



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion – Part 1

**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, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and on today's program we're going to talk about a phenomenon called *Toxic Empathy* with our special guest Allie Beth Stuckey. Now sitting in the guest host chair today here on Family Talk is Dr. Owen Strachan. Dr. Strachan is the senior director of the brand new Dr. James Dobson Family Institute Culture Center, and he's written a brand new e-book called *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage The Public Square*. In these weeks leading up to the election day, November the 5th, we encourage you to check out this brand new free resource. Go online to [drjamesdobson.org/engage](http://drjamesdobson.org/engage) and sign up to receive your free copy of *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage the Public Square*, a fascinating new e-book by Dr. Owen Strachan.

Now, Dr. Strachan's guest on today's broadcast is Allie Beth Stuckey. Allie is a Christian author, podcaster, and public speaker who is passionate about helping women build their world view upon the truth of God's Word. She's the host of The Relatable Podcast, also a former contributor to The Blaze, and has made appearances on Fox News, the Ben Shapiro Show, and PragerU. Her podcast, Relatable with Allie Beth Stuckey, a program that analyzes culture, news and politics and theology from a Christian conservative perspective. Allie and her husband Timothy are the parents of three children and they make their home in the Dallas area. During the next half hour, you're going to hear a conversation that Owen Strachan had recently with Allie Beth Stuckey about her brand new book, *Toxic Empathy*, which will be available in stores tomorrow. Be listening at the end of today's program and you'll hear how you can get a copy of this powerful new book. And now here's Dr. Owen Strachan to introduce today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Dr. Owen Strachan:** Hello friends, I'm Owen Strachan, a new voice and the co-host seat here on Family Talk. I serve as senior director of the Dobson Culture Center here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and it is such an honor to be here with you today. We know God commanded us to love our neighbor, from the rude driver

on the road to that one relative who doesn't seem to have a filter. In 1 Peter 3:8, we read this, "Finally, all of you be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." But when it comes to using this compassion we're called to have for one another in a way that is not what God intended, that compassion then can become a weapon. It can actually become a weapon in the hand of the enemy in the form of manipulation.

This toxic empathy can be utilized as a means then of swaying Christians on matters regarding abortion, gender, sexuality, immigration, and social justice. So how do we as believers make sure we don't get caught in this trap? Well, that is exactly what we're going to dive into today. Today's guest is Allie Beth Stuckey. She's an author and speaker, Allie is the host of The Relatable Podcast where she breaks down culture, news, and politics with a biblical point of view. Today she'll talk about her upcoming book entitled *Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion*, and I want to mention that Allie and her husband have three children, they have a beautiful family. Welcome to Family Talk, Allie.

Allie Beth Stuckey: Thanks so much, I'm really excited to be here. This is my first ever interview on my new book, so I'm pumped to talk about it.

Dr. Owen Strachan: You are known for standing firm in your faith, you're known for speaking out on cultural and social issues, you provide a really helpful biblical perspective, in my judgment, on so many matters. Has this always been the case for you as we dive into the subject of your book?

Allie Beth Stuckey: Well, thank you so much, I really appreciate that. I can't take credit for any of it, and I also can't say that I have always spoken about the things that I do or how I speak about them. I've always liked to talk, that is true, that's always been the case probably since I was birthed. That was the thing that I always got in trouble for when I was in school, was talking too much, but thankfully now I get to do it a lot, really as much as I want to.

And so I've always loved to communicate, and yes, I've always cared to a certain degree about politics and social issues. I can't say that that was my number one focus in high school or college, but certainly in the election of 2015, 2016 when I had just graduated from college and I lived in a semi-conservative town, and yet I looked around and I realized that all of these people who are my age and a little younger, because I lived in a college town, they were raised conservative, they were raised Christian most importantly, and yet they didn't know where they stood on any of these really important issues, they didn't know where they stood on abortion.

I was leading a bible study and one of the girls in my Bible study, she was a freshman in college, I had just graduated, she said that she was voting for Bernie Sanders, and the rest of the girls in the Bible study had no idea who they were voting for, if they were going to vote, why any of the issues on the line really matter, especially those big issues that aren't primarily political but for us or biblical like abortion, like marriage, like sexuality, and I thought, "Wow, these

young women need to know why these issues matter, most importantly what the Bible has to say about them, but then also they play into how we engage in the public sphere." And so that's when I started speaking to college students in particular, because I lived in Athens, Georgia, the UGA college town, and I was working full-time as a publicist.

But my husband and I, we got married in 2015, and we lived right off Sorority Row, Millage Avenue, and I decided, okay, this is the perfect experiment for me. If I can really do something with speaking and talking to young women about these things that matter, I'm going to go into these sorority houses and basically ask them if I can speak at their chapter meetings. And so I did, I reached out to all of these sororities, some answered, some didn't, some said yes, some said no, and I asked, "Hey, can I come give this presentation about why y'all need to vote in this election and why these issues matter?"

