



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Nehemiah Code – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. O.S. Hawkins

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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 to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we're joined by a beloved voice in Christian ministry, Dr. O.S. Hawkins, former senior pastor of the Historic First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. After many, many years in the pulpit, Dr. Hawkins followed God's call to lead GuideStone Financial Resources where he has helped transform the lives of retired pastors and their widows through their Mission:Dignity program. Now you may know Dr. Hawkins from his popular "Code" series of devotional books including *The Joshua Code*, *The Jesus Code*, and our topic for today, *The Nehemiah Code*. In today's conversation with Dr. Dobson, Dr. Hawkins will share an encouraging word about new beginnings, drawing wisdom from the biblical story of Nehemiah. Whether you're looking to rebuild relationships or start fresh in any other area of your life, you will not want to miss what these two doctors have to say on this most important topic. Let's get into this conversation right now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Doctor?

Dr. James Dobson: We are so pleased and honored to have a man here that many of you will recognize because his name is very well known in Christendom. He is Dr. O.S. Hawkins, who for years was the head pastor of the historic First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas where Dr. W.A. Criswell was the beloved pastor for 50 years. I love that church. I've spoken there. Of course, Dr. Robert Jeffress is the senior pastor now, but Dr. Hawkins holds a doctorate of ministry from Luther Rice Seminary. And he's working on a Ph.D. now at Southwestern Seminary, which will make him the oldest earner of PhD in the history of the school. Is that right?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Well, I think that's pretty close.

Dr. James Dobson: And you're about to work on your dissertation.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: I am.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you're a Texan. I'm a Texan. We had dinner together and I found out I really like you. I mean to tell you, I would like to be your friend for the rest of my life and it would be just a pleasure to have you here again because you have the

same values and the same beliefs that I do. And we have walked a similar path and it's a pleasure to have you here. You flew here to be with us today and God is blessing your life, isn't He?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: He is. And let me just say from my wife Susie and myself, in the library of people we've always loved and respected, you and Shirley are way up there on the top shelf. Because we couldn't have raised our girls back in the '70s and the '80s without *Dare to Discipline*, without *Hide or Seek* and especially without *The Strong-Willed Child*. Susie told me today that she got that book out and looked at it again and it's tear-stained all the way through it.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you got to bring her here the next time you come.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: I shall.

Dr. James Dobson: You have two daughters.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: We have two daughters.

Dr. James Dobson: And they're grown.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Wendy and Holly. Wendy is an attorney. She and her husband are both attorneys in Dallas. They have two children and then Holly, our youngest, is an author with Thomas Nelson with children's devotionals and she's married to a young man who's a minister, one of the ministers at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas and they have four children.

Dr. James Dobson: That's Dr. Jack Graham's church.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: It is.

Dr. James Dobson: I've been there too. I have in front of me a copy of the cover of Holly's book. *I Can Learn the Bible*, and I gave a plug to that book some years ago and I hope that it hasn't disappeared.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: No, you did, and she was greatly appreciative. She has that and then she also has the children's devotional called *I Can Learn to Pray*, and they're incredible books for teaching our kids. As parents, we want to teach our kids to learn the Bible, we want to teach them to pray. Sometimes we don't know how, and these are books that just help hold hands with parents and help them really know how they can lead their kids to do those things.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you are no longer a pastor, but you're working in a church context and in a way that is extremely helpful primarily to widows, but to pastors and others who are having difficulty financially. But describe for me what your application of the ministry is now.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: In 1997, I left the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas where I love those people to this day and have such great memories of my days and years there. I left there to become president of GuideStone Financial Resources. It is a Christian evangelical mutual fund that serves 250,000 different participants, over 300 Christian universities, 40,000 churches with all kinds of financial service needs. We're the world's largest Christian screen mutual fund.

Dr. James Dobson: You just slurred past that, but say that again.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: GuideStone is the world's largest Christian screen mutual fund, \$16 billion under assets right now, and we just received a few years ago from Lipper and Morningstar in New York, the number one mutual fund in the country beating out 242 other mutual funds with assets of 40 billion and below. So we're proving that you can keep your Christian values and still not sacrifice excellence in the investment arena. So our GuideStone funds-

Dr. James Dobson: That means you don't invest in any known association with alcohol.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Right. Our investment policy is that we don't invest in companies that are publicly recognized to be involved in alcohol, gambling, tobacco, abortion, pornography, or any other issues like that that are important to our Christian values.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, you call this a ministry and there's reason for it. I alluded to it earlier, explain.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Right. It's a ministry because we serve these pastors in churches. Our goal is to get a couple of these generations on our watch to vocational retirement with enough financial security that they don't have to be on somebody else's relief role, that they can have enough financial security, they can volunteer for ministry and missions all over the world because we also serve a lot of folks who don't have that privilege. We have a ministry called Mission:Dignity, Dr. Dobson. We are on a mission to bring dignity to some forgotten folks, and that's retired pastors and in most cases now they're widows. Average age is about 85 in our program living at the poverty level. These are folks who pastored out in the crossroads of life in seemingly forgotten places, lived in a church-owned home, all their ministry, never made enough to get by much less-

