



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: It Ain't Over Till It's Over – Part 2

Guest(s): R.T. Kendall

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

Roger Marsh: Numerous times in Paul's letters to the early church, he equates the Christian journey to running a race. There certainly are lessons to pull from that analogy, such as enduring difficulty and focusing on the prize. But the biggest takeaway from that illustration is the importance of finishing well. If a runner gives up during the race or becomes complacent, his reward is in jeopardy. How can believers avoid this pitfall and fully run our race of faith, then? Well in just a moment, we'll continue Dr. Dobson's interview with Dr. R.T. Kendall. At the time of this recording, Dr. Kendall had just released his book titled *It Ain't Over Till It's Over*.

On today's broadcast, he and Dr. Dobson will provide practical points of introspection for Christians to assess their faith. Now before we hear the balance of this discussion, let me tell you more about our guest. Dr. R.T. Kendall is a well-respected evangelist and teacher. He's also a bestselling author of more than 60 books, and continues to preach around the country. Dr. Kendall holds a PhD from Oxford University, while completing work toward three other degrees as well. Well, with that, let's listen now to part two of Dr. Dobson's interview with Dr. R.T. Kendall here on Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: Dr. R.T. Kendall, great friend and longtime companion, we have talked about theological issues. We've talked about the books we were writing, and we've had a lot of fun when Shirley and I have come to London to be with you and Louise. Last time we were talking about your book. We want to do it again today. It's called *It Ain't Over Till It's Over*, and that came from a phrase by Yogi Berra. He wrote a foreword for it. He said, "I hope this book will help many people." That kind of sounds like him, doesn't it?

R.T. Kendall: It was very sweet of him. He didn't have to do that, but I really appreciated it.

Dr. Dobson: Well, the last chapter of the book is what I want to go to today. I intended to get to it yesterday but we had other things that we decided to talk about. This is

called Finishing Well. It's chapter 15. And you are encouraging people, even those who may have fallen short of their own expectations and have maybe even disappointed God himself by our sin and depravity, that it's not over till it's over and you can get forgiveness for wrongdoing. But you're also saying, "Don't get into that sinful behavior."

R.T. Kendall: Well, there's two levels of finishing well. One is to know that you're saved. A person who, at death, knows that his trust is in the blood of Jesus not in his good works, that's finishing well.

Dr. Dobson: Have you seen deathbed conversions in your ministry?

R.T. Kendall: Yes. When I was at Westminster Chapel, we had a ministry called Pilot Lights. We're out on the streets giving out tracts and we had them in several languages. You do that kind of ministry, you have no idea whether you're doing any good. A year after we retired, I get a letter from Germany forwarded to me where the lady said, "You gave me a tract in German. And I took it with me. We'd been praying for our dad for years. I gave him the tract. At the end, he prayed the prayer. He died the next day." And she was so thrilled.

Dr. Dobson: That happened to Shirley's aunt. She was 90 years old, and the last lucid day of her life after we'd prayed for her for years, she gave her heart to the Lord. And we expect to see her again in heaven. But you have also seen people who counted on that. Who said, "I can always make my peace with God," and waited too long.

R.T. Kendall: Yeah. The day will come when God will say, "Your time is up. This is it." And you were planning on years and years. And the worst scenario is to be like King Saul, who at the end of his life, he said, "I have played the fool. God has departed from me and answers me no more." And I would say to anybody listening right now, Jim, if you feel the Lord speaking to you, take it. If the Holy Spirit is gripping you, be thankful. That means there's time. There is time. Now is the day of salvation. Now, turn to God. He's trying to get your attention.

Dr. Dobson: So there are those occasions where you feel something that we as believers call conviction. There are times when the Lord is saying to you, "I'm calling you. I'm asking you to repent and enter into a relationship with me." And you can walk away from that only so long.

R.T. Kendall: That verse in Isaiah, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he's near." And I've got a feeling, Jim, there's someone listening now, the Lord is near. He's been on your case. He's been trying to get your attention. Don't put it off. Don't wait another day. Now is the day.

Dr. Dobson: Well, at the end of your book, you've got 10 principles in chapter 15, right at the end, about finishing well and how to do that, and what you must do to achieve that.