And so I did, and I started to do that, and I just loved it so much. And I started getting emails from these young women being like, "Oh, my professor said this, but what does this mean?" Or "How should I think about this?" And that's just when it started for me, I just felt that, okay, this is what for now I am supposed to do. And so that evolved into what I do now, and it's taken many forms over the years of course. As I've become a mom, it looks different than it did from before I had kids, but I still feel this passion to help women, in particular Christian women, to the best of my ability and by the grace of God understand these really confusing issues from a biblical perspective. And so yeah, that's kind of how it started, that's how it's evolved since 2014, 2015, and that's where we are now.

Dr. Owen Strachan: No, that's really helpful, I appreciate you sharing that. And here's the strangest thing to me, Allie, in particular with our generation and even younger generations, there's a lot of buy-in into a conservative biblical worldview when it comes to theology. Churches will teach more or less a conservative biblical take on lots of theological issues, and that's good, but that same instinct doesn't always apply when it comes to politics and the public square and cultural issues. So here's the weird thing. I want to hear your response to this, you'll have churches that hold the line on the inerrancy of Scripture and the exclusivity of Christ, and the need for people to be born again and be disciplined and these kind of things, and that's great, that's really important. But then when it comes to politics or political issues, there's this dropping of the vase that can occur because we're terrified of being seen as political, and so what can end up happening, in my judgment, is the church effectively then leads discipleship on political issues to conservative commentators and folks on TV and on the radio. And that's good, there's a lot of good voices out there, but churches don't think of themselves as even having the opportunity or the calling to disciple young people in a public square world view. Do you think that's accurate?

Allie Beth Stuckey: I think that's 100% accurate. And while I love doing the things that I do and talking about the things that I do, I would love for every Christian to say, "Well, I really don't need to listen to Allie Stuckey because my pastor has this covered."

Not that I'm trying to take that role, I'm just talking about the things that matter, but I wish that every pastor would be courageous enough to talk about these issues that, as you alluded to, really aren't primarily political issues. They have political implications, they've become political issues that become kind of these social issues, but primarily for the Christian they're biblical issues.

And look, I don't think a pastor has the responsibility every Sunday to stand behind the pulpit and comment on the news of the week, but when issues come up in their exposition of scripture that happen to also have political implications or manifest themselves in the political realm, they should not be reticent to speak up about them because when we're talking about these culture war issues, we're talking about abortion, we're talking about the definition of marriage, the definition of gender, the family, that's not only a biblical issue, that is a Genesis 1 issue.

And so if you are preaching through just even the most basic tenets of scripture, the most basic doctrines of Christianity, you're going to get political. And praise God, I don't even need a pastor to come up with any catchy slogan about these things, all you have to do is read Scripture. Praise God that we have clarity from the Bible. Okay, we've got the definition of marriage, we've got the definition of gender, we've got the fact that man and woman are made in God's image, and therefore abortion is not a moral option. We've got all that in the very first chapter of the first book of the Bible, and so the irony in what you're saying is that a lot of the pastors that you're describing that are Orthodox in their theology are often the pastors who will also say, "Well, we don't talk about politics because we're not of this world. Our kingdom, our citizenship is not of this world, and so we're just going to stand outside of that. I don't want to get into the divisiveness, the nitty-gritty of the culture wars." Whatever.

The funny thing is that they are actually operating that is a very worldly political mentality because my question to them would be, why do you see marriage or abortion as primarily a political issue? That should not be a Left/Right issue, that should not be a Republican/Democrat issue, that should not be an election issue for you. That should be a biblical issue. If people want to take that as political, that's their problem, not yours.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, I completely agree. And so you can have actually a pretty strong stake out there, you can grow a ministry or grow a podcast or these sorts of things simply by being willing, as I see you doing, to speak truth in these different areas. And it's very sad when you see pastors who won't step up to the plate. And we're not talking about dive into the weeds of recycling policy or something like that, we're talking about basic pro-life human position. We don't want the younger generation in particular to fall prey Allie to what you could call a neither left nor right political mentality.

Of course, the church is bigger than partisan politics, I've seen you talk about that recently, you're dead right, I agree. But fundamentally, we don't need to worry ultimately about the partisan issues, we need to focus on a biblical

worldview. That's what your new book, I want to transition to your book, because that's what we're here to talk about, *Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion*, focuses on. You're providing a lot of this kind of political insight from the Scripture that the younger generation hasn't gotten. Why this book now in October 2024?

