



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Seven Men Who Changed the World – Part 1

Guest(s): Eric Metaxas

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Dr. Dobson: Hello everyone, this is James Dobson and I want to share a letter with you.

Dr. Dobson: The first amendment to the US Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, provides protection for religious liberties and it's been known that way since the days of our founding fathers. It's been said that this is the foundation on which all other freedoms are based. Unfortunately, in recent years our government, our court system and organizations such as Americans United for the Separation of Church of State has been attempting to undermine, and they've encroached upon these fundamental liberties and tried to stifle them in the public square. It will encourage you to know that the Trump Administration has issued an executive order that guarantees that no school that receives government funding should be allowed to trample on the constitutional rights of its students. Accordingly, the Administration will require schools to certify on an annual basis that they have no policy which prevents participation in constitutionally protected prayer or other religious expression.

Dr. Dobson: Similarly, religious student groups at public universities and colleges should receive the same benefits, privileges and rights enjoyed by other student groups. The proposed rule therefore aims to remove regulations that burden faith-based organizations or would treat them worse than other groups or individuals. Having witnessed the erosion of religious liberty within schools and universities for many, many years, I am greatly encouraged by this effort by the President to preserve the things that matter most to us and this is certainly one of those moments.

Dr. Dobson: With that announcement, let's get to today's interview with Eric Metaxas, which was recorded several years ago and I think you're going to find this interesting.

Announcer: Today on Family Talk.

Roger Marsh: You ever wondered what it means to be a hero? Is anyone really worthy of such a label? Many people immediately associate this term with a fictional character in a movie or a comic book. However, the idea of a hero is much more sacred

and a reserved title for only a select few. As we'll hear on today's program, there are many noble, historical figures who deserve this recognition and to help us identify these extraordinary people, you're about to hear Dr. James Dobson's timeless interview with author Eric Metaxas here on Family Talk. Eric Metaxas is a celebrated New York Times best-selling author, a widely respected and sought-after speaker and also the host of a daily radio program which broadcasts across the entire nation on the Salem Radio Network.

Roger Marsh: The discussion you're about to hear centers on Eric's book called, *Seven Men and the Secret to their Greatness*. Dr. Dobson and Eric Metaxas will highlight a few of these honorable men whose outstanding faith changed the world. But their conversation starts by addressing culture's overall disdain for the concept of manhood and masculinity. Let's listen in now on this fascinating conversation.

Dr. Dobson: Eric Metaxas is rapidly becoming one of the most admired and influential Christian voices in the world and every time he puts his pen to paper, good things happen, now he's done it again. Today he's here to discuss the *Seven Men and the Secrets of their Greatness*. It's going to especially challenge the men in our audience. A lot of the things we do are for women because I would guess that there are more women than men listening to us because the men are driving trucks and doing whatever they do. But men will particularly enjoy this program today, I believe.

Dr. Dobson: Eric, I'm so glad to have you back.

Eric Metaxas: If I had lived long enough to hear those kinds of wonderful words from Dr. James Dobson, I just say, praise God and thank you so much. I am really humbled and thrilled to be with you.

Dr. Dobson: Eric is not only a writer, he's a popular speaker and communicator. He's been on many television shows and done interviews in the nation's press. You have a bachelor's degree in English from the Yale University.

Eric Metaxas: Yeah.

Dr. Dobson: I'm not real sure if that impresses me because I don't know what Yale stands for these days.

Eric Metaxas: I guarantee you that neither do they. I talk about that often. It's one of those things, it's kind of like Paul saying that he has these great credentials, but they are dung, but they can be credentials for the world. When you say Yale or New York Times or something, people listen, it means something and I'm grateful for that and I pray that Yale would have revival. The whole country needs that.

Dr. Dobson: The last time you were here, we talked about your book, *Bonhoeffer*. What a great book. If people have not yet gotten a copy or read that book, that's history

at its best. In fact, Bonhoeffer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, shows up in the new book that you have written.

Eric Metaxas: He snuck in there. I don't know how that happened, Dr. Dobson. We tried to get him out.

Dr. Dobson: We want to talk about today. The title of it is Seven Men and the Secrets of their Greatness. By the way, the Bonhoeffer book wound up number one on the New York Times and it's been referred to as a biography of uncommon power. I would love to have one of my books described that way.

Eric Metaxas: Here's the funny thing. Here's the funny thing is that I hope none of this goes to my head and I'll tell you why, because I always say the Lord humbled me up front. If you've been crushed, when you get success, you know who the author of that success is and I praise God that I know. I'm so grateful to the Lord for that. When I hear these things, I feel like it's easy how to deal with it, I just say, "Praise God." I can just point to him and I will tell you that phrase, a biography of uncommon power, it's more meaningful to me because it was said by, actually he used to be right out here in Denver, Archbishop Shambhu, a hero of the faith. When I read the review in First Things Magazine, I just about dropped dead. To have them praise me in First Things Magazine, that's one thing, but then you realize who the author of that was, it was Archbishop Shambhu and he was the one that put me forward for the Canterbury Medal for Religious Freedom. I have to say that when someone like that appreciates what you've done just as you appreciating it, it means a whole lot more than an Amazon review.

