



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** The Impact of Truth on My Life – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell

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Dr. Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson and I am so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Hi everyone, this is Roger Marsh for Family Talk. Before we get into today's broadcast, please know that some of the content that we'll be discussing is really intended for more mature audiences, so if you have little ones listening in right now, we encourage you to use parental discretion. You can either keep them busy with something else, or just come back to this presentation at a later time.

Ryan Dobson: Welcome, everyone, to Family Talk. I'm Ryan Dobson. Happy Memorial Day! Today is a continuation of a special programming this ministry's brought to you all month long. Over the past few weeks, you've been listening to a curated set or retrospective classics, commemorating Family Talk's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We continue now with part one of my dad's timeless interview with Josh and Sean McDowell, recorded in 2011. This father/son duo are prominent apologists, bestselling authors, and effective communicators. Their discussion revolves around passing on a godly legacy to the next generation. What could be more important than that? We hope you have time to reflect upon this as you enjoy the holiday. Without further delay, here is my dad, Dr. James Dobson, to greet his guests and introduce this important topic.

Dr. Dobson: Passing along your belief system to the next generation, is job one. Because if you don't get those kids into the hands of Christ, you'll never see them again. I mean, that is the ultimate responsibility. And we have two guests with us today that are great friends of mine. I'm delighted to have them back. They've written a new book and we're gonna talk about it today. Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell. We were just talking, Josh. This is maybe you're 24th time to work with us in the studio.

Josh McDowell: Yep. And I'm ju ... You're just starting to teach me the tricks, Jim.

Dr. Dobson: There are no tricks. You just go for it. But, it is exciting to see you. And you said something in my office a few minutes ago that I wanna repeat. You said that your prayer before the Lord is that of all the books you've written, which is close to 115, is that -

Josh McDowell: 130, I think it is. Somewhere around there.

Dr. Dobson: 130 books. That this is the one that you pray the Lord will bless the most. The title of it is, *The Unshakable Truth: How You Can Experience the 12 Essentials of a Relevant Faith*. And it gets to the heart of that matter of transferring what you believe to a culture that is at war with the family and at war with the church. Is that the essence of what you and Sean are doing here with this book?

Josh McDowell: I've never written in an area that is so critical at the very moment in the body of Christ. I don't like to call it a crisis. I like to say we have some overwhelming challenges. And you hit on it when you said, "We are not passing our faith on to the next generation." And when that happens, the church dies.

Dr. Dobson: Doesn't that break your heart?

Josh McDowell: Oh it does.

Dr. Dobson: I mean, just walk on a high school or college campus and look around and you can just see in behavior. Go to the mall on Friday night and see what the kids are caught up with. They don't get it. They don't know who Christ is or what He can do in their lives.

Josh McDowell: Well, Jim, maybe I'm off base on this, but walk into the average Christian home. And I would shake my head and say, "They don't get it". 'Cause much of what you see in high school and universities are not a reflection of the university and everything, it's a reflection of their home, especially the relationship with their father. Truth without relationships leads to rejection.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Josh McDowell: If we're lacking in any one area, it's helping parents, especially the father, to develop that healthy, loving, intimate relationship with their child, where when they share truth and they model truth, that child will want it. In preparation for a three and a half hour DVD I just finished called, *The Bare Facts on Sex, Love, and Dating*. I did a lot of research, secular research. One of the things that surprised me, Jim, was this: three different studies showed that everybody talks about peer pressure and sexuality, you know, from your peers and the culture and Hollywood and everything. These secular study show there's one thing, all the way through high school and university, up to 25 years, that totally overrides Hollywood, everything. Totally overrides their peers. Is their relationship with their father. Far more powerful than their peers.

Dr. Dobson: And you know something about that because you had a bad relationship with your father?

