



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** The Impact of Truth on My Life – Part 2

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

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- Dr. Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.
- Dr. Clinton: Hi everyone, this is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and President of the American Association of Christian Counselors. What unique and unprecedented times these are. The simplicity and hope of the gospel seem a little sweeter, certainly a little more precious, during these times of uncertainty. Our hope remains secure in Jesus Christ, and that brings me comfort. Great comfort. I wanted to take a moment to let you know that we here at the James Dobson Family Institute love you and we're praying for you. If you're struggling and need some encouragement, we'd be honored to pray with you. You can call us toll free at 877-732-6825. That number again: 877-732-6825. Or simply go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Thanks for inviting us to be a part of your day. We're going to get through this challenging time together. Let's go now to today's presentation.
- Ryan Dobson: Welcome to Family Talk! I'm Ryan Dobson. Today, we are continuing to celebrate this ministry's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, by highlighting a few of its classic programs. In a moment, you'll hear the remainder of my dad's timeless interview with Josh and Sean McDowell. This father/son duo are prominent apologists, bestselling authors, and effective communicators. Their discussion explains the importance of passing on a godly legacy to the next generation.
- Josh McDowell: Truth without relationships leads to rejection. 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.
- Ryan Dobson: This is every parents great commission, and nothing is more important than that. Here now is Dr. James Dobson to greet his guests, and introduce part two of this insightful conversation.

Dr. Dobson: I want to thank you for trusting us enough to share that story with us because that could not have been easy for you to do. You had tears in your eyes when you were talking about it. There are people listening to us now that have been abused by whatever means and they need to hear the story you told yesterday.

Today we're going to talk about *The Unshakable Truth, How You can Experience the 12 Essentials of a Relevant Faith*. This is a new book from Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell.

Josh McDowell: He me let co-author it with him.

Dr. Dobson: I was sitting in a rocking chair, of all things, and reading your book and it'll really capture you and especially the chapter, "Who is God?" Now, that is the first of the 12 Essentials of Faith.

Answer the question. Josh, you do it first and then Sean.

Josh McDowell: Let me take a bite and then Sean on that. Later, maybe we go into how we even got to that point. The first chapter is, "What is a Truth?" Now, you mention God today, people will say, "Oh yeah, God is love, et cetera." No. What's the first thing that God revealed about himself? Not that he was love, holy, just, right, anything. Creator God.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Josh McDowell: In the beginning, God created. Why is that so critical? Because it speaks of meaning and purpose. And so that's why that starts out as the first truth, is on God. But not just that God is love, God is a Holy God. God is a Creator God, which means when he created us, he created us with meaning and purpose to life.

Dr. Dobson: And that's what many young people do not have today.

Josh McDowell: Or adults.

Dr. Dobson: They don't know why they're here or who cares or what they're supposed to do, or whether somebody is keeping score or whether there's life after death. They have no idea what the meaning of life is, but it begins with Creator God. This is eternal truth. So, this book's going to be around a long time. Sean, what does the younger generation say back to you when you start talking about who God is?

Sean McDowell: I think this young generation is just deeply confused about the character of God. The church is becoming less and less literate. So, when I ask young people, they'll talk a lot about God, they'll worship about God. And I'll say, tell me about this God that you worship. There's really a lack of just being articulate.

Now if you can't articulate an understanding of God, then that's almost certainly because you don't have an understanding of who God is. So, what we try to do in *The Unshakable Truth* is just the first thing is help parents understand who is God? How do we know this is true? What's the nature of truth and salvation and just the core Christian truths and be able to transmit them relationally to this younger generation.

Dr. Dobson: Sean, Jesus turned to his disciples and asked, "Who do they say that I am?" So, who do they say Jesus is? If they don't know who God is, who do they think Jesus is?

Sean McDowell: Well, 50% of young people, in another BARNAs study, said that they can't believe with confidence that the physical resurrection of Jesus is a historical fact. 50%.

Josh McDowell: These are Christian kids.

Dr. Dobson: From Christian homes.