Allie Beth Stuckey:

Yes, the reason I wrote *Toxic Empathy* is it kind of really goes back to where my heart has always been when it comes to this profession, this part of my life, and that is for the Christian woman. Although I could cast a wide net and hope to get as many people as possible to read this book, really this is for the Christian woman who is deceived by what I call toxic empathy. And I use a lot of different phrases for that, empathy, shaming, empathy bullying, empathy manipulation, and really it is the practice by progressives, that's the ideology that dominates media and most of our cultural outlets today and has the greatest influence on how the world thinks about things. It is a tool used by progressives to emotionally manipulate women into taking the left-wing position on something, and they actually will use parts of Scripture, they'll use emotional, compassionate, kind-sounding language in order to get a woman to think well, in order to be a good person, in order to be kind, in order to even love my neighbor, then I have to be pro-open borders, I have to be pro-LGBTQ, I have to be pro-choice.

And typically, it comes across as a little more nuanced than just, okay, you're a left-wing, blue-haired progressive. It'll typically sound something like this, this is how empathy manipulation manifests itself among Christian women. "Well, I'm personally pro-life, but politically pro-choice." Or "I'm holistically pro-life so yeah, I'm personally against abortion but let's work on the welfare stuff before we get rid of abortion." Or "Yeah, I wouldn't ever transition to the opposite sex, but as an evangelistic tool, I'll call a man she." Or "Yeah, I'm not totally jazzed about LGBTQ issues, but I'm going to go to the gay wedding because that's how I love my neighbor." "Okay, I'm not pro-open borders, but we probably should be kind of squishy on that just because there's some really sad stories about migrants who are leaving to come for a better life."

That's typically what it sounds like, and what I try to prove through this book is that though those positions play on your emotions and sound good, they're actually toxic. They're not just, oh, yeah, they're kind of wrong. No, they're harmful, they're actually dangerous, they're practically dangerous. They actually hurt vulnerable people. I want to shift people's perspective of who the victim is in these issues from who the media tells us the victim is to the actual victim, and to trade this toxic empathy for truth in love, which is different than empathy. Empathy is feeling what someone else feels, which is, that's neither good nor bad. You can feel how someone else feels and still be a terrible person, but love and compassion, compassion you're bearing the burden of someone, love you are seeking the best for someone.

These are choices, these are sacrifices, these are actions that you have to take, and all of them, according to the God who is love, according to the God who

created these things have to be rooted in truth, as 1 Corinthians 13:6 says. So that's like the gist of it, we can get into more details of it, but that's what I want women to do, is to trade toxic empathy for truth and love. I think that leads us in a much better direction when it comes to shaping our worldview.

Dr. Owen Strachan: And so the way this issue is framed in particular for women is that it's either judgment or it's empathy. So either you're this terrible judgmental person just living to judge people by the hour, or you're empathetic and loving. And what you're saying is that's not the right way to approach this choice. Of course, we do have proud hearts, we can be judgmental, all of us can, but fundamentally, a better way to frame it is either true biblical love or toxic empathy, in particular with these hot-button political issues, is that accurate?

Allie Beth Stuckey: Yes. And really I think empathy as hoisted up as the highest virtue or even a virtue at all, I think that really gets us into a really big mess because taking on the feelings of someone else, while that can, it can lead you to love someone else better, it can. If I understand, for example, I'm a mom, before I was a mom, when I would go on a crowded airplane and you would hear the baby non-stop crying, I'm thinking, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, why do parents do this, this is so inconsiderate?" Such immature thoughts like that. After you become a mom, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I understand where that mom is because I have been there and there's no one on this plane that wants that baby to stop screaming more than that mom, and I just feel for that mom. I want to hold the baby, I want to do everything I can to help."

So I go from annoyed to having empathy because I've been there and then having compassion and want to serve and love that person. But empathy, feeling how someone else feels is not always necessary for having compassion and loving someone. For example, you haven't been a mom, you've been a parent, you're a parent, but you haven't been a mom and yet even without having been exactly where that woman is, you could, compelled by the love of Christ and true virtue, have compassion and understanding for her. So that's a better direction to go. Whether or not we feel how someone else feels, how do we tell the truth and seek love and seek what is best for that person? And the only way we can get information about how to do that is through the God who is love, 1 John 4:8, who created us, who tells us, as you mentioned, that love always rejoices in the truth, which means that I cannot love my gender confused neighbor by calling him She because that's lying, and that according to the God who is love is not love, rather because it's not truth. And that is true of all of these other issues that we discuss in the book too.

