



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Avoiding Monday Morning Atheism – Part 1

Guest(s): Doug Spada

Air Date: January 9, 2025

Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we're going to be exploring a thought-provoking question with our host, psychologist and best-selling author, Dr. James Dobson. And here's the question, have you ever felt like your faith takes a backseat when you go back to work on Monday morning, like God somehow gets left at the door at the start of the work week? Well, our guest today here on Family Talk calls this being a Monday morning atheist and he has insights that might surprise you about this phenomenon. He's found that many believers struggle with connecting their Sunday worship to their weekday work life. And today, Dr. Dobson will be talking with workplace ministry expert, Doug Spada, about transforming our view of work from just a job into a divine appointment.

Doug is a decorated Navy veteran and the founder of WorkLife, Inc. He spent years developing innovative resources to help people experience God in their workplace, and his research has uncovered fascinating insights about why Christians often compartmentalize their faith when they step back into the office. So whether you're wrestling with a career challenge or you simply just want to do more to honor God in your daily work, you are going to enjoy what we're about to get into on the topic of avoiding Monday morning atheism here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone and welcome to Family Talk. I'm your host, Dr. James Dobson, and we're going to be talking about a subject that we've approached from different angles on different occasions, but we're going to be talking about living out your faith in the workplace, what it means, what God wants from us, and how attitudes toward, especially Monday of all things, Monday, the day when there's so much depression for people. Suicide is more common on that day and there's a lot to talk about here.

Our guest is Doug Spada, who's written a book called *Monday Morning Atheist: Why We Switch God Off at Work*. And we'll see what he has in mind. Doug joins us from Atlanta where he lives with his wife, Tricia and their two boys, Ryan and Braden.

Doug Spada: Braden's 11 and Ryan is 20.

Dr. James Dobson: You're a decorated Navy veteran and founder and CEO of WorkLife, Incorporated, which I want to get this right, develops innovative resources to help people experience God while at work. Appreciate you being here.

Doug Spada: Yeah, thank you, Dr. Dobson. It's great to be here. I'm excited to actually talk about this subject matter that is so critical to people's daily life. It's very, very difficult to actually serve God and to honor God if this place that we spend over 60% of our life goes unaddressed. And for most of the Body of Christ, we have trouble on the Mondays, like you said, and we struggle, we switch God off. And we celebrate God on Sunday, but then sometimes let Him go on Monday. So glad to be here to talk with you about that.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, the name of the organization that you represent is called WorkLife.

Doug Spada: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And how does it function? What is its mission assignment?

Doug Spada: Yeah, WorkLife is actually a catalyst organization, so we are at a very, very critical time in our nation. We have an open door that's just amazing. And so our purpose is actually to ignite a Monday revolution. This is helping people fight this epidemic of Monday morning atheism and step into their culture. And so, Dr. Dobson, I was thinking about this, that not many people know this either. One of the greatest spiritual awakenings that ever happened in U.S. history actually started and was sustained in the workplace. In 1857, the United States was at a place, Black Monday just happened, the stock market was in trouble, banks were failing, railroads were failing.

And in New York City, one block from Wall Street, there was a gentleman named Jeremiah Lanphier. Jeremiah Lanphier, he was a worker, but his heart was so broken. People were out of work, they were roaming around New York City, and he went to his church. This is a perfect example of business and people in the workplace partnering with the church. He went to his church. It was a Dutch Reformed church, one block from Wall Street on Fulton Street, and he partnered with his church and so he was in work and business and stuff, so he did what any worker or business would do, he put these little flyers up all over New York City for a noontime prayer meeting.

Dr. James Dobson: This was the beginning of the Great Awakening.

Doug Spada: That's right. And so what happened is Jeremiah Lanphier published these and nobody showed up at first, he had a crisis of belief and I think six people showed up. And they just kept praying and praying. He didn't know what else to do. He was just like, "God, please, man, bring revival to our city and to our country and stuff." Within a month, Dr. Dobson, 10,000 people were showing up. It became

so extraordinary that all the businesses in New York City shut down. I mean, you would go to them and they would see, "Shut down for noontime prayer." It spread to Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and within one year, a million people came to Christ. Now, the population of the U.S. was only about 30 million at the time, so that would be equivalent of 10 million people coming to Christ in the U.S.

Dr. James Dobson: I have an article in my file from the Denver Area. I don't know what the newspaper was, but it describes the fact that there were these noontime prayer events and that it was an enormous outpouring of people seeking God.

Doug Spada: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: I mean, wouldn't it be incredible if that happened today?