Dr. Dobson: You know how the Lord keeps me humble and has now for over 50 years, he gave me Shirley. Shirley's not impressed by all these things, but she loves me like crazy and it's a great combination.

Eric Metaxas: I get that. I'm also married and I think that is how the Lord ... and through children obviously. Man, the Lord can sanctify one, but that's a blessing and if you recognize it as a blessing, it's a double blessing.

Dr. Dobson: Again, the title of your book is Seven Men and the Secret of their Greatness. Before we get into others that are listed and the ones you chose, talk about the wider perspective. What makes a great man?

Eric Metaxas: This is what made me write the book actually. It's a funny thing, because I said in this culture, we don't talk about what is a man. Years ago you'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? We're getting, in our culture today, and most listeners know this, bad role models. If you're trying to raise a boy, trying to raise a son, who can you point him to?

Dr. Dobson: Try to find somebody.

Eric Metaxas: Try to find somebody. That, to me, is a crisis and it's a crisis of manhood and we need to have heroes, role models that we can point to. I said I want to write a book that, in a positive way, puts forth seven role models, seven great men, not perfect, because they are not Jesus, but they were great men. The funny thing is, in the introduction to the book I write about all this stuff. Number one, men are denigrated. It's a way to attack Father God, we understand that and it's a way to make the head the tail and the tail the head. We've attacked Father God, we've attacked fatherhood, we've attacked men and what happens as a result, who is hurt the most? If you ask me, women are hurt the most. So I said, we need role models, but then why don't we have a lot of heroes and role models? It's the same thing, we attacked heroes.

Eric Metaxas: Something happened in the 60s, we flipped to the anti-hero and every time we're looking at an apple, we're looking for the worm in the apple. We're looking for the steroid in the sprinter, or the ... We're always looking for that thing and it's like somebody looking at a beautiful beach and saying, I want to find the cigarette butt. I want to find the thing that says, "Ah-ha, he's a phony. He beats his wife." We really don't celebrate heroes. Talk about George Washington. The first thing people talk about is, "Oh, he owned slaves." Every one of the men in this book was a sinner. There's no doubt about that. But these men did things so great, I said these stories need to be told. Young men especially need to know there are great men, and by the way, this is God's plan for you to have this kind of a life. And I think the thing about knocking down heroes constantly, that is something that I think that I want to deal with in this book as well.

Eric Metaxas: Why, again, this ties into the whole theme. If you look at things from God's point of view, God gives us strength for His purposes. He gives a woman beauty for His purposes. He gives you wealth, He gives you talent for His purposes. Influence for His purposes. Now you can take every one of those things and use them for your own purpose. Somebody along the line, around the 60s decided that male strength is only going to be used to abuse women so therefore men should no longer be strong because it's dangerous and it's scary.

Eric Metaxas: You could look at the same thing from a national or an international perspective. The United States is strong. Why? To do all these great things. Well, the people say, "Yeah, but the United States has been a bully on the world stage. The United States needs to be brought low." It's this idea that instead of orienting strength for God's purposes, we'll say, strength is bad. We want to get rid of strength.

Eric Metaxas: You look at somebody like John Wayne, all these heroes. He was strong, but what was his strength used for? Usually to protect the weak, to protect ... It was used for good. That's what boys need to learn, that God has made me physically strong so I can protect my sister, my mother, my anybody. It's a principle, not just physical strength, the principle. God's given me all these things for His purposes. If you're not looking at it that way, well no wonder people want men not to be strong.

Dr. Dobson: Parents have got to step in there, first of all by modeling as a father.

Eric Metaxas: Absolutely. That's exactly why I wrote this book. I said, I want to put seven men out there, these are the role models. If you read these stories, you get a whole different idea of what is possible to do with your life. Every one of these men is different, but every one of them puts forward, I would say the one characteristic, in fact the title of the book is Seven Men and the Secret of their Greatness. What is that secret? The secret is, I would say at the heart of it, is this idea of noble sacrifice. That whatever God has given you, you're willing to lay it on the altar. And if you think of George Washington, the first man in the book, he was offered unlimited power and it was basically legitimate. It wasn't dirty.