R.T. Kendall: Right. Well, principle number one, put yourself under Holy scripture. You see here's where's King Saul got it wrong. There was a time when he was supposed to wait until Samuel turned up to offer the burnt sacrifice. And for some reason, Samuel was late. This is in 1 Samuel 13. And King Saul says, "Well, look, bring me the burnt offering." Somebody should have said, "Your majesty, with respect, I don't think you're supposed to do that." But he said, "Bring me the burnt offerings." And in that moment, King Saul went right against Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, which clearly stipulates only the person called of God should do that. Saul did it. He went against scripture. And when Samuel came, he said, "What have you done?" And that was the moment when Samuel said, "God is looking for him, a man after his own heart." And in that instance, King Saul became what I call "yesterday's man."

He lived for several years, but the anointing of the Spirit was lifted from him all because he thought he didn't have to put himself under scripture. And I would urge every person, do not underestimate how serious it is to believe the Bible. And don't say, "I'm the exception because God knows in my situation, I have this problem or that problem." That won't do. Be aware that you are responsible for what God has taught. Don't make yourself the exception. Put yourself under Holy Scripture. King Saul thought he was the exception. The person who does that is a fool and will rue the day he thought he didn't have to put himself under scripture.

Dr. Dobson: Aren't there places throughout scripture, especially in the Old Testament, where Jehovah says, "I would not let you even pray for him. I don't hear him when he prays. I will stop my ears and not hear his prayer," because he had so offended the Holy Spirit that he was no longer in a relationship with him.

R.T. Kendall: Genesis 6:3: "My spirit will not always strive with man." So I would say to anybody, principle number one, put yourself under Holy Scripture, God's infallible word.

Dr. Dobson: You can't do that if you don't read it, can you?

R.T. Kendall: Well, I would urge every person have a Bible reading plan. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the man who put me in Westminster Chapel, he gave me a Bible reading plan. I'm so thankful for it. I can now say, I've read the Bible through over 40 times. Jim, there are some people haven't even read it once all the way through. There are preachers who only turn to the Bible when they want to get a sermon. We all need a plan. I have a plan. I read it every day. It takes me through the Bible in a year. And I would urge anyone listening, go online, get a one-year Bible reading plan and live by that and put yourself under scripture.

Dr. Dobson: That's the first of the 10 principles. What's the second one?

R.T. Kendall: Be accountable to reliable people. This means you've got people around you that know where you are. Any moment they could call you. I've got friends who

are unafraid to say, "R.T., how is it with you and Louise right now? What's going on?" Or they'll say to me, "R.T., I read this manuscript. You can't say that." "R. T., what you said the other day, you shouldn't say that."

I've got friends like Lyndon Bowring, Rob Parsons. And over in this country, I've got friends who aren't afraid to tell me what I need to hear. The famous last words of yesterday's man, "I'm accountable to God alone." I say to that person, "You're not that spiritual. You need people around you who aren't afraid to tell you what you need to know." I need advice. I need wisdom. "In a multitude of counsel, there is safety." And a good way to become yesterday's man or woman is to reject the wisdom of your friends who are telling you what you need to hear. King Saul should have been accountable to Samuel, but he thought he outgrew Samuel and he failed. So I want to be accountable to people.

Dr. Dobson: We really do need each other, don't we?

R.T. Kendall: We do, and we need to listen to each other. That's principle number two, be accountable to reliable people.

Dr. Dobson: I had a minister who preached on that too. He objected to the song, "On the Jericho road there's room for just two, my Lord and me." And he said, "That's crazy. There's not just room for two. We need each other because we can lead each other in the paths of righteousness." Okay. Let's go to principle number three.

R.T. Kendall: Be squeaky clean when it comes to money and finances. When I think of great ministries that have failed or been exposed, it so often has to do with the way they use their money. And I think it's a time we should be willing for people to know exactly how we use our money. I am accountable to the money God gives me, and not the least of which is remember the tithe is the Lord's. Be gracious in giving. Paul said, "The love of money is a root of all evil." Let people know how you use your money and be generous toward God.

Principle number four. Maintain sexual purity. Billy Graham said some time ago, "It seems that the devil gets 75% of God's best servants." You see, Jesus when he gave his interpretation of the seventh command, "You shall not commit adultery," said, "If you lust in your heart, you've committed adultery in the sight of God." This rules out pornography, you would be amazed, or maybe you wouldn't, how many ministers are addicted to pornography. And there are those who have their secret affairs. I would say to anyone listening right now, if you're listening to me and you are now in the middle of an affair, or you're thinking about it, I have a word for you. "Stop it, stop it now." It's only a matter of time you would give a thousand worlds to turn the clock back to this moment.