Doug Spada: People would come into New York Harbor and cussing sailors would just start weeping and crying. I mean, there was really no preaching. It was just the Spirit of God and people humbling themselves and stuff. It's so awesome is that that started in the workplace and got spread through the workplace. So we believe, Dr. Billy Graham said this a while back, that he believes the next great spiritual awakening is coming through the workplace, because that's where we spend over 60% of our time. And you can see, everything we've discussed, you can see where the enemy of our soul, if there's one area he can rob, he robs the family very well, as you know.

Dr. James Dobson: Of course.

Doug Spada: But he can rob people of their understanding their destiny and why they were created and the stories of, and just like we just talked about this revival. And so yeah, Dr. Graham said that he believes the next great spiritual awakening is happening through the workplace. So we're about trying to fuel that awakening and we see it-

Dr. James Dobson: How does that happen, Doug?

Doug Spada: I think it happens one person at a time first of all, it happens by churches understanding, and actually we've seen churches do some amazing things where they start preaching the theology of work. People start understanding that, maybe they have discipleship groups. One thing we like to challenge people to do is to take the Monday challenge. If they go to worklife.org, they can actually find something called the Monday Switch, and so they can take six Mondays. So our little pitch to them, Dr. Dobson is just, can you trust God with just six Mondays?

And so the Monday Challenge leads them through a process of actually working with God, not just for God and not without God obviously in an atheistic kind of way, but how do you actually know? It says, "He walked with God and he was a

righteous man and he walked with God," but how do you actually walk with God? It's really exciting times in the workplace and stuff, and I think that people understanding their rightful and biblical position in the workplace and actually assuming that is very critical in our time.

Dr. James Dobson: Is that possible in a highly antagonistic workplace?

Doug Spada: It is. Yes, it is.

Dr. James Dobson: When there's just no evidence that God is there at all?

Doug Spada: Yeah, but when you're in a dark place, I had a situation in California once. This is a little story speaking of this. I was trying to serve God and I was running my company and I was trying to do a business deal with a company up in Newport Beach, California. And so what happened is, through this negotiation, I was seeing money. I saw, it was like, "Oh my gosh, I got to do this deal." And God was telling me to turn away from it. Well, I sort of listened to Him. I changed some clauses in a contract and I partially obeyed Him. And everybody knows probably who is listening that partial obedience is actually disobedience, right?

Dr. James Dobson: Right.

Doug Spada: And so within a short period of time, this company stole a million dollars from us because I disobeyed God. And so that was a really dark place, and I should have recognized it, but I just did not. A lot of people have trouble hearing the voice of the Lord and obeying in the midst of the work environment. I mean, you got pressure, stress. When it gets darker, man, there's also the lights shine brighter too. So I think this is a time for the Body of Christ to step forward. Most of the Body of Christ is working, Dr. Dobson. So if we don't deal with this issue of work, we can't just switch off for 60% of the time where we're called to influence.

Where do people have their greatest influence? Their family, obviously, but where else? Their work, all these people that they rub shoulders with. And listen, they're speaking, most workers are speaking the Indigenous language of law or medicine, or economics, or whatever field of practice they're in. So anyway, and you and I may not be able to go into certain environments, so we have to equip the saints for the work of ministry and help them walk out their calls for Christ wherever God has called them.

Dr. James Dobson: Doug, can you tell us more about that situation? I mean, losing a million bucks, what happened? Did your company go bankrupt? Is there anything else we can learn from that?

Doug Spada: Yeah, I think the biggest thing to learn from that was not so much the money or anything like that. It was the way that God redeemed the situation. Many months later, one of the gentlemen that orchestrated that actually asked for

forgiveness. I said, "I forgive you." And so what happened is I just started loving on him and he ended up coming to Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: Really?

Doug Spada: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Did he admit any wrongdoing?

Doug Spada: Oh, yeah. And there were some resolutions in the courts and things like that, but the main important thing was his soul. So I did this in Lynchburg, Virginia a few weeks ago, and I told the same story and I said, "How much is one soul worth? Would you pay \$1 million for your soul? Does God think your soul is worth \$1 million?" It is an interesting kind of thought when you start thinking, "Wow, that's interesting, man. What I want somebody-"

Dr. James Dobson: Did you get the money back?

Doug Spada: Part of it. I mean, there's the whole court system and kind of going back and forth and different things like that.

Dr. James Dobson: Are you friends with that individual?

Doug Spada: Yes. Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you play a role in him coming to Christ?

Doug Spada: Yes. Oh, that's what happened. I mean, once we started talking and I started loving on him, I'd come up and visit him and we'd talk about the Bible and just all kinds of stuff. And then in his office by himself, man, Jesus sort of revealed himself to him and he gave his life to Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: You weren't angry?

Doug Spada: No, it was an extraordinary thing to see that happen.