Josh McDowell: Well, my dad, as I've shared many times, was the town alcoholic. The embarrassment put up, making a fool of himself downtown and all. Beating my mother to a point where she couldn't stand up. I wish I never grew up hating my dad because Jim, I think every day in my life I paid a price for it. Even after coming to Christ. And that had a profound effect because see, my dad was always drunk. Now this sounds dumb, but what it said to me: I was not worth having a relationship with. It affected my self-image and everything. Because if I had been a good kid and my dad really loved me, he never would've gotten drunk. I didn't realize I had nothing to do with the problem. And the other is, and I don't know if I've ever shared this, even with you, Jim. I've just come kinda public with it, between six and 13 years of age. I was homosexually raped, almost every week for seven years.

It has nothing to do with the suppression of memory ... No, it has to do with a man name of Wayne Bailey. When I was six years old, my parents hired him to be a cook and a housekeeper on the farm. From that moment on, whenever my mother went downtown to shop, my parents went away... my mother would grab me by the shirt and march me into Wayne Bailey. And in front of him say, "Now, you obey him. You do everything he tells you to do. And if you're disobedient, you're gonna get a thrashing when I got home." So, what'd you do? You did everything Wayne Bailey told you. At nine year-

Dr. Dobson: Did your mother know what was going on?

Josh McDowell: At nine years old and 12 years old, I went to my mother and told her. And she wouldn't believe me. And Jim, you can't put into words what you feel like at that moment. The only emotion I can really experience from that was an overwhelming fear. I still have that today. Say, if I was in this room alone and I was focused on something, anyone here walked into this room, any man walked in this room, even today, a tremendous emotion of fear will sweep over me, just for a second or two. I have people come up, Jim, all the time, like they'll say to you, "Well, let's gather around Josh and pray for him." And I say, "No", right in front of a huge congregation, I say, "No, please don't." Why? Every time, every single man that's ever laid his ... a pastor, anyone or group of people. Every time, they'll touch you on the shoulder. Every time, they don't even know it. They start to rub you, every person does it.

Dr. Dobson: And you get a flash back.

Josh McDowell: And that's exactly what happened. He'd come up from behind me and he would start rubbing my shoulders. And when somebody does that now, all those flashbacks come back. But I know my past. I know who I am. I know what's happened in my life. But I'll tell you this Jim, if I hadn't come to Jesus, I don't know what'd happen in my life, and if the man who led me to Christ had not mentored me for six months and said, "Josh, you need to forgive him." I said,

"No way, I want him to burn in hell." But I did it out of obedience. I didn't feel like forgiving him, but I did. Oh my gosh, it was like a big burden rolling off. I've learned this one thing: there's nothing too great in my life for God's power to deal with, nor anything too insignificant for his love to be concerned about. And I'm a walking, living example of that. And without understanding that, I wouldn't be in this program with you today, Jim. I wouldn't have my relationship that I have with my son.

Dr. Dobson: How did you get through the teen years with that kind of abuse going on? I mean, how did you come to know what it means to be a man?

Josh McDowell: Well, ... at 13 ... Well, at 13 years of age, I was playing football, working the farm, and my mother had gone downtown. He came up behind me, I swirled around, cupped my hand around his neck, threw him up against the wall and said, "If you ever touch me again, I'll kill you." He never touched me again. I woulda killed him. Jim, one of the hardest things was living - excuse me - with the shame of it.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Josh McDowell: But I had nothing to do with it. But it was a tr ... and back then, you have to understand, no one talked about it. But that shame. I went through life fearing people because I had no control over it. But you know what? I like who I am today, Jim. And I wouldn't be who I am if God hadn't walked me through all those things.

Dr. Dobson: See, that explains why you talk so often about fathering. You teach about being a good father. And the relationship with your son. How did you get over that? You did not accept the tenants of the Christian faith. I mean, they were there for you, but you say in the book that you really had a struggle.

Josh McDowell: Oh, I struggle to this day, Jim. Every day I have a struggle with it. But, apart from this man mentoring me. And this is why Jim, I developed such deep convictions, not just that the Bible's true intellectually, but it changes lives. My life has been changed through the very principles this man taught me from the scriptures. And I remember, I had so much fear going to him, and I was afraid to tell him, "I don't wanna be hurt again" it hurts to be rejected. And finally, I got up the courage, I drove about 35 miles to tell him. Sat there for a half hour. He had to wonder, "Why is he even here?" Finally, just blurted it out and he believed me. That was like being born again. And then he said, "Will you meet with me?" Oh my gosh. And I saw the word of God take effect in my life, dealing with sin, dealing with hatred.

