



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion – Part 2

Guest(s): Allie Beth Stuckey

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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: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. And on today's program, part two of a fascinating conversation featuring Dr. Owen Strachan, our senior director of the Dobson Culture Center and his guest, Allie Beth Stuckey, podcaster extraordinaire, the host of the Relatable podcast, and author of a brand new book that is just out today called *Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion*. We have a link for that book up at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Allie Beth Stuckey is a Christian author, podcaster, and public speaker who is passionate about helping women build their worldview upon the truth of God's word. In addition to being the host of the Relatable with Allie Beth Stuckey podcast, she's also made appearances on the Blaze, Fox News, The Ben Shapiro Show and PragerU. She and her husband Timothy are the parents of three children, and we're looking forward to a great continuation of the interview that started on yesterday's broadcast. So without further ado, here now is Dr. Owen Strachan to reintroduce our guest, Allie Beth Stuckey, on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Our culture has us all playing in the victim Olympics and only those the left says are the biggest victims of all. So those who are typically are not white straight men, for example, if you're not in those categories, then you are the biggest victim, or at least you have a serious horse in that race.

And so we're just in this poisoned climate where everybody's claiming victim status. That itself, Allie, is not a sound framing. That's not the way the Christian worldview teaches us to approach life as if there's a zero-sum game, there's all these victimizers against you and you just play the victim until you succeed. That is how many conversations in our day are framed. For example, you think of transgenderism and you think of what has been sold to kids. The idea that if they feel like they're trapped in the wrong body, everyone around them is victimizing them and they're the victim. So how do we help, for example, young

men and women who have been fed this lie, this woke lie, this critical theory lie? How do we help them out of that as Christians?

Allie Beth Stuckey: And so often on the left, their language is so distorted. What they mean by victims isn't actually victims of something tangible. There's talking about something very abstract. They see Barack Obama as a victim to whom the poor white person in a trailer park needs to pay reparations. It's not actually talking about victims of real violence or actual oppression, which of course, like the unborn child that you and I know that we would need to take up their cause and advocate for them. They're talking about victim in a very academic sense. They're talking about it for the purposes of gaining political power. They're not even talking about real tangible victimhood.

And so I think that people can kind of take a step back and use the brain that God gave them and be reasonable and ask themselves as you wrote a book about this, and we talked about this a lot in 2020, "What do you mean by X? Like, how are you defining oppression, the system, being marginalized? How are you defining victim? What do you mean by that? And where did you get that idea?"

"Well, you got that idea from [inaudible 00:03:50], whatever it is? Okay, that's interesting." Let see what Scripture says about these things. Of course, there's real oppression, of course, there's real injustice, and you can even have compassion for someone who feels like they're a social justice advocate and say, "I love your heart for the least of these. Let's look at these issues though." And that's what I hope that this book does, is like, "Women, I'm not shaming you for having emotions. I'm not shaming you for wanting to be empathetic or having compassion or having your heartstrings pulled by these stories that the media puts out. That means you have a heart. That's what the media is trying to do because stories are really powerful." But we cannot be unmoored from biblical truth and objective reality.

And so I don't think the message of Ben Shapiro is great, but I don't think only saying facts don't care about your feelings is quite enough for people, not just women, but people who have been given feelings by a good God who wanted us to feel things, and feelings are important. So we've got to figure out how our feelings are controlled, what they are in submission to, and what are the tools that we can use to make sure that our feelings are always in submission to reality.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, that's one of the strengths of this book, *Toxic Empathy* by Allie Beth Stuckey. We're discussing it right now obviously. You don't say, "All we need is to know truth." You say, "We need truth and love." And sometimes Christians are known for being the truth people, and so we're ready to bow up and tell you the truth and get in your face even. But we lose sight of the loving aspect of that.

And what I think you are saying, and what I'm trying to say as well in a small way, is we don't make a choice between truth or love. One of the devices you use in this book, *Toxic Empathy*, is you don't set aside the stories of real individuals. You share true stories. For example, a woman named Laura Perry Smalts who tried to change, I should say, from being a woman to a man and then saw the error of her ways and re-embraced her God-given biological sex as a woman. And so you're not in your book saying, "The only thing you need to know is stats and facts about transgenderism and then refute them. We need to know biblical truth. We should know stats and facts, but then we also should have real compassion for people going through the ravages of sin." How did that story affect you when you first encountered Laura's story?

