



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Colleges in Chaos: The Consequences of Abandoning Truth— Part 2

**Guest(s):** Dr. Everett Piper

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk, it's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome back to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, I'm Roger Marsh and on today's classic program we're going to hear the conclusion of a thoughtful conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and former college president, Dr. Everett Piper. On our last broadcast, Dr. Piper shared how a student's claim of being offended by a simple sermon sparked a national conversation about truth and coddling on college campuses. During the next half hour, he'll help us understand how today's students are different from previous generations and what that means for higher education. Now this captivating discussion about the very real assault on truth and its impact on the next generation was recorded right here in our Family Talk studios. Dr. Piper brings deep insight into this topic through his book, *Not a Day Care: The Devastating Consequences of Abandoning Truth* and that postulates that many colleges are systematically eroding the value of absolute truth in our culture and they're replacing it with truth that is based on our own personal feelings instead.

For 17 years, Dr. Everett Piper served as president of Oklahoma Wesleyan University. Currently, he's a contributing columnist for the Washington Times. Let's join Dr. Dobson now along with his guest, Dr. Everett Piper for the powerful conclusion of this fascinating conversation on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Piper, I told you last time, two or three times how glad I was that you were here. And it's because I have such respect for you, for your willingness to tell things that are true, your willingness to take the heat for them. And for what you've done at your university, Oklahoma Wesleyan University. I want to ask you a question about that. You knew Dr. Clyde Cook, did you not?

Dr. Everett Piper: I know of him and his legacy, and honor it greatly in terms of what he did at Biola.

Dr. James Dobson: He was the president of Biola for 25 years, and he had just retired, and he was taking a tour around the country, and he came to see me. And he came in one day and he sat down and we had a wonderful conversation because he was another man who knew what he believed and wouldn't wobble from it at all. In

that, of course that conversation, I asked him a question. I said, "Dr. Cook, you have now put 25 years in as the president of Bio University. Tell me how the students have changed in 25 years. How were they when you started all that long ago? And how are they now and what is different?" Oh, he said "they're totally different." I said, "how?"

And he said, "When we started 25 years ago, that these kids came in with a foundation of biblical truth. Their parents knew what they believed and they taught it to their boys and girls and young adults. And so they came in knowing the fundamentals of the faith. He said 25 years later, that's totally not true. Because they are going to churches and aren't teaching anything or at least not teaching the truths of the Scriptures. And they don't read the Bible and their parents largely don't know either. And he said, we have to start by laying a foundation. We have put in a lot of requirements, course requirements to get them up to speed. Because it's a different world than it was 25 years ago.

Now you haven't been there 25 years, you've been at Oklahoma Wesleyan for 15 years.

Dr. Everett Piper: Correct.

Dr. James Dobson: What has changed in those 15 years at your university?

Dr. Everett Piper: Well, I would affirm what Dr. Cook said, in terms of the change from students being grounded in things that are right and wrong, and true and false, and knowing the difference. To students today, not believing there is anything right or wrong, good or bad, and not knowing the difference because it doesn't matter. So I think I would just kind of double down on Dr. Cook's critique.

A few years ago I was asked at a different Christian college to come forward and make a presentation to the faculty. And to answer the question that you just asked me, what are our students like today? How have they changed? And basically, I challenged them with this. You go back to a theory that I learned when I was in graduate school at Bowling Green State, Perry's Scheme of Moral Development. Which talks about dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and then commitment to relativism. Those are the four schemes of Perry's particular model. Dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and then commitment to relativism. And what does that mean? Perry argued that when we're younger, we're dualistic. And if mom and dad says it's right, it's right. If the pastor says it's wrong, it's wrong. This dualistic black and white thinking.

He argued that that is not good moral maturity. That there comes a time when we need to take the mask off, that it's not mom and dad's idea any longer, it's not the pastor's faith any longer. We need to take the mask off and decide to own our own views and our own morality. You know all the stuff, Dr. Dobson, you've taught it. Well, here was my point to the faculty. Back in the day when those faculty that I was talking to ventured off into college, they came into

college as dualistic students. They believed in black and white answers. They believed in right and wrong answers. They believed that the pastor was right and so was dad. They were dualistic in their thinking.