Dr. James Dobson: Many of them didn't even get social security because the church couldn't pay for it.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Right. And they couldn't get by because they had no money to prepare for retirement. They were just trying to live from week to week and paycheck to paycheck. And so we come alongside them in their declining years. 10 years ago, we raised enough money to give them, I'm talking about thousands of people in this program to give them \$50 a month extra, but we've raised so much money recently that the neediest among them now get \$630 a month. One little

pastor's widow, 87 years old, wrote me recently and said, "I get to eat at night now, and it's not just a piece of toast."

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that unbelievable?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Yeah. So to be Christ's hand extended to these people, it's close to the heart of God. In the book of James, the Bible tells us that "pure and undefiled religion is this, to take care of widows and orphans."

Dr. James Dobson: And that's all through the Scriptures.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: It's woven throughout the Scriptures and it's our privilege to be Christ's hand extended. The beautiful thing about this program is that we have endowed years ago all the expenses of the program. So everybody works in the bookkeeping of it, everybody works in the development program, all their salaries are paid out of this endowment. All the printed materials that we provide for the people, even the stamp that goes on the check to thousands of these people each month is paid for out of that endowment so that everyone who gives to Mission:Dignity knows that every single penny they give goes to them. And we've raised \$150 million in the last 10 or 15 years for this. And all the royalties to my books, we have a "Code" series of devotional books with Thomas Nelson.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, we're going to talk about that today.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Yeah, they've sold over a million and a half copies in the last three or four years. And the reason I can talk about that is because all the royalties to all those books also go to these precious people in Mission. There's a baby boomer generation that's coming into retirement and they're not prepared for retirement and they're getting a double whammy. Some of them still have aged parents that they're trying to take care of. And at the same time they've got kids that are 30 or 40 years old that many of them are still providing for. So we've got a whole situation with Mission:Dignity where we continue to grow it because of the growing need that's there.

Dr. James Dobson: I would like everybody to remember that name. Say it again.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Mission: Dignity. Yeah, you can go to oshawkins.com and there's a page there, you can click on Mission:Dignity. Just listen to a few of the videos of these people and learn more about the program there.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I'm glad we had a chance to talk about that. We're actually here to talk about your book and you mentioned that you have written a number of books and the linkage to them all is the word code, C-O-D-E, and those books are *The Joshua Code*, *The Jesus Code*, *The James Code*, *The Daniel Code*, *The Believer's Code*, *The Christmas Code*, and *The Easter Code*, and the one we're going to talk about today, *The Nehemiah Code*. What is the linkage between all this?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Well, I believe that they're nuggets of truth in Scripture in these books of the Bible that really when their mind can give us a code to live on and to live by. And so these are all devotional books and the secret to them, Dr. Dobson, is in the subtitle for example. The first one is *The Joshua Code*, and the subtitle is *52 Scripture Verses Ever Believer Should Know*. So it's a devotional book for a year where you take one verse of Scripture, memorize it that week, Scripture memories are lost art in Christian living.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, it is.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Memorize that verse that week, there're devotional helps on it there through it, and it's a year-long devotion. It comes from Joshua 1:8 that says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night in order to do all that is written therein, then you'll make your way prosperous, then you'll have good success." So what I found was that there were a lot of people who wanted to get into the Word of God, they just didn't know where to start. They start in the Book of Genesis and by the time they get to Leviticus, they're bogged down or if they start in the New Testament, they get to Matthew and they can't pronounce four-fifths of the names and the genealogy in Matthew 1. So I picked out 52 verses in the Bible that if you know these verses, you're going to know the message of the Bible. And if you know these verses, there are 52 verses I believe every believer should know before they go to Heaven.

And it had such success. It sold several hundred thousand copies that we followed it up with *The Jesus Code*. Do you know one of the things I was reading through the gospels just devotionally and I was astounded by something I'd seen a hundred times before but never really seen if you know what I mean. And that was the numbers of times Jesus asked questions in the Scripture. He was always asking questions. Now He didn't need answers. He was omniscient. He knew everything but 150 questions are recorded in the gospels that escape the lips of our Lord. It dawned on me that there are 52 Scripture questions ever believer ought to answer before they go to Heaven. And so we wrote *The Jesus Code* again, it's a devotional book, take you through a year with 52 questions. If a man dies, shall he live again? All these questions in the Bible, most of them from the lips of Jesus, who do you say that I am, that people ought to know before they get to heaven?

