



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Discovering the Blessings of Scripture

Guest(s): Dr. James Tour

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello, everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, a radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust, for the family you love. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we're going to get into a topic of conversation about have you ever wondered what truly successful people consider to be their greatest achievements? Today we're going to hear from someone whose answer just might surprise you.

Our guest here on Family Talk is Dr. James Tour and he stands at the pinnacle of scientific achievement. As a synthetic organic chemist, with over 450 research publications and 50 patents, he's ranked among the top 10 chemists in the world, and yet when asked about the source of his success, Dr. Tour points not to his scientific discoveries or academic honors, but to something far different.

We're about to hear a presentation from Dr. Tour that Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley had the opportunity to attend. And Dr. Dobson, speaking of success, did you know that if you search a popular online retailer, you'll find over 15,000 self-help books dedicated simply to how to find success in life?

Dr. James Dobson: That really doesn't surprise me because in our culture, there's just a tremendous emphasis placed on happiness and pleasure and material success. And if you read the Book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon tells us that the temporal pleasures and earthly riches and superficial accomplishments are not going to satisfy in the long run. It just seems to me that we've got an imbalance here that somebody ought to address, and indeed, today somebody will.

Well, I'm excited about the message that we're going to hear today because I did have the pleasure just a few months ago of hearing a marvelous speaker named Dr. James Tour. To call this man brilliant would be a gross understatement. He's a synthetic organic chemist who earned his Ph.D. in synthetic, organic, and organometallic chemistry from Purdue University, and don't ask me what that is. He has over 450 research publications and 50 patents. He's founded three different companies in his field of expertise. He's also been ranked as one of the top 10 chemists in the world over the past decade.

I have heard it said that we should not be surprised if one day we hear that Dr. Tour has won a Nobel Prize. I believe that.

Roger Marsh: Well, that's quite the glowing introduction indeed, and I'm truly excited to hear what such a remarkable man considers to be the definition of true success. So let's listen to this presentation from Dr. James Tour with a nod to Dr. James Dobson, starting right now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. James Tour: First of all, I want to thank many of you who have placed things in my life, in my wife's life. The Dobsons spoke so much into our lives. When we were newly married, I didn't know what to do, and anything that James Dobson told me, I did. And when I didn't follow through particularly, I would tell my wife, "Well, I'm James Tour, not James Dobson, but I'm trying."

Dr. James Dobson: Not even Shirley does that.

Dr. James Tour: I feel honored to be able to share with you today. It is amazing the way this service has gone and how it dovetails with the things that I wanted to share with you.

I want to start out and tell you a little bit about my coming to faith. I was 18 years old. I was in college and I was in the laundry room, just the first load of laundry that I was doing, so early on in my freshman year, and a young man was in there. And he was a quarterback on the Syracuse University football team and we got to talking, and I asked him if he wanted to play pro ball when he was done with school.

He says, "Oh, no, I'm not good enough for that." I said, "Well, what do you want to do?" He said, "Oh, well maybe a missionary." "Missionary? It's 1977, you don't need missionaries today." He said, "Would you mind if I told you something about Jesus Christ?" I said, "Sure, you can tell me whatever you want."

So he came to my room and he had me read some verses, and the first verse that I read from the Bible was Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And I looked at him, I said, "I'm not a sinner." He said, "We're all sinners." I said, "I've never killed anybody. How can I be a sinner?"

Then he had me open to Matthew 5:28 and he had me read it and it says, "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." And it was as if I had been punched right in the chest because from the age of 14, I had been addicted to pornography. I worked in a gas station on the highway going into New York City where there's a gas station on each side of the road, and the businessmen would throw out their magazines on Friday nights before they'd go home for the weekend and I had an entire stash of magazines. There was no internet, of course, but the magazines are what brought me into this.

And to those of you that may have struggled with this in your lives, you know how compelling that is. And at the age of 18, I knew that I was addicted to pornography, and the words of this man, Jesus Christ, came crashing through in my life and the reality of sin in my life all of a sudden became real to me.