But they perhaps did need to be challenged to own their own faith rather than just assume dad's. I get that, I understand that. I understand the need to own it for myself. But if we assume today that our students are coming to us with the dualistic frame of mind that you had when you went to school and I had when I enrolled into school, we're wrong. They're not coming to us today, as freshmen with black and white answers thinking everything's right and everything's wrong. They're coming to us today with no answers, thinking nothing's right and nothing's wrong. In other words, they're totally lost, they're totally adrift. And they're basically saying it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as it works for you.

Dr. James Dobson: These are kids who come out of Christian homes and Christian schools?

Dr. Everett Piper: Absolutely. It's our culture. I often get asked during new student orientation at Oklahoma Wesleyan University by a parent, "Do you have these problems at your school? Do you have these types of problems, this poor thinking or this bad moral decision at your school?" And I'll say, "Yes." And you can hear a pin drop, they don't expect me to say that. I say, "Yes, we have these problems. Why wouldn't I?" And then I look the parent in the eye, I say, "Do you have the problem in your youth group, in your church, in your community, in your family? So why wouldn't I have these problems at my college?" And then I'll say, "Sir, the question isn't whether I have these problems at my college. The question is, what do I do about it? Do I confront it or do I coddle it? Do I expect your students to grow up and move beyond it? Or am I going to enable them to feel too easily satisfied and comfortable in their self-absorption?"

Dr. James Dobson: Well, how do you do that? How do you come about confronting them?

Dr. Everett Piper: First of all, I think you need to understand that the faculty and staff of your institution needs to believe that truth exists. So you have to have a measuring rod outside of those things being measured. And you know where that quote comes from, C. S. Lewis. He told us that you can do no measuring without a measuring rod outside of those things being measured.

So if you're going to confront a bad idea, you have to have a measuring rod outside of the idea to identify it as being bad. And what is that measuring rod for our culture? Well, historically, it's been the Bible, it's been Scripture. And even in our seminal documents, those self-evident truths that are endowed to us by our creator, assumed a measuring rod outside of our own opinion and our own feelings. So the first thing we need to do is to let the students know that that measuring rod exists. And as they go through life, there are boundaries, there are restrictions, there are rules, there are yardsticks, there are measuring rods. And those things actually give us the ability to be a free people in a free

society. In other words, we confront them with truth, rather than coddled them in their opinions and their feelings and their lies.

- Dr. James Dobson: How commonly do they believe there is no absolute truth in your freshman class?
- Dr. Everett Piper: Oh, I think it's pervasive. I think it's pervasive in the church. If you look at Barna's research, and you've probably had Mr. Barna on your program talking to him.
- Dr. James Dobson: Recently.
- Dr. Everett Piper: Okay. You know that it's not only endemic in our culture, but it's endemic in the church. That we've lost the ability to define orthodoxy. We've lost the ability to even acknowledge that an objective absolute truth exists. I mean, my land, we can't even define what's male and female any longer. There's no objective standard for that anymore in our culture and even in our church. So when it comes to truth and honesty and integrity, when it comes to those seminal ideas that give us a definition as a country, as a church, as a community, we've lost the ability to do that. So I think it's endemic in the incoming freshman class, that they don't understand that truth exists as a measuring rod to allow them to function in culture.
- Dr. James Dobson: Suppose I'm a parent who wants to do better than that. I don't want to settle for what the millennials believe. I want to teach what I was taught when I was a kid and I want my son or daughter to understand that. And they do pretty well. But now it comes time to choose a college. If a school claims to be supportive of Jesus Christ and the gospel, is that enough? Do you have to find out more than that to do the best you can to make sure that your son or daughter is not propagandized and twisted and warped while there? And I'll start with that question. Does that happen commonly on Christian college campuses, that parents might not believe we're at risk there?
- Dr. Everett Piper: Yes, it does. And if there's any one important chapter in my book, it's the chapter on the prodigal path of the university. Where I present the case on how the Christian Academy has abandoned its birthright of biblical truth and has played the prodigal. And has been walling around in the pig slop of post modernity, opinions and feelings rather than facts and truth.
- Dr. James Dobson: What are they teaching?
- Dr. Everett Piper: Many Christian universities want to be respected by their big brother in the secular academy. So they start teaching the exact same thing. They just put out a nice four color brochure that says that they're Christ-centered. But here's what the point I want to make in answering your question, don't believe it. Don't believe the four color brochure. You need to be a good consumer, a good

shopper. And therefore, I would argue you need to ask two simple questions when you're getting ready to send your kid off to college.