Allie Beth Stuckey:

Yes, that's exactly what I tried to do. That's a great description of it, is that I didn't want to just say, "Yeah, okay, I understand that story makes you sad, but get over it." It's, "Okay. I understand. This story over here sounds like liberation. It sounds like happiness, it sounds like truth." We do that in every chapter of like, "Oh yeah, look at this person who seems like they needed abortion or who finally found herself when she decided to get into a relationship with another woman. All that stuff." And I want people to read those stories and be like, "Wow, maybe I do believe that. Maybe I am on the progressive side." But then I want to say, "But let's zoom out a little bit. What about the people on the other side of this equation? Or what if we expanded our compassion this way?"

And then once we have those competing anecdotes, at the end of the day, we all have our anecdotes that can persuade people. Once we have those competing anecdotes we have to look at, "Okay, but what is actually true?" Laura Perry Smalts is a great example because she is such an incredible communicator of God's Truth and her own testimony of redemption, which obviously God knew when He plucked her out and He dastened her for this very thing to be a minister of the gospel. Her gift of communication is incredible.

She thought that she wanted to be a man named Jake. She had some things in her upbringing that led her to believe that the rest of her problems would go away if she became masculine. And she started going by this different name, this identity that she had created in her head. And when people affirmed that, she felt really good about herself. Plus, the effects of testosterone can actually make a woman feel good because they give you energy, they make you feel strong, they make you feel like you can conquer the world. Some of the female biological issues that she had been dealing with went away because of the testosterone.

So it was almost like, and it's such Satan to do this, to give you something that feels good, that looks like healing, that is actually harming you. And so temporarily, she felt like she was healed. What was it that changed, her mom said, "Oh, can you transcribe some of these Bible setting notes for me?" That included a bunch of scripture references. As she was transcribing those, without any spiritual connection to them, she still thinks she identifies as a man even

though her parents never accepted that, she's a young woman now, the word of God started doing what it does, and it took root in her heart and she started going to her parents' church.

She says that the other people at her parents' church, they were so loving to her, this speaks to your point, love and truth. They loved her, they embraced her, and they called her her. They called her Laura. They never said, "Oh, just for a little while, let's affirm this harmful deadly delusion. Let's call her Jake. Let's call her him." They didn't do that. They said, "You're Laura. We love you. We've known you since you were a child." And it was their truth in love that God used to turn her to himself. And then of course after she became a Christian through the process of sanctification, she realized, "Okay, I cannot..." She tried, she wanted to hold on to that male identity, but again, God doing what he does, He's like, "No, no, no, I'm taking all of you." And of course she always was a woman, but reverted even in appearance back to her identity as Laura. And gosh, it's such a good example of what the truth and love can do. Affirming the lie would have just helped her continue down that deadly path.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, that was just beautifully stated. And it takes me to the New Testament example of Jesus who had that blend. That's who Jesus is. We can't do this perfectly. Her parents, I'm sure didn't do this perfectly. You and I can't, those listening can't. But our target and our goal in engaging fellow sinners who need the grace and mercy of God is to bring them that blend of truth and love, not 50% and 50%. By God's grace, 100% and 100%. And that's what that community around her did starting with her folks.

And so Allie, I love that you've given your readers, primarily women readers here, a great model because you haven't said to them, for example, with Laura's family, they figured out this perfect apologetic, this perfect method by which to bring her back. As you talk about in the book, they didn't use her preferred pronouns. I mean we're edging into tough territory here, but they kept loving her, so they never bought into her lie. They kept loving her. And eventually through her mom deploying Scripture very strategically, God brought her back. And so I love that readers can take that model and actually apply it. You also help readers think about euphemisms, about quick little pithy sayings that prey on people, especially women. Love is love would be one, and that relates to the sexual revolution and homosexuality. Love is love. All love is the same. Women have been fed that lie. How would you oppose that standing on the Word of God?

Allie Beth Stuckey: Yeah, so a lot of people, I would say even on the right, if you want to describe it like that, they say, "Okay, I'm down with love is love, but I won't go to trans women or women." So I would say a lot of people, they just look at the biological reality of like, "Okay, man can't become a woman." And they realize that, but they don't realize that love is love is the exact same math as trans women are women. These are two lies that we refute them in the book because they're both circular. Just like trans women are women doesn't really have a

meaning unless you define what a woman is, which of course they cannot and will not do, a love is love is also meaningless unless you can define what love is. Because if love is love, then love can be anything. If a trans woman is a woman, then a woman can be anything.