Then he had me read in Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And then I read this verse out of Romans 10:9 that, "If you confess with your mouth that 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God has raised you from the dead, you shall be saved."

And I started attending a Bible study through the Navigators campus ministry there on campus. And on November 7th, 1977, I was all alone in my room, room 1812 of the Lawrinson dormitory. And I don't know what prompted me to do this, but I got down on my knees. It had never been demonstrated to me in Christianity or in Judaism. And I got down on my knees and I said, "Father, forgive me because I am a sinner, and come into my life."

There was this presence that filled the room and I opened my eyes to see who was there and I didn't see anybody, but it was as if somebody was standing there, and there was this cleansing that was happening, and this burden of sin that I had been carrying all of a sudden lifted up and I started to weep uncontrollably and I didn't want to get up off my knees. I didn't want to leave the presence that was there and I felt cleansed. God came into my life on November 7th, 1977.

I didn't tell anyone. I didn't know what to do. What's this kid from New York City who's a Jewish kid, what's he going to say? And I went and I was one day walking on the dormitory floor and the guy who had shared Christ with me, he says, "Jim, have you received Jesus in your heart?" I said, "I think I have. Why do you ask?" He said, "You haven't stopped smiling for weeks. Something's different." Something really happened to me on that day.

And I said to him, "How can I stay close to God? How can I remain close? I don't want to leave the presence that I felt that day." And he said to me a very simple thing. He said, "You know, I've asked Christians that seem to have drifted away from the Lord, and I asked them, 'Were you reading your Bible every day when you drifted away?' And they said, 'No.'" And then he said, "I've asked other Christians who seem to have such fellowship with God, 'Were you reading your Bible every day?' And they said, 'Yes.'"

And for me, that was very simple. It was digital. You read your Bible every day, you remain close to the Lord. You don't, you won't. That, I could understand.

So I started to pick up the Bible, and shortly after that, I picked up this pattern of reading the Bible from beginning to end. I started to take this Word of God and internalize it, and I've seen the value in this, the value of taking this Word and

putting it in my heart, and I see the blessing that comes. The Word of God is so specific, it does not speak in generalities.

Psalm 1, which we just heard, "How blessed is the man who doesn't walk in the council of the wicked or stand in the path of sinners or sit in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in His law, he meditates day and night and he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in a season, and its leaf does not wither, in whatever he does, he prospers."

There is a connection between day and night meditation on Scriptures and the prosperity that God has for us, which is much, much richer than money. Being in Houston the last 13 years, I've had the pleasure of meeting many very rich oil traders, and I'll tell you, they want what I have and I have no desire to have what they have because the richness that comes in Christ, what He has done in my life, in my family, the treasure that I have, I prayed when I was an undergraduate that God would bring the right wife into my life and He did. Never, never could I have seen what was coming, the treasure that I had in that woman. 30 years I've been married. I have never heard her say a bad thing about anyone. I mean, how can a human being be like this? I mean, this is the treasure I have.

I was struggling in freshman chemistry. I'd been thrown into the honors program because I was a chemistry major and they never should have done that. I was struggling. I gave my heart to the Lord on November 7th, 1977. I got a B+ at the end of that semester. I ended up taking every graduate course as an undergraduate in organic chemistry and being number one in every class I took and ended up being the number one student. I know what God did in my life. I know the prosperity that came in my life.

You take the Word of God, it is very specific, it says, "You meditate on the law of the Lord day and night," day and night. There's Scriptures that say either "day and night" or "every day," every day. There may be a blessing for three times a week. There may not be. I don't know. But there is no such description for it in the Bible. It is daily. It is very specific. He would not have said it if it were not true.

Joshua 1:8, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success." God will prosper you. He may have for you to die next week, but you will prosper in that because for us, death is victory.