Dr. Dobson: How old were you? How old?

Josh McDowell: I was probably about 19. It was right after I came to Christ. But, probably the biggest thing that helped me is the woman I'm married to. I just ... I stand in awe

of Dotty. I'm the most fortunate man in the world to be married to Dotty. And people say, "Oh, you have a wonderful family." I said, "I know this. I wouldn't have the relationship with my son here and my daughters, without Dotty." I woulda destroyed everything in my life if God hadn't had me marry someone like Dotty.

Roger Marsh:

Well, this is Family Talk, and you've been listening to a very raw and honest testimony from Josh McDowell. I'm Roger Marsh. You know, today's broadcast really has been difficult to listen to, given the horrific trauma that Josh McDowell experienced. It's the kind of thing that happens to a lot of people and makes you look at God a whole different way. Josh McDowell admitted being sexually abused altered his worldview. Fortunately, we serve a God who is a God of love, He's not a God of condemnation. When you are a victim of abuse, you have to remember that this is not your fault, and that God can rescue you from that pain. He can redeem you, and He can restore you.

This timeless Family Talk broadcast featuring Josh and Sean McDowell will continue after a moment, after this quick message from Dr. Dobson.

Dr. Dobson:

Society has always recognized the crucial role a mother plays in the development of children. But behavioral scientists have only recently begun to understand the vital role a father plays in a family's emotional health. According to psychiatrist Kyle Pruitt, the author of the book titled *Father Need*, dads are just as important to children as moms, but in a very different way. He cited recent studies indicating that by eight weeks, babies can distinguish between the differing caretaking methods of a mother and a father. Further studies found that infants are born with a drive to connect with their fathers. Teenagers also express a deep need for their fatherly influences. In fact, some teen rebellion is often a complex effort by adolescents to connect with their fathers by confronting his rules and values. Sadly, many young fathers today see their children's mother as the primary caregiver and nurturer in the family. But kids clearly need their fathers just as much; in some cases, even more.

Fathers, take time for you children. Don't let your career absorb all your time and energy. Don't squander the precious few years you have to invest in the life of your family.

Roger Marsh:

As you may know, the month of May marks our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary here at Family Talk. In recognition of that milestone, we are revisiting some of Family Talk's most popular programs. Now, for your convenience, we've compiled all 20 of these hit shows onto eight audio CDs. Here's a sample of what you'll hear on one of those programs: Dr. Dobson's interview with Rebekah Gregory:

Rebekah Gregory:

For 26 years, I expected to get out of bed and put two feet on the ground, and when I couldn't do that anymore, when I could no longer put two feet on the ground, my entire life changed. And not just physically, but emotionally. And it really made me appreciate just being able to get out of the bed at all. Life is

beautiful, but we have to decide that we're going to count our blessings and not count our problems.

Roger Marsh: You also won't want to miss Dr. Dobson's riveting conversation with author and radio host, Eric Metaxas, as they discuss the importance of remembering America's heritage as a nation. Here's a quick piece of that conversation:

Eric Metaxas: To my mind it's strong evidence for this over and over again that we have been great because we have been good. And if we want to be great again, we have to be good. Honestly, we cannot make America great unless we the people understand this idea of what it means to be good, what it means to love our enemies. It doesn't mean we agree with them, but it's a whole different way of doing business that we have been doing since the beginning. We have been a different kind of country, and we need to understand what that means.

Roger Marsh: All of these entertaining and informative programs are sure to become a cherished part of your family resource library. Family Talk's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Broadcast Collection can be yours as our way of thanking you for a suggested gift of fifty dollars or more to the ministry of Family Talk. You can pledge your donation over the phone by calling 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Or, remember you can always give a gift online when you go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

Okay, let's get back now to Dr. Dobson's classic conversation with Josh and Sean McDowell. As we rejoin the discussion, you'll continue hearing about Josh's traumatic abuse and how it warped his worldview for many years. Here now is the conclusion of this interview.

