen. As he told Joshua, "Joshua, just as I was with Moses, I'll be with you. Be strong and courageous." Go for it, buddy. You got one life. Go for it. Go for it, men. Ladies, if you're listening, encourage your man to go for it to be the man he wants to be. You encourage him, be behind him. Men, step up. Go for it. Why not? You got one life. He'll never leave you. He'll never forsake you. He loves you big time. Be his man, serve other men.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And our prayer is that we'll hear those words well done.

Dennis Swanberg: Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Good and faithful servant. Dennis, you were on with Dr. Dobson, and I think it was back a couple years ago talking about your book, No More Secrets. In it you talk a lot about shame. I think shame's one of the greatest challenges that men face, and you talked about shedding that shame.

Dennis Swanberg: Yeah. You don't have to shame a man. They already feel plenty of shame. I don't have to enable them, but I need to encourage them because they need to shed that. Confess your sins one to another that you may be healed, but you've got to get rid of that. If not, it's like the big beach ball. You can hold a beach ball underneath the water a long time, but eventually it's going to come up and pop you right in the nose, give you a bloody nose. Why not just let the air out of it? Men, let the air out of it. Forgive, confess, turn away from, embrace the love of God himself, but you've got to get rid of it. If you don't get rid of it, it's going to make you sick.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I also wanted to ask you about the significance of quiet time of prayer alone. A lot of men, by the way, struggle being alone, especially in the presence of God.

Dennis Swanberg: Sometimes we think a lot, and we want to call thinking a lot praying. Okay yeah, I know what you mean, but sometimes to stay focused, I do best when I talk out loud to him. I hear guys say all the time, I'd like to hear God speak. I've never heard God speak. Well, open your Bible and read it out loud, and you'll hear God speak.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Dennis Swanberg: Pray with an open Bible, pray with godly materials in your hand and stay focused. And if you're an early bird, be the early bird. Some of you may not be the early bird, but somewhere life demands it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Dennis Swanberg: That day demands a time when you're with him.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And boy, it's a good time.

Dennis Swanberg: Yep.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's a cleansing time.

Dennis Swanberg: It's a good time.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, I want to also ask you, we're fighting the clock here, but I wanted to throw in a question about Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley. I've heard you talk so many times about their influence in your life, and how they've prepared you for this later part of life. Dennis, talk to us about the significance of legacy to you.

Dennis Swanberg: Well, when I started doing stuff for Dr. Dobson, he had one of my little cassette tapes. And he played it on, and everybody went bananas on that cassette tape. And next thing I know, when I left the pastorate in 1995, he was having me come and speak and do stuff. And I just would watch Dr. Dobson and Miss Shirley, and I'm getting to do an event that they're opening up doors for me. They told me they were glad to open up doors for me. Now that I've grown older and hopefully little wiser, you know what Doc and Miss Shirley have done for me? They have let me watch them and know them in their fifties all the way to these days today. And that whole composite has enabled me now to know how to finish.

I'm in my sixties, but I know if the Lord gives me 25 more years, I have a pattern that's in front of me. I have Jim and Shirley Dobson, and they're showing me now, the old Swan and my little sweet Lauree, my honey love, how to finish and to finish well. And they're pressing towards the mark, and that means everything to me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: One of my favorite pieces from Dr. Dobson is in the end, all that will really matter who you loved, who loved you, and who you take to heaven with you.

Dennis Swanberg: Yeah, exactly right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The rest of it fades. Life will trash your trophies. Dennis, this is all about pressing in vertically between us and God and then those that we hold close.

Dennis Swanberg: Exactly.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dennis, before we go, wanted to ask you if people want to know how to get this book, they want to know your schedule, where are you showing up? Love to have you speak, how do they find it?

Dennis Swanberg: Hey, DennisSwanberg.com. Just Swanberg is a mouthful. S W A N B E R G. I think you can spell Dennis because Dennis spelled backwards is sinned, past tense, but DennisSwanberg.com, and we have all the stuff there. I'd love to come and serve you, your church. I love my senior adults, my singles. I love the men's ministry, marriage, and I love these millennials and I love your kids, love to serve and encourage you, so give us a holler.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Dennis, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley.

Dennis Swanberg: Oh, I love those two.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah, the entire team of Family Talk. We love you, we pray for you, and especially that God would raise you up again as a voice for men, deep encouragement for men for such a time as this. Congrats again on your new book, *Breakfast Bible and Bull*. Might get us in trouble. Dennis, I don't know. God bless you. Thank you for joining us.

Dennis Swanberg: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Dr. Dennis Swanberg backstage with our own co-host, Dr. Tim Clinton from the Men's Ignite Event on today's edition of Family Talk. And what a great message it was. Men should help support other men on the journey to follow God and to become strong leaders and then stay there. Did you know that this Friday is the March for Life event in Washington DC? Now the next few days here on the program, we'll be discussing several topics highlighting the sanctity of human life. You can find previously aired broadcasts that cover many pro-life issues on our website, [Dr. James Dobson.org](http://Dr.JamesDobson.org).

And while you're online, why not consider making a donation or sending a prayer request our way. You can even order the 2022 Best of Broadcast collection for a suggested donation of \$50. It's a great biblical resource for any family. Now you can order the 2022 Best of Broadcast collection over the phone as well. Call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Thanks so much for joining us

today. I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, have a blessed and wonderful day.

Announcer:

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