



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Seven Men Who Changed the World – Part 2

Guest(s): Eric Metaxas

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Announcer: Today on Family Talk.

Eric Metaxas: In this culture, we don't talk about what is a man. I mean, years ago he'd say, "Be a man" and that would mean something. What does it mean today? Who do we have out there as role models, as heroes, as figures in our culture today? Most listeners know this, bad role models. If you're trying to raise a boy, try to raise a son, who can you point him to? Now that to me is a crisis.

Roger Marsh: Few would argue that there is an alarming shortage of upstanding men to model godliness in modern society. As our guest Eric Metaxas just shared with us, this is a crisis that can potentially devastate future generations. And recognizing this deficit who should our people look up to, especially young people? Thankfully, as we will continue to learn in just a moment, there are numerous historical figures whose example we can follow.

Roger Marsh: Today's edition of Family Talk. We'll feature the second part of Dr. James Dobson's classic conversation with his friend Eric Metaxas. New York times bestselling author, popular radio host and prolific speaker. Eric Metaxas is a prominent evangelical voice who remains faithful to the call for righteousness in modern culture. Today he and Dr. Dobson will continue emphasizing the heroic leaders that Eric has included in his book Seven Men: And the Secret of Their Greatness.

Roger Marsh: As we begin the two will resume discussing George Washington's life before highlighting the courageous acts of William Wilberforce. Again, this is a very enlightening broadcast. It's going to be a huge benefit, especially to us guys listening in today.

Roger Marsh: Here now again to introduce our guest is our host, Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. Dobson: Eric, there is so much in your book that it is just impossible to move in a straight line, but because one thing leads to another, but we started last time talking about George Washington and I loved what you said about him. But I'm not

through with him as I said, and I really would like to ask you more things that made him qualify as one of the seven men that you put in your book.

Dr. Dobson: As a place to begin, I had one of the greatest honors that I've ever had just three, four years ago. When the Library of Congress invited me to come to Washington for a private tour of that wonderful facility. I mean it's gigantic. People don't have any idea how big the Library of Congress really is. But I had a private tour and I came upon George Washington's private affairs and writings and things. Eric, I held in my hand, the hand written diary of George Washington when he was at Valley Forge. I stood there reading what he wrote. I mean I don't think I've ever felt more awe struck than having his personal thoughts and writings in my hand. I'm sure it's been published, but to hold it, it was phenomenal because I have such respect for this man. Tell us again why you chose him.

Eric Metaxas: Well, the main reason I chose him, there's so much. I mean, you can go through and say he did a number of great things. So that's really ultimately not what this book is about, a listing great things. This idea that this man in two really key moments in his life gave himself over to a higher purpose. Number one example is, it's 1783, the war is won. This man, George Washington, clearly, is the hero. The man who held it together practically with his own arms, he held the nation together and now Congress cannot pay the officers. It was nothing new under the sun Congress has no money. And the officers are getting angry because they're thinking, "You know what? We risked our lives, we risked our families, and now we're getting nothing for it. Well, here's what's going to happen, Congress. We're taking over, we're going to a military coup and it's totally legitimate. George Washington is going to be the leader. He's going to be King George the First. It's going to be a benevolent dictatorship. He's going to be a great leader and you know he'll be a great leader."

Eric Metaxas: So George catches wind of this plot. There's a letter circulated and he is deeply offended. I tell you, it takes a great man to be deeply offended. Because I think most reasonable men with think about this because it's very reasonable.

Dr. Dobson: Well, it's safe. They need me.

Eric Metaxas: Well, that's about it. This man says no. When he says no, it's a no that thunders, echoes through the halls of history forever and ever that, that no, that saying no to this really, in many, ways legitimate offer is so powerful. The idea that he says, "I refuse power." Who would say that today? Can we tell young men today? Can we tell older men today? Can we tell anyone today look at this story, would you turn down power? Are your beliefs strong enough that you'll do the right thing? He did the right thing at a moment when most of people would have never even thought of doing the right thing and without that we would not have the United States of America. Obviously, that's the number one thing.