Eric Metaxas: They said, "Listen, you won the war, you did this stuff. You should be King George, the first of America." He's offered this. Anybody would have said to him, "Take it. It's the right thing. You'll be a good monarch." And he says, "No." Unbelievable, he says no. He says, "I'm offended at that idea." Every one of the men in the story had something like that where all the voices of worldly wisdom would say, do this, do this. And somehow they say no. It's this noble sacrifice. It's heroic. We need to recapture the heroic for young men.

Dr. Dobson: We have a number of listeners out there that are waiting to know who the seven are and we need to name them. We've already talked about Bonhoeffer and you're talking now about George Washington and I want to go farther into his life, which fascinates me and also Eric Liddell. Jackie Robinson and Pope John Paul II, and Chuck Colson and William Wilberforce. Is that the seven?

Eric Metaxas: That's the seven. Abraham Lincoln got bumped by my friend Chuck Colson. When Chuck was on his deathbed, I was jogging one day and I said, Chuck needs to be the seventh man. He's not going to make it and there's no doubt that he ought to be in this book, but it's only because he passed on that I would put him in the book. I just say that, number one, you had to be a figure from history. Number two, people need to understand this is a subjective list, this is not some silly countdown. This is a subjective list that Eric Metaxas throws out there, seven great men. There are 7000 out there, I picked these seven for a number of reasons, but I would say in some ways the main reason is each of them in some way events what I just refer to as this noble sacrifice. They laid something on the altar. Jackie Robinson lays on the altar the right to fight back. He says I will give that up. Eric Liddell lays on the altar Olympic gold. Every one of them does something like that. Chuck Colson gives up a plea bargain to keep out of jail. Everybody said, "You've got to be out of your mind. Take the plea bargain." He says, "I will not do it."

Eric Metaxas: In every case, you have that picture of this nobility. It's just so beautiful to behold and I think that that's ultimately why these seven men are in there.

Dr. Dobson: You're really on to something.

Eric Metaxas: I hope so.

Dr. Dobson: You really are. The last time you were here, as I've already said, we talked about Bonhoeffer and I don't want to give a lot of time to him, even though he's one of seven great men in this book, but tell us in very abbreviated wording why you include him, why you consider him one of the seven great men.

Eric Metaxas: There's two reasons I included him. The first reason is there are a lot of people too intimidated by the length of the 600 page Bonhoeffer book to ever read that book and I say, "I'm going to fix you. I'm going to write the 20-page version so now you can't avoid it.", because I believe in this day and age to not know the story of Bonhoeffer is just a tragedy. He is one of the greatest figures of the 20th century, of history. For folks that don't know anything about him, I'll simply say that this is a man whose radical faith in Jesus led him to speak up for the Jews in Nazi Germany at the risk of his own life.

Eric Metaxas: Eventually he got involved in the conspiracy against Hitler. Talk about going out on a theological limb. Because it's complicated, but Bonhoeffer had a heart for God, he eventually ended up being captured by the Nazis and killed by the Nazis right before the end of the war so it's tragic and yet here we are talking about him. It's like the crucifixion is tragic and then you say, "Guess what, God gets the last word." This man followed God all through this time when so much of the church was unable somehow to hear from God. He was a prophetic voice and I really believe that the Lord called me to write the book about Bonhoeffer for this generation, that the church in America is asleep. We lack the courage, the backbone, the clarity, the discernment that the German church also lacked at that time. But I believe that by God's grace we would get a second chance and that the story of Bonhoeffer would be used to wake up the church to the threats to religious liberty and those kinds of things that are happening to us today.

Eric Metaxas: I think that story of Bonhoeffer is important on a number of levels, but it's specifically important for the church today. So I hope folks will read the chapter in Seven Men and then say, "I'd like to know a little more.", and then read the whole book because it's just a story of the ages.

Dr. Dobson: Those that are critical of him, because he was involved in a plot to kill Hitler have to put it in the context of six million Jews shot and gassed and killed and not only Jews, but political prisoners and homosexuals and other human beings that God loves. I mean, it's just a phenomenal thing and he was hanged the same month that Hitler killed himself.

Eric Metaxas: Took his life, yeah. Right at the end, it was pure revenge on Hitler's part that he wanted these guys killed. I talk about this wherever I go, people as me these questions. David, King David, he was involved in a plot to kill Goliath. Have you ever heard about that? Yeah, and we cheer. We don't say, that's before David became a Christian. Three years later he became a believer and he repented. No, we don't rejoice at killing, but first of all, there's a difference between murder and killing. Scripture says thou shall do no murder. It doesn't say that

every time a life is taken, it's murder and so that's complicated. We don't give cops guns to murder, but it's to protect human life. So it's much more complicated and I'm fascinated sometimes at the shallow theological thinking of many in the church, that they don't really think this stuff through and it's important. I think Bonhoeffer helps us to think it through.