September 3rd, 1993, I was invited back to Purdue to give a seminar. I had just become a tenured professor and I was invited back and I was alone in the hotel room and I knew I had to give a chemistry lecture that day. And as I was praying, I read this verse and it says, "Truly," and it's in Matthew 21:21, "Truly I say to

you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to this fig tree, but if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen."

And I said, "Father, you are raising my faith." And I knew that in the audience would be my professor who I trained under and he's a Japanese man. And when I was a graduate student, no matter what I ever did, no matter how good the result, I would bring it to him. He would say, "Pretty good for your level," and I never got past the man's waist. And I knew that he would be there in the audience and that his mentor, H.C. Brown, who had won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1979, would be in the audience.

And I said, "Lord, I pray that this lecture is the very best lecture ever in that department. You have raised my faith, Lord. I pray that it is." Then I said, "Well, how will I know if it is? I mean, the department's a hundred years old. How am I going to know?" And I said, "Lord, if it's the best lecture, I pray that my professor says that it was a super seminar." That's not a word I heard him use, but I said, "I pray that he would say it was a super seminar. None of it's for-your-level stuff."

Well, when I got done with that seminar, I knew that God had blessed. And as soon as I got done, that little Japanese man sitting on the front row stood up and he said, "Super! Super!"

I stepped down and I walked up to H.C. Brown who had won the Nobel Prize in 1979, and I shook his hand and I said, "Thank you for coming to the seminar today." And he held onto my hand. He says, "I got to tell you something. That was the best seminar I've ever seen in my life." I said, "That's very kind of you to say that." And in typical Nobel Prize-winning fashion, he said, "I'm not saying it to be kind. I really mean it." God confirms His Word.

One day I was upset with a colleague and I was just a young professor and God was blessing my program, and he was struggling like many young professors. And so he started to say things about me and it really started to get at me. And I went one day to his office to knock on his door to really just give it to him. So I knocked on the door and he wasn't in. And then God began to speak to me from Luke 6:27 and 28. It was a chapter that I was memorizing with my children. It says, "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies and do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you and pray for those who mistreat you."

And God began to speak to my heart and I said, "Okay, Lord, I will pray for his work that God will bless his work." And I started praying for him and God started to bless his work. He got a big National Institutes of Health grant. His group started growing and things were going great for him, and he went from having a little metal desk to having a good desk and a carpeted office, and his program got so good that about two years later, he got an offer from another university. He accepted the offer and he left and I was so happy.

You know, God showed me that I want to deal with problems. God says, "Yes, I can deal with that problem, but I have to deal with you first." If you take these Scriptures and make them your daily meditation, God will do amazing things through your life.

When a student stands up to give their final presentation in the university, their Ph.D. defense, I stand up and I'm supposed to summarize their four or five years of research in a few lines and then turn the stage over to them and say, "This is now yours. You will now become the Ph.D." Moses summarized 40 years of instruction. That's like 10 Ph.D.'s worth of instruction. That's a long time. How do you summarize 40 years? What will you say to summarize 40 years of instruction?

This is what he says in Deuteronomy 32:45-47, "When Moses is finished speaking all these words to all Israel, he said to them, 'Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully. Even all the words of this law, for it is not an idle word for you, but indeed, it is your life.'" This is how Moses summarized it, "This is not an idle word for you. Indeed, it is your life." This is our life. You make this word your meditation and you will see God working in your life.

Psalms 112. I did prison ministry in a maximum security prison for 10 years, and I would go in there and anytime I couldn't get through to a man, I would say, "Do you have children that I can pray for?" And immediately he would catch them because everybody wants God's best for their children. "Praise the Lord, how blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth. The generation of the upright will be blessed."

If not for you, then for your children. You meditate on this word and for your children, in Psalm 112, they will be blessed. Your generation will be blessed if you will meditate on the Scriptures. For your children's sake, do this. This is God's promise. He will follow through on it.

I understand that in careers, people have to work very hard. I understand that. But I beg you, do not trash your marriages for your career.