Sean McDowell: There is such a lack of understanding. I think they tend to see him as somebody who was kind of influential, somebody who was really nice but didn't ruffle feathers, didn't really claim to be God incarnate, and certainly have the power still today to transform their lives. As somebody who lived 2000 years ago, maybe it was a myth, maybe not, but doesn't have the living power to transform them today.

Josh McDowell: Here's an issue. With the incipience of the Internet. For years I've said this, that the Internet, with the abundance of knowledge that's going to come, will not lead to certainty. It will lead to skepticism, and this is what we're facing.

See, back when you with your dad, when he said something, there was very little out there that would contradict it. I mean, there was very few books, et cetera. The media, the information. Now, every kid is confronted with every world view there is at eight, nine, 10, 11 years old, and the abundance of information has not led to certainty. It's, well, how do you know really what's true? How do you know what you said is really true? Josh, there's so much out there, and that's what we're facing right in the family. Even when I was raising Sean, there wasn't those contrary voices out there bombarding.

Now, with my grandson, there's all those voices that you and I never faced, Jim. And I put it this way. What most parents, right now listening to this program, what they faced in a challenge to their faith at maybe the first, second, third, fourth year after the university, kids are facing at nine, 10, 11 years old right now.

Dr. Dobson: That's true.

Josh McDowell: And we couldn't handle it two or three years out of the university. They can't handle it at nine, 10, 11. The Internet leveled the playing field and the atheist/agnostic has a same access to our kids as any of us do.

Sean McDowell: And I think part of the solution to the so many voices that are competing for the minds and hearts of our young people is two things. Number one is a genuine, authentic relationship with somebody that they trust. So if there's somebody a young person knows, they believe cares about them, they believe is informed and thoughtful, that voice is going to win out in the relationship over multiple voices that are online and competing for them.

Second, when there's so many ideas competing for our kids, they have to have a framework or a world view, really a narrative about reality to make sense of the competing truths. So more important than ever, we can't just give young people truth and say, "Well, believe this," we've got to show them, here is what truth is. Here's how I came to this conclusion. Walk them through it. And then practically, in a relationship, help kids just understand how to decipher truth from lies.

Dr. Dobson: If you do that, is this generation willing to listen? Are they hungry? Is there a desire to know? They're confused about ultimate realities and certainly about faith. But can you get through to them?

Sean McDowell: As a whole, I would say yes. There's going to be a handful of kids in this generation who are not going to care. But as a whole, my experience is that when young people find somebody who's knowledgeable and who cares and can help them make sense of the world, they will swarm to that person.

Josh McDowell: I've done over 250 debates in universities all over the world and I developed one principle is this: you never ever debate to win your opponent, you debate to win your audience. This is more relevant now, the best way to win your audience is to love your opponent as you destroy him. I've been in Christian debates where the Christian won hands down that people walk away loving, respecting, wanting to follow the loser. Why? The attitude.

The attitude of love, the attitude of passion, everything. And if you don't have that love, especially today, I don't care how logic you are, how much sense you make, they'll walk away.

I just did a, just a couple of days ago, a major university with a little over 1,000 out. And I sat there, I said, "Wow." Not one person left and you could've heard a pin drop, but you know what one of the keys was? Started 45 minutes, an hour before. People were walking in and everything. And I've always done this for 50 years. I met them at the door and at their seat, went around and introduced myself, laughed with them, hugged with them, asked them questions, everything. By the time I got up to speak that crowd already knew I cared. I cared. And it's the same way with the kids.

The other day, Sean brought, what was it? 39 kids over to my house. I mean, I got home, and that night, we have 39 kids in our house. And oh, I loved it. They were so respectful. They interacted. Everything. And one reason was they knew that I cared, and more than that, they knew that Sean cared.