Dr. James Dobson: How did you start thinking about this? What led you to feeling that there was a ministry here that really people needed help with Monday, an attitude toward not just Monday, but the workplace?

Doug Spada: Yes. That came from my own brokenness. So it wasn't just an idea that came to me. It happened through trying to find solutions. Why did God create work? I ran a company. I had a lot of different things. I lost my family in the midst of work and I was searching for solutions and answers. What does the Bible have to say about work?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, what does it say? Summarize it for us. What is a biblical theological perspective on work?

Doug Spada: Yeah. I'll put it in a one-liner here real fast that work is an actual spiritual act of worship to God. He created work, he created man in his image. We are workers and work's not a waste. There is no work that's a waste if it's done for the Lord. I don't care what it is and stuff. So, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: It's honorable, isn't it?

Doug Spada: It's honorable, yes. No matter what it is, I mean, if we're called to actually sweep the floors over here and we're doing it unto the Lord, it brings a smile to His face. So work is not just a platform for people to go in all the time just to do evangelism or some other thing. It's the work itself that brings honor to God. Does that make sense?

Dr. James Dobson: Of course it does.

Doug Spada: The work itself does. So even if nobody else is watching, it's how you do the work and the excellence of your work that brings honor to God.

Dr. James Dobson: I've tried to say to the organizations that I've led where there are a large number of people doing different jobs, that were not on a hierarchy. I'm not sitting up here as the boss and that I have all the authority and I make all the decisions, and I have all the fun. And beyond this, everybody else is subservient. I want every person who works in an organization that I have anything to do with to realize that they are important, they have a mission, they have a purpose. And if they don't do that job, something will not be completed that needs to be done, and there should be honor for everybody-

Doug Spada: That's right, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: ... each person, because God has put them there. I really feel that way. Everybody who works here at Family Talk is here because they have a mission.

Doug Spada: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: The Lord has sent them here to do that job. There's nothing menial, there's nothing disrespectful about it, and we need to respect each other. That's a biblical view, is it not?

Doug Spada: That's right, it is. It's also another thing that's important, Dr. Dobson, is that it's not just for organizations. I mean, there's a lot of people that work for themselves, self-employed. So it's not about where you're doing the work. And so this is where it affects the family a lot. There's a lot of work that's done, or let's take students for example. What is a student's primary work? It's their school at that moment. So people that work at home or mothers that work, I

mean raising a child, I think we all know that is a load of work and it's honorable. So I think for all those stay-at-home moms and the wives that are listening to, it's very, very important to understand that your work is valuable to God.

Dr. James Dobson: You were mentioning earlier when we're off mic that there are more than 90 million people in America who don't have work. For them, finding a job is the assignment. That is the work. It's not that they sit home and watch daytime television. They have a job to do, which is to go out and make themselves available in the workplace. We all have work to do, right?

Doug Spada: That's right. Yes, everybody does. And I'm just thinking about the family here for a second. The earlier we teach our children the biblical meaning of work, we won't have to keep repeating this over and over. We allow our kids to grow up not understanding why God created work, and they just think it's a job and we keep repeating the same thing. So teach your children early and often that work is honorable and you're called by God to work. We're never more like God, we're never more like God.

Dr. James Dobson: That's absolutely true, but you're working against human nature. The natural view of a child is that work, it's to get out of, work is misery, work is punishment, work is something that's imposed on you. But the truth of the matter is you have to teach children that work is honorable and what they're doing at home, even if it's taking out the trash. This is a God assignment.

Doug Spada: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Do it unto the Lord.

Doug Spada: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Do everything you do unto the Lord.

Doug Spada: Yeah. And I think children obviously are going to take the key from their mother and father, so they're going to watch how we actually are responding to work and how we process work. They overhear our conversations about work issues and other people and stuff. So I think if we get our thinking right, I think that our children will pick that up.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, going back to the book that you've written, I made reference to it in the introduction. The title of it is *Monday Morning Atheist: Why We Switch God Off at Work*. This implies that you go to church on the weekends, Sunday or Saturday night, whatever it is, and you worship God there. And then you get up on Monday morning and first of all, you don't want to be doing what you're doing and you dread going back to that workplace, and you have bad attitude about it, and you don't comprehend that work is an assignment from God, and

he has something He wants you to do there. For one thing, to minister to each other and to care for one another that you're working with.

Doug Spada: Yes. Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: But the other one is to see this as a divine appointment. I believe that's one of your themes and that the Monday morning atheist doesn't get that.