Both of these mottos are based on this nonsensical idea that men and women are interchangeable, that they are replaceable, that you can exchange them, you can swap them out, that there's nothing unique about a husband or a wife, there's nothing unique about a mother or a father. A child doesn't necessarily need a mom and a dad. A marriage doesn't have to be made of a man and a woman. It's the exact same math, the exact same thinking as someone on the trans issue saying that a man can become a woman and vice versa. And yet it's a little bit more enticing, I would say, than the trans issue because really for anyone, but I would say particularly for a woman, if they've got a child or they've got a friend who is like, "This is just who I am and I've been this way forever and I love this person..."

And love of course is powerful. We know that it's good. We're commanded to love. So when someone says, "I love this person, I finally feel like myself," we go through the story of Glennon Doyle where she just says, "I finally felt this." She almost describes it as some kind of spiritual awakening when she decided that she was going to enter into a lesbian relationship. And she tells a very powerful tale.

That woman has sold millions and millions of books based on the idea that once you do what you want to and you unleash yourself from expectations of religion or society or family or whatever, you will finally be happy. She sees her relationship with a woman as part of that. That is extremely powerful for women, this tale of being free from other people's standards and expectations, but that shouldn't be enticing for the Christian. I understand why it is, but it shouldn't because again, it goes all the way back to the garden. Did God really say, "And you can be like God?" That's what Eve was tempted with. That's what women are tempted with today. And it certainly plays into this idea that love is love, that, "Oh, God didn't really say in Romans 1 that this is an unnatural disorder desire that's going to harm you." He didn't really say that. He meant something else. It's a mistranslation. It was added to the Bible in 1948. And really what he didn't want was for you to experience your true self. He didn't want you to experience true love and true liberation.

So once you follow your own way, pursue this kind of relationship, then you'll finally be there. It's an attractive narrative. It's the same narrative that progressives have for everything, race, sexual orientation, gender. But it's just not true because we know that the same faith that met Adam and Eve meets us when we decide that our sin will free us. And the beautiful thing is too, and the good news is, that I wish someone like Andy Stanley would understand and actually preach, is that the good news is that we are not our sin. That is not who

you are. And so therefore it is unloving to affirm that someone's sexual desire is who they are and part of their identity.

Dr. Owen Strachan: There it is. My son would say, "She's spitting fire." That's it. That's exactly right. All love is not the same. The person who tries to forcibly have a relationship with somebody else, though he thinks he's loving, let's say, that woman, an adult man, he's forcibly making her love him or trying to, that's not love. He might think it's love, but that's just one small example of this.

You bring out the story of Rosaria Butterfield in this book, *Toxic Empathy*, and one of the things I've heard Rosaria talk about is how the lesbian community, let me speak carefully here for just a second, really did offer her a lot of warmth and unconditional acceptance. As Christians, we need to hear testimony like that. And it should never make us soften the truth, not one bit. But as you were just talking about, and as we talked about throughout this broadcast, these two episodes, fundamentally, Christians really do need to make sure that we pray to be as loving as possible.

I'm thinking here, Allie, you have three kids, I have three kids, but we really don't want to send our children, we don't want to drive them into the arms of these, frankly, pagan communities because there was like a drop of love in our church, but then they perceive there to be an ocean of love outside. I do think that's a danger, and I think we've got to watch that. Would you agree?

Allie Beth Stuckey: I think that is so true. Now, you mentioned how Jesus was this perfect combination of grace and truth. I think of Jesus being described in that way. I also think of Stephen being described as full of grace and truth. And you probably would be able to tell me one is grace and power, one is grace and truth, but both of them had truth, power, and grace, and they were compassionate and kind individuals and still the world regarded them as hateful.

I mean, we remember what happened to Jesus. We remember what happened to Stephen, Stephen being stoned to death, Jesus being crucified. So while it is absolutely true that we should be the most loving force on the planet as Christians, we should be the most radically loving institution the church should be. At the same time, we cannot, just by speaking the truth, which is not always nice, which is not always popular, which is not always accepted, we cannot mistake that for being unloving. We cannot measure our obedience and our love by how a non-believer reacts to us. Because you do hear a lot of people, especially those deconstructing saying that they were traumatized by the church.

Now, some people truly were victimized by people within the church, unfortunately. But some people when they're talking about that, they are talking about being told that something was sin that they wanted to do, and

they will use that to empathy, manipulate someone and to say, "Well, you weren't loving because you told me that this thing that I wanted to do was sin."

So Christians also have to be careful there, that yes, we should be so powerfully loving and we should meet people's needs and we should meet them where they are and share with them our lives and the truth of Christ, but also don't think that being loving is always being nice, and do not think that if you are loving enough that the world will accept you, that you'll get an op-ed in the New York Times and that you will be popular amongst your secular friends and all of your secular progressive people in your book club. That's just not going to happen. If you speak the truth in love, there will absolutely be people who hate you. And that doesn't mean you're doing it wrong, it probably means that you're doing it right.