Dr. James Dobson: Let me stop you.

Dr. Everett Piper: Okay.

Dr. James Dobson: I would like our listeners, as quickly as possible, to go grab a pencil and paper and write down what you're about to say. Because you said it in my office before we came in here, and I think it's brilliant. So I'm going to give you 15 seconds while we talk here, how long have you stated these basic ideas?

Dr. Everett Piper: Oh, I've been arguing this for 15 years at Oklahoma Wesleyan University. As you know, when I took over as president, my attitude was, we are going to waive the right banner. We're going to waive the banner of the truth of Christ and the truth of Scripture. And if we win waving that banner, great, that's God's grace. And if we lose waving that banner, frankly I don't care. It's the right banner to wave and we'll go down fighting.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay, let's remind everybody of what you just said. These are two questions that you really ought to go to the senior person, the president of the University. Especially a Christian University-

Dr. Everett Piper: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: If you're thinking of sending your student there and ask them these two questions. What are they?

Dr. Everett Piper: Right. First the premise to this is get the President's ear, demand a meeting with the President. And if he won't give you his time, don't go there. You're spending too much money to be ignored by the president. So I think that's a litmus test in and of itself. If you're going to drop 30, 40, 50 grand on the barrel head and the president ignores you, that tells you something.

So number one, get a meeting with the President. And when you have that meeting, ask him two simple questions. Number one, what is your view of Scripture? And number two, what is your view of truth? And be quiet and listen. Don't say anything. Does he say that Scripture is inherent, infallible, the authoritative written Word of God? If he says that, that's a good answer. But if he doesn't answer you that way, it's not because he's stupid and he doesn't understand why you asked the question. He knows.

Dr. James Dobson: He knows, doesn't he?

Dr. Everett Piper: Oh, he knows very well. So if you don't hear that Scripture is inherent, infallible and authoritative and that all faculty hired at that institution subscribed to the same, I would argue don't go there. It's not worth your time, it's not worth your

money. The second question, what is your view of truth? Is truth an objective reality? Is it a revelation of God? Or is it a postmodern construct? A collection of opinions? Again-

Dr. James Dobson: Explain why that's important.

Dr. Everett Piper: It's huge. Because almost all colleges today, they have abandoned the objectivity of truth. They don't believe in the objective reality of truth. They think that truth is a lowercase T, as opposed to a capital T. They believe that truth is nothing but a collection of social constructs, that we make it up as we go. That is a very dangerous view of culture, of society and of what it means to be a human being. I would argue that any good education should be grounded in the objective pursuit of truth, as a reality as opposed to a construct.

Dr. James Dobson: Can you still find a Christian school where the president knows the right answers to those two questions?

Dr. Everett Piper: Yes, you can, but it's becoming increasingly limited. I believe there's a handful of schools out there right now that actually understand what I'm saying, and are going to double down and actually give it because it's the right kind of education to get.

Dr. James Dobson: One of my favorite academics has gone on to be with the Lord, but he was former Senator Bill Armstrong and he became the president of Colorado Christian University. They have not wavered. The trouble is, you recommend a school and then the president changes or the vice president or the faculty changes or tenure takes its impact, and they're no longer the school that you thought it was. And that worries me.

Dr. Everett Piper: And it should. I think there's a way to try to keep track of that. And by the way, Bill Armstrong was a mentor of mine, and I'm glad you brought him up and college-

Dr. James Dobson: He was a godly man.

Dr. Everett Piper: Oh, he's a great man and he did a great work at Colorado Christian. So I agree with that. With regard to how do you keep track as to whether a university is remaining true? Look at the way they present themselves on their campus, in their architecture, in their cafeteria, in their gymnasium. If you walk on my campus, you are going to see Christ, Scripture, truth, wisdom everywhere. You're going to see it in the gymnasium, you're going to see it in the library. You will see it in the cafeteria, you will see it in the chapel, you will see it in the classroom.

Dr. James Dobson: How is the cafeteria?