Dr. Dobson: Sean, you have obviously known this for a long time, haven't you?

Sean McDowell: Well-

Dr. Dobson: This is not new news that ...

Josh McDowell: It is.

Dr. Dobson: Is it? Is it?

Sean McDowell: I think it was about two years ago, roughly, maybe two or three years ago.

Josh McDowell: Two years ago, April.

Sean McDowell: You sat down with us kids and he said, "There's something I wanna share with you." I thought you were gonna tell us you were dying or something. It was really that somber and then he shared with us. And just, I mean, we cried and we wept because ... But honestly, to just think of somebody who has everything against him saying he should be a victim, he should be in jail, and God has

transformed his heart. Whenever I hear people say they're victims, I say, "You know what? My dad was in as bad or worse circumstances. I don't believe it. God can change-."

Dr. Dobson: You really didn't know that till two years ago?

Sean McDowell: I did not know that till two years ago.

Josh McDowell: I had shared with Dotty.

Dr. Dobson: Have you- Why now?

Josh McDowell: Everyone asks that. Dotty asked it. I just kind of felt it was nobody's business.

Dr. Dobson: Well, I understand that. Why now is it everybody's business?

Josh McDowell: I don't know. I just know I went and I shared it with ... I called her up and I said, "Honey, when I get home, I need some time, just alone with you. I need to share something." And I know, I'd run into a number of people who was just devastated by the same thing. And I shared with them a little bit of what happened in my life and they said, "Why aren't you talking about that?" And that burdened me, and finally I went to Dotty, and this shows the woman ... My wife is very private 'cause my life is so public.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah, I have the same [crosstalk 00:14:52].

Josh McDowell: And she said ... Yeah. And she's very private, people don't need to know about our life. People don't need to know this. And so, I sat down and shared with her. And the first thing she did, she started crying. She said, "Honey, I am so sorry that happened to you." And the next word out of her mouth was, "You've gotta share this with others." I mean, Jim, that was the last thing I ever expected from my wife.

Dr. Dobson: You know, Josh, I know you know this, but the children of alcoholics don't like to share the things they've been through. And they hold it within. And they're embarrassed by it, especially when they're younger. And my wife, Shirley's father was an alcoholic. And Shirley didn't tell me that until we had been dating for over a year. She held it all in and then the night that she told me, she really thought I'd walk away from her. And if anything, it gave me a great desire to protect her and to make up to her for what she had missed and what she'd gone through. But, she still was very private about it for about, at least 15 years after that. And I was teaching a Sunday school class and one day I said to her, "Shirley, God's done a miracle in your life. And there are other people out there that are struggling just like you did. You need to tell it."

Josh McDowell: See, that's what Dotty said to me.

Dr. Dobson: And she said, "Oh, I couldn't. Oh, never. I couldn't do that." And I said, "Well, you pray about it." And the next Sunday morning, she got up and shared it for the first time. And two things happened. One, she was healed of those memories. Secondly, there was so many people in the audience who came and said, "That's me. I've never told anybody, but I've been through exactly what you have."

Josh McDowell: Well, you know, after I shared with Dotty, I called my kids together, shared with them. And you know Steve Arterburn.

Dr. Dobson: Sure.

Josh McDowell: And I went over, and I shared with him. And he said ... One of the first things he said was, "Josh, you've got to share this with others." And he started firing all these questions at me. And he said, "You know, Josh, where you're unique ..." And I wasn't a believer when I went through all this, but he said, "One, you have never ever looked at yourself as a victim." And I said, "That's true." I've never looked at myself as a victim. But he said, "Second, where a healthy thing, a decision you made, that you probably didn't even realize the time is ..." I never looked at myself as damaged goods.

Dr. Dobson: Even when you were a kid?

Josh McDowell: Even when I was a kid.

Dr. Dobson: I thought that's where you were going with the story in the beginning.