Dr. Dobson: That kingship was offered to him again after his second term. They didn't want him to step down.

Eric Metaxas: Well, see that's the thing is that the second case in his story, in my book, the second case is just what you said, they wanted him to run forever. They didn't want him to step down. He didn't want to run the first time that he figured, "Okay, I'll do it." He didn't want to run the second time even more. They kind of made him do it. After that he said, "That's it." Now he could have just hung in there forever. It would have created this imperial presidency. He said, no. He believed in the noble idea Cincinnatus at the plow. The idea of the citizen leader. I mean, these beautiful ideas he lived it out. Again, those are just two major examples. I tell the whole story of his life in that chapter, but that is in every one of the men in this book and he is in many ways number one.

Dr. Dobson: There was a divine presence around him too. I don't know if you've read that. During the revolutionary war, there was a terrible battle and he was right in the middle of it. He was on this white horse out there in front. When the battle was over, he took off his coat and it was riddled with bullets and his hat.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah. I write about that. It's there a couple of cases like that. He seemed protected by God in a sense for great things that we can hardly make sense of these things. I mean, who knows? But the bottom line is that he was used in a way that you have to marvel. If you don't marvel at the life of George Washington, you don't know the life of George Washington. It's extraordinary.

Dr. Dobson: Well, as so much more about George Washington that we could talk about, but let's move on to the second of your seven great men and the secrets of their success. It has to be Will Wilberforce. William Wilberforce.

Eric Metaxas: Yes. Yeah, I put them in chronological order. Wilberforce, again, part of the reason he's in the book is because a lot of people who don't want to read the 300 page biography by Eric Metaxas. So I said, "Well listen, I'm going to fix those people. I'm going to give him the 20 page version because they need to know the story of Wilberforce." The speech that I give on Wilberforce, essentially, that's the chapter. People need to know this man. If there ever was a great man, this was a great man. Washington was six foot three almost. Incredible physical specimen. Wilberforce was probably five foot two, five foot two and a half. Tiny man, but courageous on every level and talk about sacrifice. Everyone said that he put principles before politics or principles before party even and that he was really predestined to be prime minister, but he gave himself over to these noble causes.

Eric Metaxas: The most notable of course, the abolition of the slave trade. So he was happy to give up being prime minister to serve these causes because guess what? He actually cared about the poor. He actually cared about the slaves. He actually cared. He became a profound Christian around his 26th birthday and changed everything.

Dr. Dobson: He wandered from the faith from time. Didn't he?

Eric Metaxas: Oh yes. God had given him a position in politics to use the power and influence that he had for God's purposes. He did that. He did that through a lifetime. Contrasting with the life of Bonhoeffer, which has an extensively sad ending. We know ultimately it's not a sad ending, but this is a case of a truly happy ending. This man in the course of about 50 years in politics, literally changed the world. You can't say that about too many people.

Eric Metaxas: The world was profoundly different because of the 50 years that this man spent laboring and laboring and laboring faithfully with God gave him in the role as a politician. If everybody asks, "Can somebody serve God in politics?" Read about William Wilberforce. Because this man, not only did he serve God in politics, but God created him to serve him in politics. And that's what he did. I tell you, it's just one of those stories that every Christian especially must know the story of Wilberforce.

Dr. Dobson: One of the comments about him that I loved is that he gave a voice to the voiceless. In his case it was slavery. But the direct line from that to the pro-life movement. I mean, there's no doubt about the fact that he also faced disappointment. He was voted down over and over again. He was then where we are now.

Eric Metaxas: That's precisely right. I've talked and I have to say that there is such a strong parallel because you have this idea. I mean, to be fair, there are many Americans who simply know nothing about what actually happens in abortion. So you have to give them grace and say they actually don't know what is going on.