And then we followed that up with *The James Code*, practical principles for Christian living, *The Daniel Code*, how to really live in this culture. Daniel was taken out of a culture that he lived in and much like many of us are living in a new culture around us today and how he thrived in it. Then we have *The Believer's Code*, which is a 365-day devotional. And what's really taken off is *The Christmas code*. And *The Christmas Code* is an Advent devotional, 25 sermons from December 1 to 25. And in the back of it is the plan of salvation plainly experience where somebody could put their faith and trust in Christ. And it's a little paperback. There's a church in Syracuse, New York wrote me and they bought 9,000 of them and put them on every door in a certain mile radius of

their church with an invitation to their Christmas Eve service. That church runs about eight or 900 in worship. 1900 people showed up to their Christmas Eve service and hundreds of people came to know Christ and were saved.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you left the pastorate for another assignment and yet you're probably "preaching" to more people now than you were then.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: I preach almost every Sunday in the pulpit somewhere around the country, but through the printed page, God has just enlarged my coast and my sphere of influence. There's an incredible verse of Scripture in 2 Corinthians 10:13. It says that God has assigned to us an area of influence. Now think about that. Somewhere there's somebody that every one of us can reach like no one else can because God has assigned an area of influence. Now, you were a track star in high school.

Dr. James Dobson: No. I ran track.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Well, you ran track with Bobby Morrow, the Olympic champion.

Dr. James Dobson: That's him.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Okay, but you ran track. Okay. So when the Corinthians were reading this and they saw that they would've immediately jumped to their feet when they saw that Greek word Paul used to say that God has assigned an area of influence. It's the same Greek word that they would use in those Grecian games or we would use in track meets to describe a lane in which you're to run. When you run a relay race or you run into a track meet, you're assigned a lane and you can't get out of that. If you get out of that lane, you're disqualified and you have to run that race in that lane. And that's the word Paul used to say that God is assigned to every one of us an area of influence.

And so I want to just say this about you. The word influence comes from two Latin words, in and flow. The word pictures of this mighty river that's flowing vibrant and crystal clear and with a deep current and into it run these little tributaries and streams and creeks that flow into it and are carried away in its flow. And that's where we get our word influence. And so I'm thankful to be here today because I'm one of those people of the millions that got caught up in Jim Dobson's flow in that area of influence God assigned to you.

Dr. James Dobson: That brings tears to my eyes because the truth of the matter is I can't take the credit for it. The Lord was doing something and it was a shock to me all the way along as to what was happening and the fact that he could use me. Shirley and I were just college kids that got married and we really didn't know where the Lord was taking us. Although I was headed for graduate school, I knew what I wanted to do there, but it's just been amazing how doors have opened. Whenever I've gotten to a barrier, it has moved. I couldn't do that. There's

nothing I could do. So it is almost scary to me to take the credit for what's taking place.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Well, the last chapter in the new *Nehemiah* code that we're going to talk about in a moment is about finishing strong. And if anybody's ever finished strong, you and Shirley certainly are finishing strong. And going back to influence, in fact I wrote a book that all the royalties of it also go to Mission:Dignity called VIP. You know that acronym? We couldn't exist in our vocabulary in English if we didn't use acronyms. I mean, we were talking about education a while ago. If you want to go to college to earn a BA, you better have a good GPA and you better score well on the SAT or you're not going to get a BA and then can't get an MA.

We're being protected by the CIA and the FBI right now. Now April 15th, the IRS is going to come knocking on my door, I'm cancer free today because of a test called PSA test. I use the ESV because I think the NIV's a little too eclectic. We live by acronyms and no acronym has muscled and maneuvered its way into English vernacular more than that one VIP, very important person, because being important is the life goal of a lot of people. But I've changed that acronym because I think it's supposed to mean very influential person. The world has a way of forgetting those people that deem themselves important, but we have a long memory when it comes to those who've influenced our lives. And so VIP, and I want to say this about you before you cut me off because if you're going to be a person of influence, a VIP, those are the three things that are vital.

V is for vision. People who influence others know where they're going. People don't follow people that don't know where they're going. Somebody says, "Well, that ought to be intellect because knowledge is power." Somebody says, "It ought to be intensity and passion." No, it's for integrity. I've known a lot of people with a lot of great intellect, had no integrity and aren't in the race anymore. And P is for purpose. They don't let you know where they are going and who they are. They know why they're here. And Jim, the one thing about you is this. You've lived your life knowing where you were going, who you were and why you're here. And because of that, God has enlarged the scope of your ministry and even to this very day.