Josh McDowell: Going 13, 14 ... 13, 14, 15, 16 years old, even as a non-believer without Christ's influence on my life, I never looked at myself as a victim. And I never looked at myself as damaged goods. But with Shirley, you just hit on something and I think it's true in my life. You say, "Why didn't you share it before?" Now, this probably seems so un-Christian, so immature, everything. But, I felt if I shared it, that people would never ever look at me the same again.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Josh McDowell: And they don't. Whether good or bad.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Josh McDowell: But you know, God used other people. And this is what I say to people, "Don't go it alone. You won't make it."

Dr. Dobson: Josh, we really can't leave that story without carrying it through to conclusion. Wayne Bailey, I understand that he died seven, eight years ago.

Josh McDowell: I believe so.



Dr. Dobson: Did you carry anger and resentment to him, to his death?

Josh McDowell: Oh, absolutely not.

Dr. Dobson: And is it still there, within your heart?

Josh McDowell: No.

Dr. Dobson: What has God done with that?

Josh McDowell: Remember, I shared that the man who led me to Christ mentored me for six months, at the end he said something I didn't wanna hear. I knew it was true but I didn't wanna hear it. He said, "Josh, you need to forgive him." But I knew the Bible was true, I knew God commanded me to forgive and it would be honoring to him. So, I did it, not out of any good feeling ... I did it out of obedience. I was in Battle Creek, Michigan, I drove up to Jackson, Michigan. Knocked on the door, when he answered the door, I said, "Wayne, what you did to me was evil, very evil. But I've come here to tell you that I've come to know Jesus Christ as my savior and Lord. And I want you to know ..." and what I told him, Jim, I didn't want it to be true. I knew it was true, but I didn't want it to be. I said, "Wayne, I've come here to tell you that Jesus died as much for you as he did for me. I forgive you." If I hadn't of done that, I would have probably died years ago.

Dr. Dobson: You'd of carried it through you the rest of your life.

Josh McDowell: Yeah. But I want you to understand, I'm still dealing with a lot of things in my life, Jim. But it's a process. And I'm not what I ought to be, but I'm not what I used to be, and I'm not what I'm going to be by God's grace.

Dr. Dobson: The illustration that I've heard before is if you were beaten with a whip until your back was bloody, and then you came to Christ, you would still have the scars there, but they would've healed over. You still have the scars of your childhood, but you're not bitter, and you're not angry, and you didn't wanna kill him.

Josh McDowell: I control them now, they don't control me, by God's grace.

Dr. Dobson: We are talking to many people today who have experienced that. That's the tragic thing. It is happening so commonly today. And they hold it in. And they don't tell anybody. And yet. Maybe we can liberate some of those people in Christ. And you can reach a generation that maybe Josh reaches. But, fewer people who are 20 and 25 and 30, are hearing it from anybody and maybe not from me and us. And I appreciate you guys being willing to do that. Let's talk about that next time. And for Pete's sake, let's talk about your book.

Josh McDowell: Oh, that's right. We were gonna talk about that, weren't we?

Dr. Dobson: Hey, Josh, thank you for sharing that. Thank you for opening that part of your life. I never knew that. We said at the top of the program that I've interviewed you now, 24 times, I've never known that. Obviously, God is taking you into a new chapter whereby, you will be in a position to minister to those who are wounded and broken as a result of the abuse, either physical, emotional, or homosexual, that the adults in this culture have inflicted upon them. And I pray that you'll continue to do it. Thanks for being with us, and we'll talk about it some more next time.

Josh McDowell: Sounds great.

Sean McDowell: You got it.

Ryan Dobson: I'm Ryan Dobson, and thanks for listening to a special 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Family Talk. My dad's guests today have been bestselling authors and apologists, Josh and Sean McDowell. That father/son duo is doing great work with their individual ministries, and I am happy to see Sean flourishing. That reminds me: make sure to check out my ministry, Rebel Parenting. Head to [rebelparenting.org](http://rebelparenting.org). There you can access the podcast I do with my wife Laura. We cover all things marriage and parenting in this new and challenging age. Visit [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) for more information about Josh and Sean's ministries, and their book, *The Unshakeable Truth*. Tune in tomorrow to hear the remainder of my dad's classic interview with Josh and Sean McDowell. They'll dive deeper into their book about conveying truth to the next generation, right here, on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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