Dr. Everett Piper: There are four columns in the cafeteria and etched in those columns in black marble is Christ, Scripture, truth, wisdom. The primacy of Christ, the priority of Scripture, the pursuit of truth and the practice of wisdom. In the dormitory, in the school of business, in the gymnasium, everywhere. Now you may say, well, that's interesting, but what does that mean? It means that I want my students to understand our mission statement and that we are unwavering. And that everything you get here from the classroom to the cafeteria, to the library, to the dormitory, even when you're on the basketball court, is going to be grounded in those priorities, in that missional integrity. We're not going to move.

Dr. James Dobson: You talk quite a bit in this book about freedom. And it's obviously very important to you. Is Christianity intertwined with freedom? I'm baiting you a little bit here, but tell us about it.

Dr. Everett Piper: Well see, I think that's one of the most important ideas that I present in the book, is this idea of freedom winning. How can we possibly lose in the market square of ideas if we argue for freedom, if we argue for liberty, if we argue for liberation, if we argue for justice? In fact, we see the left, the progressives arguing for the same thing, it's just they don't know how to get there. Because their worldview is bankrupt and they always fall short. Because they're grounded in lies as opposed to truth.

I quoted G. K. Chesterton earlier where I said, if you get rid of big laws, you don't get liberty. You get thousands of little laws that rush in to fill the vacuum. Well, Chesterton also told us about freedom and fences. He once used this analogy, he said if you want to build the largest playground in all of the world, the best playground ever in your community. And it's got all the ball fields and all the bells and all the whistles, all the games. If you want to build this playground and have your children enjoy it and be free to do so, you better build a fence. And what was his point? His point was this-

Dr. James Dobson: That's in my book *Dare to Discipline*.

Dr. Everett Piper: Oh, is it? You used same thing.

Dr. James Dobson: From 45 years ago.

Dr. Everett Piper: Well, you know what I'm saying.

Dr. James Dobson: Because the kids huddling around the middle.

Dr. Everett Piper: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: They're frightened if they can go all the way to the edge, there is safety in boundaries.

- Dr. Everett Piper: Exactly. I didn't realize I was stealing your stuff. I'm going to have to give you credit for this from now on.
- Dr. James Dobson: Well, Chesterton's a pretty good source.
- Dr. Everett Piper: Fair enough, fair enough. So the point is the paradox of discipline and freedom. That if there is no fence, you're not going to enjoy the playground, you're not going to be free to enjoy it to its fullest. Because your parents will be policing you, haranguing you and yelling at you and say, stay in the middle, don't go over there. Or you'll run out in the road and get killed. And either extreme is not the freedom that the playground was intended to give.
- So this argument in the book is simple. It's this, do you want to be free? Do you want intellectual freedom and academic freedom on the college campus? Or do you want to be controlled by ideological fascism? A fascist was a Roman bundle of sticks bound together so tightly that it couldn't be broken. And it's out of that word we get fascism. It's commonality. You must agree, you must be one of us. If you don't think like we think, and if you don't believe like we believe, we will crush you. We will break you, you're verboten, you're expelled. That's what you see on the college campus today because they've lost the big laws, they've lost the truth of Christ and the truth of Scripture, and now they're controlled by the fascists, the bundle of sticks that's used to crush dissent.
- Christians can step into this debate and offer our culture true and lasting liberty and freedom in the words of Jesus. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Learn what's true and you will be free. But if you imbibe lies and believe them, then you're going to be huddled up in the middle of the playground with people yelling at you and saying, "Stay over here. You cannot move. We're demanding that you stay put because we will crush you if you don't." Do you want freedom or do you want fascism? Christianity and a true conservative view of the world conserves those truths and perpetuates freedom rather than controlling people.
- Dr. James Dobson: Another illustration of that is Royal Gorge, which is just unbelievably high. You go there and you shrink toward the middle. If there were not a fence on either side of the Royal Gorge, you would never walk over it. Or if you did, you'd walk right down the middle because there is safety and security and limits, defined limits. More and more, our culture is characterized by the absence of limits. Do anything you want, there are no consequences.
- Dr. Everett Piper: But the consequence of living that way is that you end up living in bondage and slavery. Either you're bound to somebody else's rules and regulations, or you're held in slavery to your own sin. It's the paradox of discipline and freedom. With laws, you get liberty and with fences, you get freedom.
- Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Piper, I've been on the air for 40 years and I've never had an opportunity to interview you before. Of course, I'm a lot older than you are. But what a



pleasure it's been to talk about some of these great ideas today. I'll end with this one. Is there a hope for today's kids? Parents who are out there and they've been listening to what we've had to say today and they have four, five, six, eight year old children, and they look ahead and they're scared because of where we appear to be going. Is there hope for us?