Eric Metaxas: Wilberforce was living at a time when no one in Great Britain actually knew what was happening in the slave trade. It happened over there. Well, it's not like in this country where you have slavery right in front of you. No, it was bolstering their economy. But the slaves, the ship would leave the port and it would go to Africa and it would pick up slaves and it would go to the West Indies, to the colonies, all the way across the Atlantic. All of this horror was happening on the high seas. It was happening across the... They never saw it.

Eric Metaxas: Just like with the abortion thing, Wilberforce says, "Okay. Our economy's supporting this. People need to know what we're doing. People need to know. I will take it upon myself to educate them because I believe that in a Christian nation..." And they were an overtly Christian nation. He said that when they know what's happening, they will say this is wrong and they will take measures. That's exactly what happened. But it took him years to educate the people-

Dr. Dobson: The media, the press at that time didn't help him at all.

Eric Metaxas: Think about it. I mean, the economic interests against what he was doing were huge. He knew that if I can get the truth out about what is happening... I actually believe that's exactly what is happening on the life issue today. The

Gosnell story. Finally people on the fence, a lot of good people on the fence are saying, "Oh, I didn't know. I didn't know that that was happening. You know what? I may have made a mistake on this." That is happening right now on this issue.

Dr. Dobson: That's why the media did not cover that trial.

Eric Metaxas: Well, that's exactly right. There's more and more and more the great work that Lila Rose is doing. When the truth gets out. There are many people in this country who are going to change their minds. And they're going to say, "You know what? We're ashamed. We've been part of something. We didn't know what was happening. We have to do something."

Dr. Dobson: The slaves that were put in the hold of those ships that they were coming back and took a long time to get back. It was wind power that brought them back. Half of them died on the way. Can you imagine the bodies, the stench of people being chained down there, not fed properly.

Eric Metaxas: No one knows. When I read it, in my book *Amazing Grace*, I give a firsthand account of a doctor who observed all of this stuff. It is so horrifying. It is unspeakably horrifying. That's the thing is when you look right at it, you can't help unless you're a monster or unless your conscience has been seared, you can't help but be affected. Some people just say, "Well, I'll look away." Well that's the thing is Wilberforce said, "I'm going to put this out there and put this out there so that people can not look away. They have to deal with this." On the abortion issue today, it's the same thing. If we can winsomely, lovingly put the facts out there, there are plenty people in the middle who'll say, "You know what? I didn't get that before. I'm starting to get it." So I have hope.

Dr. Dobson: Do we know how Wilberforce dealt with discouragement? I've been at this pro-life thing. Not putting myself in the same category as Wilberforce, but since 1970 when it really hit me what was going on and just happens to be the time that Ryan was born. We adopted him and he became the symbol of life that his mother gave him life and put that child in our arms. From that point on I have been passionate about this. But I've seen a lot of failure on that point too. I know how I've dealt with discouragement. There are times when I've been to the point of despair over it. But how did Wilberforce do it?

Eric Metaxas: Two things I would say. First of all, he had a very healthy community of believers around him.

Eric Metaxas: In my book, I call them the Clapham Circle. It was a really an intentional community of people who were on the same page as he was living in the Clapham suburb of London. They would get together and pray together and minister together and counsel together. When you have people around you, obviously, it's that much easier. If you're all alone... I think we do need that. We really need that.

Eric Metaxas: I also think that Wilberforce understood that it was about obedience. That as much as you want to win, even more, you've got to want to obey God. If you end up losing by being obedient in a way that's a story of Bonhoeffer. But the point is that you stay faithful knowing that that's what God calls us to is to be faithful to do what we can do. Do everything we can do, but to do it his way, not to descend into fighting in the flesh.

Eric Metaxas: I think that ultimately we really have to know that God calls us to obey him in the battle. I think that a lot of times we can get sidetracked because you get so angry. Imagine what Wilberforce felt about these slaves.

Dr. Dobson: My greatest time of discouragement was over the partial birth abortion situation. Because I would stand up and talk about this and people's eyes would glass over and they would become white. Just the horror of that. They had no idea. It was very difficult to help them to see.