Dr. James Dobson: My goodness, again, that's very touching to me. And the Lord's blessed you in the same way and continues to do so.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: I'm simply saying what millions of people would say if they were sitting in the microphone having the opportunity to say thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: I heard you speak at Ruth Shanahan's funeral. This was what? Two years ago?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Two years ago. Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And was very impressed by what you had to say there. She was a great lady, wasn't she?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: She was a wonderful lady. Came from a wonderful lady by the name of Mary Crowley, her mom. And I just got through preaching her brother Don Carter's funeral here the other day. But Ruth Shanahan's, one of the greatest women I know. And she loved two organizations. She loved three organizations. She loved our First Baptist Church in Dallas, she loved the Billy Graham Association and she loved Jim and Shirley Dobson. And she gave her life to those organizations and her money to those organizations, her influence.

Dr. James Dobson: She helped support Shirley's work in the National Day of Prayer.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Oh, absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: As well as ours.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: I love her for a bunch of reasons. Your book, again is called *The Nehemiah Code*, but the subtitle is very important, *It's Never Too Late for a New Beginning*.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: And new beginning reminds me of Ronald Reagan because when he was inaugurated all over town, there were these billboards and signs saying a new beginning.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: And we had one.

Dr. James Dobson: And we did have one. And this book really comes back to that phrase in many of the illustrations and points that you made.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: And no matter who we are, what we've done, where we live, it's never too late for a new beginning. There are a lot of people needing a new beginning. There are people who've lost their self-confidence looking for a new beginning. People have been divorced and they're trying to start over. They need a new beginning. People who've lost a spouse and it opens a page of a new chapter, a new beginning in their lives. Churches are looking to revitalize new business or needing a new beginning. Coaches are rebuilding teams. Rebuilding process is something that touches every single one of us. And while many people just look at Nehemiah for the leadership principles that are there, what I believe the book is really about is the fact that it's never too late to rebuild our lives. It's never too late to rebuild the broken walls and the burning gates of our lives and have a second chance.

Dr. James Dobson: That new beginning often involves repentance and reconciliation and forgiveness, doesn't it?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: You start there. I mean, none of us is perfect. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And He can take whatever mess you've made out of your life and make it new.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: You're in the middle of the bullseye because broken relationships, for example, there's an offending party and there's an offended party. In most cases there's a little bit of both of us in all of them that get broken. But by and large, there's an offending party and an offended party. So two things have to happen for a new beginning. There must be, as you just said, a spirit of repentance on the part of the offending party. But there also has to be a spirit of reception on the heart of the offended party. And as a pastor for decades, one of the things I found in dealing with people's lives and broken relationships was often it was more the folks that just couldn't bring themselves to accept the fact the person had repented and received them back than it was the people that didn't repent to mend the broken relationship. So those two things are vital in doing that for sure. And forgiveness is the key.

Dr. James Dobson: And we have just barely started the conversation about *The Nehemiah Code* and the time has gone. You've flown here, would you stay long enough to do another program with us?

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: In a drop-dead heartbeat minute.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we've got a lot to talk about here and I can't wait to get into it.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Great.

Dr. James Dobson: I appreciate you. I appreciate your kind words to me, but they rebound from me to you and the life you've lived. You've lived a life of integrity and purpose, and thank you for being true to the gospel and to the one that we love, Jesus Christ, and he's continuing to bless you. Let's leave it there and pick it up next time.

Dr. O.S. Hawkins: Wonderful.

Roger Marsh: Well, you've been listening to Family Talk and an inspiring conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his guest, Dr. O.S. Hawkins, about finding new beginnings through God's grace. These powerful insights remind us that it's never too late to rebuild, whether it's in a relationship, our faith, or our purpose in life. Now, if you missed any part of today's broadcast or if you'd just like to share it with someone who needs this message of hope, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And keep in mind, you can also access this program on the JDFI app as well. Well, today's program about hope and new beginnings and others like it are made possible through the generous support of friends just like you.

If today's conversation about God's transforming power has touched your heart, would you consider partnering with us? Your tax-deductible donation of any

amount helps us continue broadcasting biblical truth to families all across America and all over the world. You can make a secure donation online when you go to drjamesdobson.org, that's drjamesdobson.org. Or give us a call at 877-732-6825. And before we leave for today, I want to remind you about a helpful way to receive daily encouragement from Family Talk, and that's by signing up for our free reading plans on the Bible app by YouVersion. Whether you're waiting in the carpool or taking a quiet moment before bedtime, these brief devotionals offer practical wisdom for your family journey, featuring topics like a mother's impact on her children opting for effective discipline and more.

Now, the plans are designed to fit your busy schedule while helping you build a stronger family on God's foundation. To access these free reading plans, simply open the Bible app on your phone or tablet and search for JDFI, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. These bite-sized devotionals might be just what you need to bring fresh biblical perspective to your daily routine. I'm Roger Marsh inviting you to join us again next time for part two of Dr. Dobson's powerful discussion with Dr. O.S. Hawkins. That's coming your way next time right here on 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.