



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Up Close and Personal with Zig Ziglar – Part 2

Guest(s): Zig Ziglar

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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. I'm Roger Marsh, and today on the broadcast, we're going to continue our special tribute to one of the most influential voices of the 20th century, the late Zig Ziglar. Now, by the way, if you missed part one of this presentation, you can hear it again in its entirety when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. For more than 40 years, Zig Ziglar inspired millions through his books, seminars, and speaking engagements. He shared the stage with three U.S. presidents and was the author of more than 30 books. Through his organization, Ziglar Inc., Zig's message of faith-filled living and principled success continues to impact lives even today. But behind his public success was a deeply personal story of faith and family. Zig and his beloved wife, Jean, shared 65 wonderful years of marriage before his passing in 2012. He was 86 years of age.

Together they raised four children, Suzanne, Tom, Cindy, and Julie. Tragically, Suzanne went home to be with our Lord before her father. Now in this conversation with our own Dr. James Dobson, you'll hear Zig Ziglar share candid insights about family relationships and how writing a heartfelt book became an unexpected bridge to spiritual healing between parent and child. He'll also reflect on those moments when Heaven seems to touch earth in unmistakable ways, offering glimpses of God's larger purpose in our trials. So whether you're walking through your own season of challenge or simply need reassurance of God's faithfulness, today's conversation here on Family Talk will remind you that even in our darkest valleys, God's presence remains constant and His timing is perfect. And now here's Dr. James Dobson to continue this inspiring conversation with Zig Ziglar, right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Zig, you lost a daughter not too long ago and it had a profound impact on you as it would for any father or mother. Explain what happened. She had pulmonary fibrosis, is that correct?

Zig Ziglar: That's correct, Jim. We knew she was sick, but we had no idea that she was as sick as she was. The doctors had said in probably in two or three years she would need a lung transplant. And then about two weeks after that, she awakened one morning just in desperate shape. We had to call an ambulance,

take her to the hospital, and two weeks later she was gone. And actually, we expected her, the doctors did, for her to last only about a week. I'll be grateful for that last week because though she could not respond to what we were saying, she was able to acknowledge, you know, with a nod of the head or a smile, that she was hearing what we were saying.

Dr. James Dobson: She knew you were there.

And how old was she?

Zig Ziglar: She was 45, 46. I'm sorry.

Dr. James Dobson: And how many children do you have?

Zig Ziglar: I had four, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Four?

Zig Ziglar: We have four.

Dr. James Dobson: Was she the eldest?

Zig Ziglar: She was the oldest one. She sure was.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. What'd it do to you?

Zig Ziglar: Well, the first thing that broke my heart, Jim, but God is so good. He had impressed upon me a number of years earlier after I became a Christian, and I immediately started witnessing to all members of my family, but she resisted. And even a father can only go so far. She had seen her dad get excited before. And so, one day God just impressed upon me. It was almost like it was verbal. Why don't you write her a book? And I said, all right, Lord, we will write her a book. I wrote *Confessions of a Happy Christian*. Every word, every example, every illustration, every Bible verse, every story. Everything was aimed at bringing my daughter into the kingdom.

And God used the book for that purpose. And knowing where she was, Jim, was extraordinarily comforting. Doesn't eliminate the grief, but it makes it more bearable. And one of the things, two of the verses that gave me so much comfort, Psalms 139:16 tells us that our death date is determined before our birthdate. That removes guilt. We loved her as much as a child can be loved. We told it to her thousands of times. We provided the best medical care that was available. There were prayer meetings held for her in India and Israel and Canada, and all over America, and who knows where else, but God had her days measured. And so that removes guilt. We never once talked about maybe we should have or I wish we had or, you know, we could have.

Dr. James Dobson: Did she know she was dying?

Zig Ziglar: She did. She knew it many months before she died, Jim. And the reason I know she did, she told me one day, she said, "Dad, knowing your faith and your optimism, I'm afraid you're going to tell my daughter, Katherine, that you know God's going to heal her mother. Dad, we don't know that God is sovereign. If He chooses to heal me, I'll rejoice."

Dr. James Dobson: Now, you had your own frightening experience in a hospital. Bring us up to date on what happened?