Dr. Dobson: Okay, there's something we've got to do. We haven't even touched the content of this book, *The Unshakable Truth*. But listen to the subtitle again. *How can you experience the 12 essentials of a relevant faith?*

We can't leave today without knowing what those 12 are. The truth that God exists. The truth about God's word, the truth about original sin, the truth about God becoming human. The truth about Christ's atonement for sin. The truth about justification through faith in Christ (you can't earn it). The truth about living the transformed life, the truth about Jesus' bodily resurrection, the truth about the trinity, the truth about God's kingdom, the truth about the church, and the truth about the return of Christ. If you know that, you understand what the biblical plan for the salvation of man is and ultimate reality.

What was the Council of Nicaea?

Josh McDowell: The council of Nicaea was around 325 AD where they realized they really needed to explain and show what the Christian faith is because there were so many cults, others coming around and challenging the deity of Christ and everything else. They needed clarity.

Dr. Dobson: Who were these people?

Josh McDowell: These were bishops, pastors, leaders of the church, influencers from all over the world who were called together in a council to give guidance to the Christian faith, but it's what took the church from 25,000 to 20 million. Justin Martyr said, we're not producing followers of Jesus and we're not passing the faith on. Three words, he wrote out: believe, behavior, belong. And that's what this whole book is about.

What do we need to believe? What should we believe about that? How should that affect our behavior and how can I live that out in community?

Dr. Clinton: Thanks for spending some time with us. You're listening to Family Talk, a radio broadcast of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the Institute, and we've come to the midpoint of today's broadcast. On behalf of Dr. Dobson and all of us here at JDFI, I want to thank you for listening today, and, by the way, for your continued support. We're completely supported by you, our faithful listeners. We would not be able to bring programs to you, like the one you're listening to today, without your generous contributions. Learn how you can stand with us by visiting [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Let's get back to today's broadcast right now, here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: You know Josh, so many parents want to have devotions with their kids and they want to get across the meaning of Christianity and they sit down, they look at the Bible and they say, "Where do I start?"

Josh McDowell: We could start, we could take them into the scriptures with their kids.

Dr. Dobson: This book's got nearly 500 pages in it of a plan to teach and by the time your kids get out of high school, they ought to know these things.

Sean McDowell: I mean, I think the biblical precedent is in Deuteronomy chapter six where it's- you don't have to completely change your parenting, add all these programs and books. As important as all these are, but just start to incorporate into daily conversation. It says in Deuteronomy says when they lie down, when the kids wake up, when you walk along the road and travel, just kind of seasoning those times with biblical principles that we learn. And that's what we are trying to do in *Unshakable Truth*, is just give people practical things they can incorporate in their relationships, in their dynamics, that can help them, just daily, help their kids, in a relationship, think biblically.

Josh McDowell: Jim, I think Sean hit on it when he said the way we raised him and what he saw in Deuteronomy is what this will help parents do. Not to sit down and have what is called a traditional devotion. I almost never had that with my kids. We never sat at the table. I can't even remember, at home, sitting at the table reading the scriptures, having prayer together and talk. No, we did a day in - every moment and out, on the way to school, on the way to breakfast, driving to the ballgame, whatever.

I would throw out something. I'd interact with them in a real life situation. This is what this book will help ... as parents read it, it will give them confidence to interact with their kids.

You cannot take your children further than what you've gone yourself, either in your knowledge or in your walk with Jesus. This book, I pray, will help parents to understand what they need to know about that truth.

Second, why is it even true? Third, so what to my child? How does it even relate to my child. Fourth, how can I live it and pass it on to my child? If I could just do that with parents, without pastors, anything else involved, that would make all the effort, everything worthwhile.

Sean McDowell: It's not just a book of systematic theology doctrines to believe, it's full of stories from our own life, from successes, from failures, and just the way Jesus taught. He taught by giving stories and examples. So I think it's a very easy, natural, enjoyable read for people to understand these core truths.

Dr. Dobson: I want to ask our listeners today, if somebody came up to you and said, "What do you believe?" Where would you start? How far could you go?

Josh McDowell: And be true and be biblical?

Dr. Dobson: Yeah, you better know the 12.

Sean McDowell: Jim, I travel around the country and a question I ask young people time and time again from the best youth groups, best homes, is I'll say, "Are you a Christian?" And they'll say, "Yes." And I learned this from watching my dad do it. And I'll just ask them a simple question. I'll say, "Why are you Christian?" And sometimes it's almost embarrassing for these kids.