Dr. Everett Piper: I'll quote my good friend and yours, Jim Garlow of Skyline Wesleyan Church in San Diego. Jim Garlow fought for Proposition 8 and he won, he prevailed. I called him the day afterwards and I congratulated him. I said, "Jim, without your leadership, a traditional marriage would not have prevailed in California. Good for you." And he said, "Everett, you don't know the half of it. It's been quite a fight."

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, his life was threatened.

Dr. Everett Piper: His life was threatened, he had to have armed guards at the church and at his house. But then he paused and he said, "What a wonderful time to be alive."

Dr. James Dobson: Did he say that?

Dr. Everett Piper: What a wonderful time to be alive. Why did Jim Garlow say that? Because he knows the end of the story.

Dr. James Dobson: That's where I met him in the midst of that, and I respect him very, very highly.

Dr. Everett Piper: Is there hope? Absolutely. What a wonderful time to be alive, for such a time is this. The colors are bold, we don't live in pastel times. They're very bold distinctions. And the truth of Christ and the truth of Scripture, if it's presented with confidence and clarity, if it's presented with a spine and with courage, we win. We know the end of the story. But we have to ground our worldview and the truth of Christ and the truth of Scripture. And then trust God to honor that as we speak His word clearly to a culture that's like a dry sponge. They're just waiting to soak up some water. So let's give it to them.

Dr. James Dobson: Is their revival coming?

Dr. Everett Piper: We just had 40 kids get saved on my campus. They raised their hand and got saved a couple weeks ago in a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting and we had 35 of them get baptized in the campus pond. Is the revival coming?

Dr. James Dobson: It still happens.

Dr. Everett Piper: It's still happening, and it's happening right on my campus right now. Because of these ideas, because of the truth of Christ and the truth of Scripture.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's work together to bring it about.

Dr. Everett Piper: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you, sir for being our guest.

Dr. Everett Piper: And I'm honored. Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Even as our culture wrestles with truth, God is still powerfully at work in the next generation. Friend, you've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a conversation about standing firm for truth in education featuring Dr. Dobson and his special in-studio guest, Dr. Everett Piper. Dr. Piper reminds us that when we stand firmly on biblical principles, and speak with clarity and courage, we can help shape a generation that's hungry for something real. Now if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you'd like to share these important insights with a friend, visit [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk) or access us through the Family Talk app.

In addition to parts one and two of this conversation, you'll also find information about Dr. Piper's book, *Not a Day Care*. Again use the Family Talk app or go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). Speaking of apps if you're looking for a practical way to strengthen your family, we have partnered with the Bible app by YouVersion to bring you free, easy to use reading plans that fit your busy schedule. Each plan offers Dr. Dobson's trusted insights on topics like marriage, parenting, and family life delivered right to your phone or tablet, whichever mobile device you prefer. Ready to get started? Simply open the Bible app on that mobile device, search for Dr. James Dobson and discover resources that can transform your family one day at a time.

Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute we are committed to speaking biblical truth without compromise even when it might spark a controversy or offend somebody. These daily broadcasts depend on friends like you who understand that families need a trusted voice who won't shy away from God's timeless principles and for nearly fifty years, that trusted voice has been Dr. James Dobson. If you believe America needs this kind of clear, uncompromising voice please stand with us. Your tax-deductible donation of any amount helps us continue to bring clear, unwavering truth for families across the nation. To make a secure donation online, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). If you'd like to give a gift over the phone, give us a call at 877-732-6825. And if you'd prefer to send your donation through the U.S. Postal Service, our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949.

Well I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and all of us here at Family Talk, thanks so much for helping us continue to speak truth into a culture that's more interested in comfort than conviction. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another bold edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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