And how many prominent ministers, Jim, have fallen over the lack of sexual purity. I've come to the conclusion when it comes to these things, you cannot be

too careful when it comes to the matters of the opposite sex. How you behave, what you say, because one day we'll give an account and I guarantee you now, take these principles, and this is an important one, maintain sexual purity. You will never be sorry.

Dr. Dobson: I do not understand why ministers who are loved by congregations and they're doing the Lord's work and the Lord is blessing it and using him to bring people to the Savior, why they would mess around for a little romp. I mean, I do not understand that. It just makes no sense. Cause the next thing you know, they're disgraced. They're out and the rest of their life they'll bear those scars, even though God can forgive them.

R.T. Kendall: My dad used to say, "Son, remember the devil is crafty. He's second only to God in wisdom and power. And he's looking for ways to get in. And if he can't get in through finances, he'll try to get in through sex." And I'm talking about finishing well. This is principle number four. Do you want me to move on?

Dr. Dobson: Well yeah. I just want to second what you just said about pornography, because I know something about that having served on the Attorney General's commission on pornography for two years. And it is dangerous. I'm telling you, you mess with it, you will get burned. It'll destroy your relationship with your spouse. Your children will see it. They will be affected by it, and it is more addictive than cocaine.

R.T. Kendall: I believe you.

Dr. Dobson: At 13 years of age, some vulnerable, boys especially, can have one exposure to a certain kind of pornography and be hooked for life. And it is very difficult to get disconnected once you are. So thank you for that word. Let's go to number five.

R.T. Kendall: Well, we may have to hurry, but to say each of them briefly. Principle number five is, come to terms with jealousy. When you're threatened by another person's success or high profile. We've been talking about King Saul. He was thrilled when David killed Goliath, but then right after that, the women began to sing, "Saul has killed his thousands. David, his tens of thousands." You know, people can be so insensitive. They didn't realize what a fragile ego King Saul had. And from that moment, he kept a jealous eye on David.

He was more concerned by the threat of young David than he was the Philistines, the enemy of Israel. This is how jealousy can bring you to such a lopsided perspective. And I don't want to give anybody a guilt trip because we've all faced this, and we all have problems with jealousy. But be careful if it gets a hold of you, it will ruin you.

Dr. Dobson: Number six.

R.T. Kendall: Principle number six. Be willing not to get the credit for what you do. My life verse, Jim, is John 5:44. When Jesus asked the Pharisees, "How can you believe who receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that comes from God only?" You see if you only want the credit he gives you, you won't care what people think, and you become impervious to pleasing people. If your eyes are on the honor and glory of God, and that is your focus, you're going to be safe. The problem is, we're so afraid people won't notice what we do. We want recognition for this, for that, and we forfeit the honor God would have given us. I would just say this. If God wants to give you credit, he will. Let him do it. If he wants to, fine. But don't put your eyes on that or you'll become absorbed with it and always worry "What do people think?" Set your face toward God and want his pleasure and honor.

Dr. Dobson: My pastor used to say, "There's no limit to what you can accomplish for God if it didn't matter who got the credit."

R.T. Kendall: That's it. You said it perfectly.

Dr. Dobson: Okay. Number seven.

R.T. Kendall: Always keep your word. Integrity and finishing well are inseparable. Where you're transparently honest and people know they see integrity all over your face and they find out you do what you say you will do. You will keep your word. King Saul, who we've been talking about a little bit, swore an oath to his son, Jonathan, that he would stop trying to harm David. Broke the oath before the day was over. He lost all integrity. And this is a thing that needs to be recovered, restored, to the church, to the ministry. Integrity. Where people can trust us. You know the expression, "Is so-and-so the real deal?" Is he pure gold?" Well, that's what we want.

Dr. Dobson: Number eight is the topic that we've made reference to a little bit earlier.

R.T. Kendall: Well, we could spend three days here. Live in total forgiveness. This phrase was born in what was at the time the darkest hour Louise and I ever went through. What happened? While I was at Westminster Chapel, those 25 years to quote Charles Dickens, "They were the best of times. They were the worst of times." And we went through the worst moment when the outlook was so bleak. I couldn't tell anybody what happened, and I thought life was over. I was bitter. How could this happen? An old friend from Romania, his name is Joseph [inaudible 00:19:07], happened to be in London. And I decided to tell Joseph what they did. And if I'm honest with you, Jim, I was hoping he'd put his arm around me and say, "R.T., you ought to be angry. Get it out of your system."