I was with a youth group of kids and they all, one by one there, said, "I don't know, I guess because my parents are, this is how I was raised."

Dr. Dobson: I was born in America.

Sean McDowell: Exactly. And I thought the minute they have a professor or somebody who doesn't believe it and challenge them, they're going to chuck their faith. So, this generation, it's not enough to just say, well, "the Bible says so. And my parents told me." We've got to take them back and say, "This is true. Here's how we know with confidence that it's true and here's how this truth is meaningful to your life." So, it's got to go through their head to their heart. Then it will become a part of convictions.

Dr. Dobson: All right, I'm going to do something I hadn't planned to do, but I feel like I should. I'm going to read the Nicene Creed.

Josh McDowell: Excellent.

Dr. Dobson: This is what the council came up with when they came together and they said, "What's most basic? What are the fundamentals that Jesus taught?" And this is what they wrote.

Josh McDowell: Can I context that?

Dr. Dobson: Yeah, sure.

Josh McDowell: This actually started back, way back with Justin Martyr. What they did was take what was already been known out there and taught that revolutionized the church and they put it into a document where people could see it. They didn't come up with it. What was already there.

Dr. Dobson: All right. This is what they wrote. "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible." You called it the Creator God.

Josh McDowell: Maker of all things.

Dr. Dobson: Yes. "And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds. God of God, light of light, the very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilot. He suffered and was buried. And the third day he arose again, according to the scriptures, and ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end."

One more short paragraph: "And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets and we believe in the holy catholic," which means universal, "and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins and look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." Wow. Isn't that incredible?

Josh McDowell: I feel like we plagiarized.

Dr. Dobson: That is the essence of the Christian faith.

Josh McDowell: What we did in this book was take that and took it right down to where people can understand it. They'll know why it's true. They'll know, "How does that relate to my life and how can I live it out?" And the last paragraph was the key, Jim, the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sean McDowell: And you know what's so powerful about that? The men who wrote this just 10 or 12 years before, were persecuted and tortured for that belief. This was not just a class project. They believed it in the core of their being and had friends who lost their lives for that. Well, I could be wrong, but I think there's going to be increased persecution among Christians in the future and part of what gives people the ability to stand up for it is knowing those truths and understanding that they are really in fact true.

Dr. Dobson: I want to tell you this. You preach that and you speak that and you believe that, and you will be hated. You will be hated for it. It is amazing. It's the most controversial message that's out there. Thank you all for being with us. Josh, it's always fun to talk to you. I always get inspired when you come.

Josh McDowell: I always walk away more in love with Jesus than when I walked through the door. Sean, thank you for what you're doing in the cause of Christ. You would give your life for that cause, wouldn't you?

Sean McDowell: I pray to God that by His strength, I would.

Dr. Dobson: Ah, well we'll do it again. This is number 25. Let's go for 26.



Josh McDowell: Okay. I'm going to keep you to that word.

Dr. Dobson: Okay. God bless you guys.

Ryan Dobson: Well, that concludes my dad's interview with Josh and Sean McDowell. Even though their conversation with my dad was recorded many years ago, it's still so applicable to our everyday lives. Visit the broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) to get a copy of Josh and Sean's book, *The Unshakeable Truth*. This is a great resource to identify the essential and bedrock truth of our faith. Find a link to that resource, along with information about Josh and Sean's ministries, at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Thanks for supporting Family Talk and celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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

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Dr. Clinton: This is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks for listening today. We hope you've found this program helpful and encouraging. Please remember that our ministry is here to serve you and your family! For more information about our programs and resources or to learn how you can support us, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org), or call us toll-free: 877-732-6825. I pray that God will bless you in 2020. We're so grateful for your partnership. We ask you to stand with us and to continue to defend the Christian values in an ever-changing culture. Thanks again for joining us. We hope you'll join us again on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Roger Marsh: Hey everyone, Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family, and where they'll be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children, and their children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the

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