Zig Ziglar: February the 22nd, I awakened with a full day planned. It was a few minutes after 5:00, and five minutes later I was calling to my wife, get dressed, we got to the hospital. I had my third attack of diverticulitis and my blood loss was large and instantaneous. Before she could get dressed and ready to go, I had the second blood loss. Got to the hospital, that was the third. I ended up losing six pints of blood and fainting, and they sent out a code blue. And Jim, what happened then is just one of those miracles of God because my daughter, who had spent a lot of time in the hospital with her husband who had a liver transplant, had insisted that she and her mother be permitted to ride down on the elevators. They took me to this room and when they sounded the code blue, my daughter jumped up screaming, "Are we losing him? Are we losing him?" Now, I was fainting. I was out at this time. And then she called her mother, "Pray, mama, pray. Call on Jesus." And she said, and they immediately just called on Jesus. And at that point she saw, they opened the door and she saw me and she said, "Hang on, daddy." She said, there are angels all over the place and Jesus is there.

Well, I was out only a very, very brief period of time, but when they sent out that code blue, it created a lot of excitement. My pulse had almost flatlined and they had the paddles out ready to use them if need be, but they did not have to. And when my daughter and my wife started praying there, it was just a matter of seconds that the pulse picked up and I was breathing. Again and I awakened to a nurse saying, "Mr. Ziglar, Mr. Ziglar, are you okay?" And I said, "Yes, I'm okay. Are you okay?" My daughter said she knew then that her daddy was going to be all right.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a deeply moving conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and his good friend, Zig Ziglar. I'm Roger Marsh and we have reached a pivotal moment in today's broadcast. We've heard Zig share about one of life's most difficult trials, the loss of his beloved daughter, Suzan, at age 46. Yet even in profound grief, his faith remained unshaken, drawing comfort from Scripture and the assurance of God's sovereign timing. Then Zig recounted his own brush with death, including a remarkable experience that his daughter described as, quote, "Seeing angels all over the place." Well, in these next few moments, you're going to hear Zig share two more extraordinary encounters that shaped his faith journey. And then we'll be joined by Zig's daughters, Julie and Cindy, who will share touching memories of

their beloved father. So let's continue now with the conclusion of this special reflection on the life of Zig Ziglar, right here on Dr. James Dobson's, Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: You had an experience with what you believe to be an angel when you are unconscious there. And there may be people listening to us today who won't understand that. I do because it's happened in our family. It's never happened to me, but I believe there are encounters like that when you're very near death for many people. What was yours like?

Zig Ziglar: I know in retrospect that I was unconscious when I had this dream, and it was so vivid and so clear. I saw an angel there in the room. He was a man about 55 years old, had on a straw hat and a tan suit. And he looked at me and kind of halfway smiled, and gave me a little hand signal that said, everything's going to be all right. In my dream, I had prayed to God and asked him to extend my life that I had so many things I wanted to do for my family and my fellow man. And God gave me the assurance in that dream that He would grant that wish and extend my life. And Jim, there's even another little, and I don't understand all of this, but my closest friend for the last 37 years is a Jew from Winnipeg, Canada.

He's more like a brother. And when he heard of my illness and the operation and all, he couldn't sleep. He was just terribly at ease. He turned and tossed and twisted, and then he had a dream. And when he told his daughter about it, she was stunned because he never dreams. Once in a while, he'd get some fuzzy picture, but he said he clearly saw our daughter Suzie. And she was dressed in white and looked like an angel. And brother Byrne said, she said to him, "Uncle Byrne, don't worry about dad. He's going to be with us a long time." And Jim, those are things I don't understand.

Dr. James Dobson: I don't understand them either, but they're real. And my father had an experience like that and he told me about it the last time I ever saw him. It was in October of 1977, and he died December 4th of '77. But this is the last time I had a chance to be with him. I had flown through Kansas City and had gone to the hospital. He'd had another heart attack and we didn't know that he was going to die, but he was seriously ill. And he said, "I got to tell you something. I have to tell you something." And it was about midnight by that time. And he told me about an experience he'd had that morning, where he had something on the order of a vision that occurred before dawn that morning. It was a gray light of early dawn. He described it in great detail and he said, "I was not asleep and I was not in a coma." And he said, "I was just lying there and I was praying, and just kind of gathering my wits about me."