Eric Metaxas: We have to in some ways, I guess, have grace for people because people can handle a lot of this stuff and we have to just pray that the Lord would open their eyes. I mean, your story, okay, everything says you should have been aborted. You are just a bunch of cells. What would the harm be in getting rid of those 16 cells? If you ask me, the key to this is getting these stories into the mainstream culture, into the mainstream media. Very tough to do, but that's part of what God has given me a heart to do. That to me is part of what our calling is.

Dr. Dobson: You described in the book that after, what, 50 years of fighting the slave trade it actually ended legislatively-

Eric Metaxas: On his death bed.

Dr. Dobson: ... on his death.

Eric Metaxas: Three days before he died. In fact, it was the last day he was conscious. He was 73 years old. The last that he was conscious, I guess, was Saturday. He gets word on his death bed from Buxton, a young member of parliament, who comes to let this father of the cause know "Today in parliament," a few miles down the road here in London, "we voted to abolish slavery." Now the slave trade had been abolished 1807. This is 1833. All these years later they give him the good news. Eventually, he slips into a coma and early on Monday goes to be with the Lord.

Dr. Dobson: Eric, I started to ask a question during the Washington discussion and it slipped my mind, but now remember it. So I'm going to ask you again. Speaking of slavery, that's what I wanted to ask about. There are people who look at all the greatness of George Washington and say it's all negated by the fact that he owned slaves. What is the counter to that? Is there one?

Eric Metaxas: Well, I think the best I can say is that those folks don't really understand the whole story because if you read about... I tell that story in the chapter. I don't

want to get any details wrong, but I do go into that in the chapter because I think it's important for people to understand the context-

Dr. Dobson:

He released his slaves.

Eric Metaxas:

Well. Yes, that's a big part of it is that he released them. You could tell that he was a tender-hearted man and deeply cared about them. Now people would say, "What nonsense? How can you care?" But then he should've set them free. People are being historically sloppy. We no longer want heroes. We want anti-heroes. We want everybody to be torn down. Again, it's this idea that strength or any kind of greatness has to be pulled down into the gray mush of socialism, false egalitarianism. We're all equal. Well, if we're all equal, there's nothing great and what does it matter? You just give me my vodka and my potatoes. It's like 1984. It's not the noble vision of man that God has.

Eric Metaxas:

I think that when you're talking about any greatness, any heroes, there's all this tendency to pull these people down. But we do it in our culture. Who do we celebrate? We kind of celebrate the bad boys, right? If you've got a son or you got a daughter, you don't want those bad boys to be celebrated. You want good men to be celebrated. But we don't do that in the culture. Think of all the fathers on Father's Day. The guy who goes to work, like my dad, every day, every day, every day, every day, every day for years and years and years and years. Nobody's celebrating that. These are the values that need to be cherished and celebrate. These are stories that need to be told in movies. I just think that my book is a first salvo in trying to get something going on that.

Dr. Dobson:

Eric, we're going to devote yet another program to it. I know that you've already said you can be with us again. But I'm looking forward to talking to you about some of the others that are listed in the book.

Dr. Dobson:

We're really out of time. We've only have 30 seconds left. The book is being well received.

Eric Metaxas:

Yes, yes. Seven Men: And the Secret of Their Greatness. I wrote it, as I said, really because I felt it needed to be written. It's a kind of a strange thing. I did not expect it to sell well. It has sold very, very well. I hope it continues to sell. If it sells really well, I'll write a book called Seven Women because I think that there are some heroic women out there whose stories need to be told as well.

Eric Metaxas:

I'm getting a lot of tremendous feedback. I'll be honest with you, I didn't expect it. I just thought, "These are just seven. They're decent stories. It's not the Bonhoeffer book or it's not something..." But I think there's something so compelling about each one of these lies. I forget because you get so close to it. I think people are reading them and just saying, "Wow, I can't wait until my... I want to give this away for Father's Day. I want to give this to my son for graduation."

Dr. Dobson: We really are out of time.

Eric Metaxas: Way out of time.