Doug Spada: That's right, yeah. Sunday's like a divine commissioning. But yeah, that's the story of my life. I mean, Sunday, that was the spiritual time, and then I wanted to apply my faith at work and understand that, but I just sometimes accidentally, I just, maybe two hours, and we all know what that feels like. You're two hours into your work day and you're like, "Where's God in this," right?

Dr. James Dobson: Clock watchers. Nothing worse than that.

Doug Spada: Yeah, that's right.

Dr. James Dobson: "Oh my goodness, I got two more hours here."

Doug Spada: That's right. That's when you know that something's wrong with the way you're viewing work or the purpose of work. So, yeah. But it's exciting. I think instead of just talking about the stuff that's kind of the downer, I mean, when you can experience God through your work. And actually, I mean just like if you think about some of your greatest spiritual encounters with God, imagine looking at work that way and actually being able to go to work and actually saying, "Okay, God, let's go to work." You're getting up on Monday, "Thank God it's Monday." It's not, "Thank God it's Friday," but, "Thank God it's Monday."

And we approach work and, yes, work's hard. We got to deal with people, got to deal with a lot of stuff. But I think if we can keep God first, keep Him front of mind and know that our work is actually worship to Him, knowing that He is a worker, He's actually working in and through us. We're carrying the Kingdom of God with us as we come into those environments. So even if you walk into workplace that you think is a dark environment, just know that the Kingdom of God is actually, it has to wake up in that place. You're bringing God into that place by showing up.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you haven't always felt the way you do now about work.

Doug Spada: No.

Dr. James Dobson: And you kind of walked a dark path early on. Apparently, your marriage was not going well, and eventually you separated. Thank God that He's brought you back together. How many years you've been since you recovered each other?

Doug Spada: Trisha and I have been married 31 years. That happened about 18 years ago. Yeah, that was very painful. But it's one of those things where you're thankful for it, but you don't want to do it again. You know what I mean?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Doug Spada: You're like, God really reorganized our life and spoke to the deep wounds and the pain in our life and so on.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, that domestic difficulty spilled over into the workplace wherever you were working.

Doug Spada: Yeah. And I think that's something I think for the audience to really understand that, to quote another friend of Family Talk, Ken Eldred, "We have to live an integrated life." It's not separated over here. That's the core of integrity. So you can't separate family over here and work over here, and recreation and church over here. I mean, they all bleed together. It's almost, we write in the book something. It's like the old TV dinners. You remember the old TV dinners?

Dr. James Dobson: Too well.

Doug Spada: Yeah, the peas and you would have this and then you would cook them, and I don't know if they got better. I haven't eaten one for a long time, but the stuff would sort of bleed over into each other. The cherry juice would get over into the peas and stuff, but that's honestly, the way God wants to deliver life in an integrated kind of way, so work affects family and family affects work. You don't just check it at the door and stuff. And anybody that's been preoccupied and distracted and not able to focus on their kids or their family know what that's like. The communication breaks down and things like that, so they all affect each other.

Dr. James Dobson: Doug, I hate to interrupt this conversation because obviously I'm enjoying it so much. I appreciate your bringing that subject to us for a fresh look at what it really means to serve God in the workplace, and I thank you for writing this book and for calling it to our attention. You flew all the way from Atlanta, and I appreciate you being here, but we're on a roll. Let's just pick up where we leave off today and talk some more about this matter of what God would have us do and the attitude He would have us bring to the workplace.

Doug Spada: Yes, I've loved it and I would love to do that. Let's do it again.

Dr. James Dobson: The title of the book again is *Monday Morning Atheist: Why We Switch God Off at Work and How You Can Fix It*. Doug Spada and your co-author, Dave Scott, thank you for being with us. Tell Tricia we appreciate her allowing you to come here. And next time, bring her with you.

Doug Spada: Yeah, thank you. Appreciate everything you've done, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh:

You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a practical conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and his guest, Doug Spada, about finding God's purpose in your work. As we continue this journey into the new year, I hope that today's broadcast has given you fresh insights to help make this your best year ever.

Now, if you missed any part of today's program or you want to share it with somebody who needs this message, visit us at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Once you're there, you'll also find the link for Doug Spada's book called *Monday Morning Atheist*, and be sure to join us again next time for part two of this important conversation when Doug returns to discuss how we can truly experience God's presence in our daily work.

Now, in closing, want to express our deepest thanks to our faithful supporters who make this ministry possible. Your consistent generosity allows us to reach countless families with godly wisdom and encouragement. During these changing times, your support ensures that this source of biblical truth remains strong and available to all who seek it. So, remember, you can make a secure donation when you go to drjamesdobson.org. You can give a gift over the phone when you call 877-732-6825 or write to us at P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh inviting you to join us again next time as we continue to discover how to see work as a divine appointment. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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