When I was an assistant professor, I worked very hard, and in 2007, I won some award from the American Chemical Society and they asked me to just summarize my career. And I was writing an article for the Journal of Organic Chemistry about my career and I'm going to read to you a portion from that article where I was talking about my assistant professor days. "I submitted 37 proposals in my first 36 months as a faculty member and most of those as a single principal investigator since collaborative proposals were less common in those days." 37 proposals, that's more than one a month for three years.

So I know what it is to work hard, but you know, the other thing I wrote in that article is this, "On the days of the receiving the declination of funding letters from the NIH, sadness certainly followed. I would always call my wife Shireen because she was repeatedly there to reassure me of my self-worth and my children were still there to call me Daddy. So I endeavored to dwell only momentarily on the harsh and sometimes even unnecessarily personal comments of the reviewers. My family has seen me through." You treasure that. I know what it is to work hard.

Even to this day, I wake up very early and I have my own devotions. At five o'clock, I bring Shireen a cup of hot tea and her Bible. She has her time at 5:30, the kids get up. We only have one who's not gone to college, one left at home, and he still gets up. And 5:30, we meet as we have. And since the day my kids were born, we took them right out of the crib and they came to family devotions. And I read from... first thing we would do is we would practice our Scripture together that we were memorizing together. And the little ones, I would say, "The Lord is my," and all they would have to say is, "shepherd." Started it easy and then before long, it's much easier for them to memorize these Scriptures. And then we would memorize Scriptures together and we'd all get on our knees and pray for each other.

And then I'd leave at 6:00 in the morning and I'd come home at 6:00 in the evening, so I would work a 12-hour day, and we'd have dinner together and I'd start putting the kids to bed, starting with the youngest on up through the oldest. And so I know what it is to work hard, but you don't need to trash your family along the way.

So again, I leave you with this, my coming to faith, what the Scriptures did in my life. This is the prescription for thriving, realizing that God blesses us all differently. I don't know what God has for you, but He does. And you will be greatly blessed. And if you struggle, if you struggle with sexual disorders, sexual problems, I don't judge you. Not at all. I have been there. November 7th, 1977, God delivered me from pornography. I never was drawn back to it a single day after that.

That is miraculous. That doesn't normally happen that way. But God used that verse to convict me. He used the liberation from that to show me of His power. But I have many other struggles that I had on that day that I dealt with for years that I continue to deal with. But there is a way through this, there is a way through this, and so I will stand with you in this. Let's pray.

Abba, thank You so much for Your mercies, for Your grace. Father, I pray that You touch and impress upon each heart here to take the Word of God, the Scriptures, and make it their daily meditation and to take hold of the Scriptures, the truth of the Scriptures, that they will be greatly blessed as a result. And it's in His name, I offer this to You. Amen.

Roger Marsh:

Words of wisdom and a beautiful prayer to close out today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, featuring our special guest, Dr. James Tour. Here is a man who has experienced incredible worldly success in life, and yet at the end of the day, he says the Scriptures have been the key to every single blessing he has received. We're going to hear some closing remarks from Dr. Dobson in just a moment, so please stay with us for those.

First though, if you'd like to revisit any part of today's broadcast or if you'd like to share it with a friend or family member, you can access the complete audio on our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk, or you can also get it from the Family Talk app as well.

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And now, here once again is Dr. James Dobson with some closing thoughts to wrap up today's program.

Dr. James Dobson:

In a world where so many people are absolutely lost, they're chasing after illusory goals, not that we should not try to accomplish things in our lives, as I said at the top of the program, or to meet the financial needs of our family and the other things that drive us and motivate us, but in the end, what will matter is knowing who you are and who made you and what He wants you to do, and whether or not we're held accountable for our behavior and our actions and whether there is life after death, and if so, how do I attain it?

Answering those eternal questions will make the difference between simply living and chasing after that which is temporal and in becoming harmonious with the great God of the universe and His son, Jesus Christ.

Roger Marsh:

Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for spending a part of your day with us. Hope you'll join us again next time right here for another 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.