He just looked at me and said, "R.T., you must totally forgive them, for until you totally forgive them you will be in chains. Release them and you will be released." Nobody had ever talked to me like that in my life. That was the worst

day of my life. And it turned out to be at my finest hour. I couldn't begin to tell you how thankful I am for those words.

Dr. Dobson: All right. In the interest of time, let's move to number nine.

R.T. Kendall: Be a thankful person. In Philippians 4:6 Paul said, "Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything let your prayer and petition with thanksgiving be made known to God." I was preaching on that text back in 1986. I was convicted. It was as though in the middle of my sermon, my whole life came up before me, how unthankful I'd been. I've resolved that I would thank God for at least three things every day before I go to bed at night.

I get a bulletin every month from Mayo Clinic. This month they've got a section on being thankful. They're not talking about being thankful to God. They're not talking about the Bible. They have found out thankful people live longer. That's a fairly good reason.

Dr. Dobson: And bitterness leads to shortened life.

R.T. Kendall: Exactly. God loves gratitude. And I would just say to anybody, be thankful, stop complaining, stop grumbling.

Dr. Dobson: Number 10.

R.T. Kendall: Maintain a strong personal prayer life. There will be no praying in heaven. And the more time you give to God, the more you get done. Listen to these words from Martin Luther's journal. He said, "I've got a very busy day today. Must not spend two hours, but three in prayer." John Wesley would not think of going out into his day without two hours on his knees. But Jim, where are the Wesleys today? Where are the Luthers? Who's turning the world upside down. The average church leader in America spends, are you ready for this, four minutes a day in their quiet time. And many of them only do it when they want a sermon. This is why the church is powerless.

I got a head start on this, Jim. My godly father, my first memory of him was seeing him on his knees every morning for 30 minutes before he went to work. He was a layman. He prayed more than most preachers. And that was instilled in me when I was a teenager. I didn't go out to high school, I was 15, 16, 17 years old, without 15 minutes on my knees.

Dr. Dobson: I read that your mother then prayed after he left.

R.T. Kendall: Yeah. And did the same thing. There'll be no praying in heaven, and now's the time to spend time alone with God. You get more done that way. And you get to know His ways. And the way you get to know anybody is to spend time with them. You show your esteem for another person by how much time you give them. And so I would say, "How much time do you give to God?"

Dr. Dobson: Well, a model for that was Jesus himself. His ministry only lasted three years and he had a lot to get done during that time. But he left the disciples and went off privately to pray over and over again.

R.T. Kendall: And if he needed to, how much more do you and I?

Dr. Dobson: Well, those are the 10 principles and this is a book called *It Ain't Over Till It's Over*. That phrase came from Yogi Berra, the well-known major league baseball hall of fame inductee. And he explained what he meant by that phrase "It isn't over till it's over" to you, didn't he?

R.T. Kendall: He did. He did. And I was very blessed that he would give me that quote for the book.

Dr. Dobson: R.T., we're out of time. Every time you come, the clock is our enemy. I've loved talking to you again on this occasion, two programs, yesterday and today. It's always a pleasure. God loves you and he is working in your life at 80 years of age. And for you to take the time to get on a plane with your son and to fly here means a lot to me.

R.T. Kendall: I wouldn't miss it for anything in the world. You honor me, Jim, and God bless you and Shirley.

Dr. Dobson: Let's do it again.

R.T. Kendall: I will.

Roger Marsh: What an important reminder to run with perseverance the race set out before us. Our prayer is that this message has inspired you to live your life to the fullest and to finish well. I'm Roger Marsh, and today here on Family Talk, we just listened to part two of Dr. Dobson's timeless interview with Dr. R.T. Kendall. Visit our broadcast page @drjamesdobson.org for additional content about Dr. Kendall, also more information about his ministry and his countless books. That's drjamesdobson.org, and then click on today's broadcast tab.

Now, before we go, I want to remind you of an important campaign we have going on right now. As we head into this pivotal election season, the battle lines for decision 2020 have clearly been drawn. Dr. Dobson believes that there are several essential issues at stake this November that every Christian needs to understand. He's breaking down these urgent moral topics in his publication called Faith Votes. Request your copy of this helpful resource by going to drjamesdobson.org/faithvotes. Read and apply this wisdom at the polls and take a stand for biblical values in our culture. Again, you can get a free copy of this relevant publication when you go to drjamesdobson.org/faithvotes.

Well, that's all the time we have for this week. Thanks so much for listening and for your support of the James Dobson Family Institute. Be sure to join us again Monday for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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