Dr. Dobson: Let's go back to George Washington. We know he was the first president. He was the father of our country and that he led us to victory in the Revolutionary War. Everybody knows those things. What else spoke to you about the life of George Washington?

Eric Metaxas: I would say mainly the nobility of his character. It kind of ties into what I was saying about the introduction to the book and the denigration of heroes. Not only is George Washington a great hero who did all these things, but he also typifies the denigration. In other words, in our generation, in my generation, we have not heard of the greatness of George Washington and he's been knocked down quite a bit, kind of like Columbus, but even more so and when you really get to know George Washington, you say, this is one of the greatest men who has ever walked the world stage. This is a man who deserves to be called, the father of his country. Now that's a big thing to say, the father of this country, but when you get to know his story, everything about it ... So I said, for nothing else, just to tell this generation about this incredibly great man. The heart of it is him laying down the right to be king.

Eric Metaxas: Let's face it, in your time, Dr. Dobson, there were portraits of Washington in school rooms and portraits of Lincoln in schools and people pointed at them and said, if you eat your peas and study hard and don't mess up, you can grow up to be like George Washington, and now he's forgotten. Who's George Washington? George Washington deserves to be known and frankly, if young men know the story of George Washington, it will change the way they think about the United States of America. It's an extraordinary story.

Dr. Dobson: I saw a man on the street interview that I think was on Jay Leno's show. He does that often. One of the interviews was with a nice looking young man who, I think, is a sophomore or junior at Cal Berkeley. They asked him, he was obviously a very intelligent man, and they asked him who was Abraham Lincoln. He says, I don't know. Our first president? He had no clue. Abraham Lincoln, mind you.

Eric Metaxas: Somehow he graduated high school.

Dr. Dobson: One of the best university systems in the world, it's got a lot of problems with it too, but my goodness.

Eric Metaxas: Actually, this brings me to, I'll make it a very brief digression, but our friend, Oz Guinness, wrote a book called, A Free People's Suicide. One of the greatest books I've read in years. He talks about the idea of the founders and ordered

freedom and what I have talked about a lot sort of coming out of this book is that, if we, as Americans, do not know our history and do not know what makes us Americans, America is dead. There can be no America. It's like ... I'm French because my father was French. In America, we're an idea. If you're unaware of what you have, if you're unaware of who George Washington is and why he was great, if you never heard of Nathan Hale, if you don't know this stuff, we are on our way out. And we are on our way out.

Dr. Dobson: We're on our way out too, Eric, because our time is gone and I want to pick up right here next time. Man, this is interesting stuff to me because it's relevant to the family, it's relevant to the country I love and it ought to be relevant to all of us. We ought to study the great men and we have kind of bounced along through your book, *The Seven Men and the Secrets of the Greatness*. I recommend it strongly to our listeners and we're going to start again with George Washington because I'm not through with him. I don't think you are either and we'll work our way as far as we can get. Thank you for being with us. You live in New York, you've come a long, long way to be here and we're going to work you half to death.

Eric Metaxas: I'm looking forward to it.

Dr. Dobson: Okay.

Roger Marsh: We greatly appreciate you tuning in to Family Talk today, the interview you've been listening to features Eric Metaxas and was chocked full of information that is still so applicable to our lives today. If you'd like more information about the books written by Eric Metaxas including the one highlighted on this broadcast, go to our broadcast page at DrJamesDobson.org. That's DrJamesDobson.org, or you can call us at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. That's all the time we have for today, be sure to join us again tomorrow as Dr. Dobson and Eric Metaxas will continue the recognition of great men who changed history. That's coming up on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, have a blessed day.

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

Dr. Dobson: Someone said if you connect the boy to the right man he seldom goes wrong, and I believe that to be true. If a dad and a son or a daughter can develop some common interest together, the rebellious years really shouldn't be all that troubling. I had that kind of relationship with my own father, and the full force of his contribution hit me a few years ago when suddenly he laid dying of a major heart attack. As I stood by his bedside, I thought back to very happiest moments of my childhood.

Dr. Dobson: How my dad and I would get up very early on a wintry morning. Head about 20 miles outside of town to our favorite place. We parked the car, we climb over a fence, and follow a little creekbed back to an area that I called the big woods.

He get me situated under a fallen tree that made a little secret room, and then we would wait for the sun to come up, listening to the squirrels and the birds and the chipmunks. And the entire panarama of nature unfolded before us. Those moments together with my dad were absolutely priceless to me.

Dr. Dobson: There was a closeness that made me want to be like him. To choose his values as my values, and his dreams as my dreams, and his God as my God. That's the power of a man to set a kid on the right road. And I can't think of no wiser investment of time than the entire realm of human experience.

Roger Marsh: To get involved go to drjamesdobson.org.

Dr. Clinton: Hi everyone this is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the Dr. 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 in culture.

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