Dr. Owen Strachan: So calibrate, as we wind to a conclusion here, calibrate your expectations not by the response you get from unbelievers. They'll respond to the truth in love in a variety of ways. But I hear you saying in this book and in our conversation so much more to get to illegal immigration, "social justice" in air quotes that I pray we'll have opportunity to talk about another time, but in all of that, when a Christian woman stands on God's word and speaks the truth and love to unbelievers around her friends, family, community, school board, whatever it may be, she needs to not think that she is a failure. And a man needs to think the same way, a Christian man. You're not a failure if people hate what you say necessarily. You're striving, you're praying to be loving in what you say, even the manner of it, but you have to calibrate your assessment of your own little witness by what God's Word says, not by how people react to you.

Allie Beth Stuckey: Yes, that is a perfect way to say it. Honestly, I don't even have anything to add to that. I love what you said about calibrating. How do we grade it? We grade it based on, "Did I say what God's Word says?" And yes, there is a way to say that. I mean, I'm definitely not a tone pleaser, and I don't like the tone police, but this is the first time I've shared this.

I was thinking about this and you can tell me what you think about this metaphor because at the end of the day, the truth is the truth no matter how someone says it. And yet how we say something, I'm certainly not perfect in this, because if it were just up to my flesh I would be sarcastic and I could be biting and I could be way too harsh if it were up to my flesh. But how we say something, how kindly, how gently, how persuasively we say something does matter. It doesn't change the truth, but it does matter. It's the same way that tone is to our words as texture is to food. Like at the end of the day, food is food, but you would eat banana pudding, but you don't want banana soup, you know? But it's the same thing. And if someone were to say, "Well, why do you care? It's the same thing at the end of the day, it's just a banana," but how it's delivered actually matters. How our words taste actually matters to someone.

And so that's another thing I would say. Of course, try to be as effective in your communication as possible. It's such a balance. But don't get caught up in trying to say things perfectly because at the end of the day, God is the one who waters and gives growth to the seeds that he allows us to plant.

Dr. Owen Strachan: The banana soup method, I think it's going to catch on. I think it's going to go viral.

Allie Beth Stuckey: Okay. There we go.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Well done. Yeah, no, I completely agree with you. I think we got to conclude here. But I think of as you're talking Luke 7:13, how Jesus engages a widow, her son is in a terrible place and Luke says, "He looked on her with compassion." I don't myself think we're supposed to tone police in the way that the left wants us to, so let's just draw an X on that. But I do think there is a biblical standard of compassion. And I'll be honest, I've evaluated my own self, my own humble little ministry a little bit in terms of that winsomeness category that we're discussing. And I've realized, "Yeah, I also do need to strive to be as loving as I can."

Allie, I really appreciate your time on the broadcast today. Any last word for the broadcast that you want to share?

Allie Beth Stuckey: So you can go to Toxicempathy.com, see where it's sold. But thank you so much for helping me share all of this.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Absolutely. It's been such a joy, Allie. Allie's book, as she mentioned, is *Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion*. I very much encourage you to pick it up, especially Christian women who want to think well in this world. Allie has done a lot of great work here, so she's been our guest for not just one day, but two days of Family Talk. And on behalf of the JDPI team, we want to thank her for joining us. God bless you and live according to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

Roger Marsh: And that concludes part two of our two-part conversation featuring Dr. Owen Strachan, the senior director of the Dobson Culture Center, and his guest, Allie Beth Stuckey, author of the powerful new book that is just out today called *Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion*. We have a link for the book up at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk in addition to information about how you can contact Allie and learn more about her ministry. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Of course, Allie Beth Stuckey is one of many commentators who have given us great interviews on our Countdown to Decision 2024 podcast. If you haven't seen it yet, go to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. You'll find voter guides, long-form interviews, reels as they say, and more, featuring Kirk Cameron, Dr. Del Tackett, Pastor Sammy Rodriguez, Katy Faust and more. Again,

you'll find all that information at drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024.

And while you're online with us, be sure you also check out Dr. Owen Strand's brand new free e-book, it's called *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage The Public Square*. Just click that link when you go to our homepage at drjamesdobson.org and you can find out how to download your copy from there.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening to Family Talk today. Be sure to join us again tomorrow when we'll hear a powerful sermon from Pastor Gary Hamrick about Christians engaging the culture through casting your vote. That's coming up tomorrow 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.

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