And he said, "I saw this vision." And what he described was a man who was sitting at a table, writing, and he came to realize who that man was, because he was making the most eloquent plea for my dad before God. And describing the life he had lived and how he had tried to serve Jesus, who was the one that was writing. And it was like a lawyer making a case before the judge about this man. And then the very end of it, he said, he wrote the last word and then he threw his hand out and the last word was, he is acceptable. And everything

disappeared. And I believe my dad did have an understanding there, that Jesus was making a case for him. And if there ever was a man who deserved it, I think as much as any of us can, he did.

Zig Ziglar: Jim, I've had two other experiences with angels, and there's zero doubt in my mind that they were there protecting and looking after me.

Dr. James Dobson: You know how foolish this is going to sound to some people out there listening to us because it sounds so like a myth. It sounds like we are manufacturing things, but I believe it.

Zig Ziglar: Yeah. One of them, I very briefly will tell you, I crossed the railroad track on my way home one evening late. I remember crossing the railroad track and I remember turning right. The next time I remember anything was when the military police at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, their flashing lights awakened me. I was several, several, not several miles, but several blocks inside the fort. They had to lead me out. I had gone straight for five miles, had turned 90 degrees left, was doing about 65 miles an hour through the guard gate there at Fort Jackson. And that's what they told me later. And then they had to lead me back out of the fort. When I got home and told my wife about it, she said, "Honey." She said, "I was praying for you awfully hard tonight." I'm convinced beyond any doubt that an angel drove my car. People would say, well, you weren't really asleep. I was sound asleep, Jim.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we both have an awful lot to be thankful for. You had your brush with death, and I've had a couple of them myself, and I'm just glad to be here. You said in my office, you just had so much left you wanted to do.

Zig Ziglar: Yeah. I'm grateful to being here, but the good news is that God called me on home at that point. I was ready to go.

Dr. James Dobson: Were you ready?

Zig Ziglar: I was ready.

Dr. James Dobson: No regrets.

Zig Ziglar: No regrets.

Dr. James Dobson: Nobody you need to apologize to?

Zig Ziglar: That's right. That's right. You know, I close my autobiography by saying that one day I would have my final code blue, and when it comes, I'm ready to go. But the question is, are you ready for your final code blue?

Dr. James Dobson: We're all going to have one.

Zig Ziglar: They're all going to have one. And Jim, then I give a clear-cut plan of salvation. The last thing I want them to read and think about is meeting Christ as their Lord. Everything else is bells and whistles.

Dr. James Dobson: Doesn't matter a bit, does it?

Zig Ziglar: It sure doesn't.

Dr. James Dobson: All the things we chase, the money, the fame, the power, the influence, the material things, none of it makes a bit of difference. It's all going to burn.

Zig Ziglar: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And the only thing that matters is being ready to meet him on the other side and to bring as many people as you can with you, beginning with your own family.

Zig Ziglar: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: I mean, that's the core of my value system. The absolute core.

Zig Ziglar: Same here. I've written the directions for my funeral. I know it is going to come one day. I picked out the songs I want sung, and as I told our pastor when I sent him the letter, when I go, I want to take a load with me. I want it to be the most evangelistic sermon you've ever preached in your life because there'll be some lost people there, and looking at what's left of my remains, but I won't be there.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, for those in our listening audience who have just joined us, I'm James Dobson, and what you've just heard was an interview done between me and Zig Ziglar, my great friend. And what powerful final words those were, spoken by Zig Ziglar. And that benediction summarizes the man. You can hear in his words, his character, his values, his love for his family, his love for the Lord. And to put a capstone on this tribute to Zig Ziglar, we have placed a phone call to his two daughters, Julie Ziglar Norman and Cindy Oates, and they are on the phone with us today. Julie and Cindy, thank you for joining us today. You've been listening to those words from your dad here on the phone, I think, and so you have undoubtedly been touched by what he had to say. What do you recall from your relationship with him, either one of you?

Julie Ziglar: Well, I'm Julie and I'll speak first. Dad was absolutely a totally supportive, kind, encouraging, loving father. And there wasn't anything that he did that wasn't with the mindset of how will this benefit this person or that person. And listening to what he was saying there, that's exactly how things did play out in the end. The pastor delivered the funeral service as he had written and requested, and it was powerful. And I know there were people touched, and I know there were people saved. And we're going to be hearing more about it as time goes on.

Dr. James Dobson: Zig took a nasty fall back in 2007 and he was badly injured, but he didn't even give up speaking then, did he?