Dr. Dobson: Tell people how they can contact you.

Eric Metaxas: Well, they can come to my website, which is ericmetaxas.com. That's always the easiest way to reach me. E-R-I-C-M-E-T-A-X-A-S.com.

Dr. Dobson: Eric, you're younger than I am. But you are a hero to me. I'm really proud of you. I know you love the Lord. That's the reason you do what you do. He's given you these skills and you've dedicated them to a good cause. It's a pleasure to work with you in this context.

Eric Metaxas: Well, hearing those words from you, I can just go to glory now. Thank you very much.

Dr. Dobson: Don't do it.

Roger Marsh: Well, Dr. Dobson and Eric Metaxas have really cruise through a lot of great content over the past couple of days. But the good news is we're not quite done. Be sure to be with us again tomorrow as they will finish examining Eric Metaxas's book called *Seven Men: And the Secret of Their Greatness*. That book, like all of Eric's other works, is a fascinating read. You can learn about ordering information for your copy of the book by visiting drjamesdobson.org.

Roger Marsh: Now on our broadcast page, you'll also find out more about Eric Metaxas and his nationally syndicated radio program as well. That's drjamesdobson.org and then click onto Today's Broadcast page.

Roger Marsh: Are you tired of aimlessly spinning the dial hoping and praying that you'll come across Dr. James Dobson's family talk on the radio? Well, now you don't have to spin the dial endlessly. All you have to do is use our helpful Station Finder feature. This tool allows you to see where and when Dr. Dobson is airing near you. My wife and I used it on our honeymoon. Very, very helpful. Click on the Broadcast menu. Then drop down to the Family Talk Radio Stations button and from there you'll see our entire radio network on our interactive map.

Roger Marsh: Tap your home state or the state you're in at that time and you'll see our affiliates in your area. Take advantage of this useful feature when you visit our website at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org.

Roger Marsh: Well, we've come to the end of today's broadcast and we invite you to tune it again tomorrow for the third and final part of Dr. James Dobson's interview with author Eric Metaxas. They will count down more historical figures whose profound character and faith still provide great examples for us today. You will not want to miss the remainder of this exciting conversation coming your way

on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you'll join us then.

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

Dr. Dobson: Do you want to see what kind of men and women your children will grow up to be? Take a look in the mirror.

Roger Marsh: For Family Talk, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. Dobson: A wise man once said, "The footsteps a child follows are often those that the father thought he covered up." How true that is. All their facts, we can pass onto our children and skills we can teach. But how our children really learn is by watching us and observing our every move by absorbing what we do and who we are.

Dr. Dobson: Someone said values are not taught to kids. They're caught by them. They're picked up routinely through the subtle influences of simply being together through the day.

Dr. Dobson: A poem by Herbert Parker sums it up best. He said, "To get his good night kiss. He stood beside my chair one night and raised an eager face to me. A face with love of light. And as I gathered in my arms, the son God gave to me, I thank the lad for being good and hoped he'd always be. His little arms crept round my neck and then I heard him say four simple words. I can't forget. Four words that made me pray. They turned a mirror on my soul on secrets no one knew. They startled me. I hear them yet he said, 'I'll be like you.' Do you still think what you do as a mother or father? Doesn't really matter. It does. Believe me. It does."

Roger Marsh: To hear more, visit our Broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton, executive director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Our ministry here exists to honor the Lord through ministering to today's families and marriages all over the world. Visit us, will you do that at drjamesdobson.org? Or call us toll free at 877-732-6825. Stand with us and fight for righteousness and culture.

Roger Marsh: Hello everyone. Roger Marsh here for Dr. James Dobson's Family Time. The news comes in all shapes, sizes, and formats these days, but how do you cut through all the noise and get to the heart of the matters that affect your family? Well, come to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and sign up for Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter. You'll find clarity on tough issues, encouragement for daily life and trusted principles to help you build strong, healthy, and connected families. Go to drjamesdobson.org and sign up today. That's drjamesdobson.org.