Dr. Owen Strachan: I find this framing so helpful because part of what you've done here with this framing is you've brought men back into, for example, the abortion conversation. Because if you go by the gospel of empathy, the false gospel, you can only speak into that conversation or other conversations if you are a woman and maybe if you have had a child. And so men have no stake in that conversation because men can't bear children, and so don't get to speak, and that's effectively how things have gone on the abortion issue in the American

public square in the last few years. But what you're saying is yes, be compassionate, of course, man or woman alike, but what is the first order here is to figure out what is true and right from Scripture. And so a man should work to understand a woman's perspective, of course that's a good thing to do as a Christian, but men have a stake in this conversation. There's something higher than just feeling empathy for someone else, there's standing for the unborn, and defending the unborn, and loving the unborn enough to try to give them a shot at life.

Allie Beth Stuckey:

Yeah. And that's the thing about toxic empathy too, because empathy takes on the feelings of what someone else feels, and as we've already talked about, that in and of itself is not virtuous. But the thing about toxic empathy that I think progressives wield is that it only allows your empathy to be channeled toward one person, the person that they deem the victim. So when it comes to abortion, the woman is the victim. She's the only victim. She's the victim of restrictive abortion policy, she is the victim in a variety of ways. In that circumstance, the baby is not even regarded as human, which is why they use euphemisms like terminating the pregnancy or pregnancy tissue or things like that.

And so you're only allowed, according to the doctrines of toxic empathy, you are only allowed to have empathy for the mother, or you're only allowed to have empathy for the man who wants to become a woman, you're only allowed to have empathy for the two men who want to use a surrogate to have a child, you're only allowed to have empathy for the illegal migrant or the criminal. You're not allowed to have empathy for the people on the other side of that equation. You can't take on the feelings of the unborn child who is being ripped apart, you can't take on the feelings of the woman who lost the scholarship because she's now forced to compete against demand, you can't take on the feelings and have empathy for the child who is now forcibly raised in a motherless or childless home, you can't have empathy for the person that is killed by an illegal immigrant, you can't have empathy for the people that are victims of the defund the police movement, you can't have empathy for those people.

For some reason, they don't have as much social capital, even though they are actually more vulnerable than the people on the other side of that equation. The baby is more vulnerable than the woman. The girl in the locker room is more vulnerable than the six-foot-two guy in a dress. The child on the street in a truly actually poor marginalized community is more vulnerable than the gang member with a gun. And yet we are told we can't have empathy for the most vulnerable, we can only have the empathy for the people who are actually perpetrating the immorality. And so, yeah, that's so toxic about it, is that it's wrong. And so what I want to do in my book is say, we actually start with the gut-wrenching heart-string-pulling story from the left and then we back up and we say, but who is the real victim here? And we look at it from that perspective and then we just go into, what are the facts about this? What are the facts about illegal immigration? What are the facts about abortion? And then I try to

end each chapter with, well, what does the Bible say about these things? And that's not to say that I know what the Bible says fully about all of these issues. Yeah, I try my best to say, okay, here's how Scripture informs us.

Roger Marsh:

Well, that brings us to the midpoint of what will now be a two-day conversation featuring Dr. Owen Strachan and his guest, Allie Beth Stuckey today here on Family Talk. Don't forget Allie Beth Stuckey's brand new book, *Toxic Empathy: How Progressives Exploit Christian Compassion*, releases tomorrow. And if you're looking for more information on how you can secure a copy of the book, and to learn more about her Relatable Podcast, simply go online to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk), and you'll follow the prompts from there. That's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

Now with election 2024 just a couple of weeks away and early voting already in play, a fascinating study from Dr. George Barna indicates that nearly 41 million Christians will sit out election 2024. But are we wise to be sitting out such an important election? Well, Dr. Owen Strachan, the senior director of the Dobson Culture Center has written a brand new e-book called *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage The Public Square*, and we encourage you to go online and download your copy. Go to [drjamesdobson.org/voting-and-the-church-e-book](http://drjamesdobson.org/voting-and-the-church-e-book). Or if it's easier, just go to [drjamesdobson.org/engage](http://drjamesdobson.org/engage). You can download this e-book for free when you go online, so please take advantage of it, pray over the issues, and read more about why Christians should be engaging the public square. And casting our vote is one of the best ways to do so.

Now with the countdown to election 2024, coming up so quickly, we also have a special opportunity for you to hear more of what Allie Beth Stuckey had to say on our recent Countdown To Decision 2024 Podcast. Go to [drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024](http://drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024) for our special interview featuring Allie Beth Stuckey. You'll also find interviews with Sammy Rodriguez, Kirk Cameron, Riley Gaines, Dr. Del Tackett, and others. Again, that's [drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024](http://drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024).

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, thanks so much for listening to the broadcast today and be sure to join us again next time for part two of Dr. Owen Strachan's, fascinating conversation with author, Allie Beth Stuckey talking about toxic empathy and how progressives use Christian compassion against us in the public square. 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.