Julie Ziglar: No, he did not. He just found another way to continue doing what he felt like the Lord wanted him to do, and that was to encourage people, maybe in a different way, who had suffered a setback and who were no longer able to function like they had. He wanted to show folks that you might not be all you had been, but you could still be everything God wanted you to be.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you and I talked on the phone a little earlier and I asked you if you all realized just how much I loved your dad. I met him way, way back. I guess it was in the seventies when he spoke in Aspen, Colorado. And I had the privilege of being there, and I saw his heart then, and his love for Jesus Christ. And he never hid that. He was an evangelist in a manner of speaking, and I told you that and you said something back to me that I appreciated. Tell me again.

Julie Ziglar: That's right. When you asked me if I had any idea how much you loved my father, I said that I believe that I did. If you loved him as much as I knew that he loved you, and I believe that was true.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell us how your mom is doing.

Cindy Ziglar: Well, this is Cindy. Mom is amazing. She's in a retirement home and she's made a lot of friends, and she's still hugging every chance she gives.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I hope you'll give her our regards. We heard today about the loss of your sister, Suzan, at the age of 46. You can imagine, I'm sure that they're together on the other side today.

Cindy Ziglar: Yes.

Julie Ziglar: Yes. And I tell you what, I just want to share this with you because it's such an extension of the interview that you did with Dad all those years ago. When the doctors let Dad know that his time was slipping away, his very first response was, "Well, you know, it's kind of sad to think of all of this coming to pass." And he spread his arms out wide. He said, "But you know, I just can't help but get excited when I really stop and think about it. Did you know the Lord has gone ahead, prepare a place for me that is so incredible? I can't even imagine it." That was his first response.

Dr. James Dobson: I feel the same way. Julie, your mother sent us a little note in the last week or two, saying that she hadn't been completely aware of the impact your father made on the world until after his passing, but it's going to happen again today and in fact, just has. Thank you all. Thank you all for joining us. We're out of time. I hope to get a chance to meet you at some time. Please come by and see us here at Family Talk, and our prayers are with you.

Julie Ziglar: Thank you, Dr. Dobson. Thank you so much.

Dr. James Dobson: God's blessings to you and your family, and especially to your mom.

Julie Ziglar: Yes. To you as well, and to everyone there who makes your ministry just serve God. Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, listening to Julie and Cindy share memories of their father and hearing their peace about his home going, really does bring a touching completion to this conversation with one of America's most beloved voices of faith and encouragement. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and a powerful conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and his friend, the late Zig Ziglar. From near-death experiences to heavenly encounters, Zig Ziglar's unflinching faith reminds us that life's greatest purpose isn't found in earthly success, but in being ready for that final moment when we meet Jesus face-to-face. Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you'd like to share Zig's inspiring testimony with a friend or loved one, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. There, you'll find both parts one and two of this memorable conversation, along with information about Zig Ziglar's books and his ministry. Again, you'll find all that information on our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

You know, Valentine's Day is just a few days away. Guys, it's actually coming up this Friday, hint, hint. We all know that marriage isn't just about chocolate and roses and fancy cards. Sometimes relationships face real challenges that require wisdom and courage to overcome them. That's why I want to encourage you to check out the brand new resource that is designed to strengthen your marriage, and it's The Love Must Be Tough email series. Drawing from Dr. Dobson's timeless book with that same title, *Love Must Be Tough*, a five-day series that will provide insights and trusted guidance to help you navigate both the everyday moments and difficult seasons of marriage. Each daily email includes practical steps, biblical encouragement, and additional resources to help you build a stronger, more resilient relationship. You can sign up for this free resource online. Simply go to drjamesdobson.org and then enter your email address. That's drjamesdobson.org, and then enter your email address for the brand new, Love Must Be Tough email series. Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. James Dobson: We all know we should listen to our children and our spouses, but we should also tune into the older folks who are around us.

Roger Marsh: Here's today's Dr. Dobson Minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: I was given a copy of a letter recently written by an 80-year-old grandmother named Mom Keltner, and it was sent with love to her family. This is what this quiet lady wrote on that day. "I need your patience when I don't hear what you say the first time. I need your patience when I think too much about the past. I need your patience with my slowness in my set ways. I want you to be tolerant with what the years have done to me." To sum up, time, patience, and understanding are the priceless gifts that I ask for. Mom Keltner expressed so beautifully here, what many elderly people wish they could tell their children. You know, you might want to ask the older members of your family to tell you the thoughts and needs that are trapped inside.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit drdobsonminute.org.