



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Holy Sexuality, Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Christopher Yuan

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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 we have an informative and an insightful program for you today, especially for parents and grandparents, especially in light of what's happening in the culture and even in the church with regards to holy sexuality. Our guest on Family Talk today is Dr. Christopher Yuan.

It's wonderful to have Dr. Yuan back with us. He's an author, speaker, ordained minister and Bible professor who taught at the Moody Bible Institute for over a dozen years. His speaking ministry is centered on faith and sexuality, and he has a fascinating testimony, which I know a lot of our listeners are familiar with, but we will get into that in just a moment. So you can understand his heart and how God has been using him to reach millions, both domestically and internationally, with this ministry that's centered on faith and sexuality.

Dr. Christopher Yuan and his mother, Angela, co-wrote a memoir called *Out of a Far Country*. And so to date, it's sold over 130,000 copies and has been translated into many, many languages. Dr. Yuan's second book, *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel*, was named the 2020 Book of the Year for Social Issues by Outreach Magazine. Now, he has recently produced the *Holy Sexuality Project*, which is a first-of-its-kind video series designed to help parents and grandparents to empower their teens to understand, embrace, and celebrate biblical sexuality. And this curriculum will be the basis of our conversation today. Dr. Christopher Yuan, welcome back to Dr. James Dobson's family talk.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Great to be back on, Roger. Nice to connect with you.

Roger Marsh: Yes. For those who may not be aware of this term, I mean, we just jump right in and sometimes we talk about things that we've been discussing behind the scenes here in terms of what's happening in the culture. But you've got this project and you refer to something that you call holy sexuality. That seems like it should be pretty obvious to Christians, but even in the church, it's a little

confusing. Give us kind of a 35,000 foot definition, if you will, of what holy sexuality means.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Yeah, well, sure. It kind of came out of my misunderstanding of what God was calling to, number one. And number two, that we have this tendency of pigeonholing ourselves into a secular framework. Heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality. And, you know, I'll be sharing my testimony in just a minute, but obviously God was so clearly in the Holy Spirit convicting me, homosexuality is wrong. And so I thought, well, heterosexuality must be right. But then as I kept reading scripture, really important, I realized, but wait, the Bible is also condemning various forms of heterosexual sin. And I thought, this is too broad of a category. And as I kept reading, I was like, there are just two options, which are either chastity and singleness or faithfulness in marriage. So in other words, if you happen to be single, to be sexually abstinent, then if you later get married and marriage being the only definition in the Bible, one man and one woman, that's faithfulness. So it's chastity and singleness or faithfulness in marriage. So that's what that term means.

Roger Marsh: Okay, and that's a helpful definition because there are a lot of people who have been muddying the water of late, especially in the church, as to what it means in terms, if you hear terms like gay Christian and things of that nature, and it's very confusing. I want you to speak, if you would, first just kind of give us an overview for those who are not familiar with your story, because when you write about things like holy sex, and you give us the definition like that, you are speaking from your experience of having walked down a path that was not holy sexuality.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: That's right. So this discussion that I have is not just intellectual exercise. It's not something I've just written a few books on, but it's something that's very real and personal. I wasn't raised in a Christian home, so my parents, we didn't go to church. Both of my parents were not Christian at all. Parents were born in China, raised in Taiwan, came to the United States for graduate school, and they met in college. They married here and had my brother and I. Well, I wrestled with my sexuality from a young age. Unfortunately, I was kind of exposed to pornography around nine years old, and this is back in the 70s.

And that began this confusion with all these situations going on. It was very taboo to discuss this. So I didn't have any of that encouragement that we have today, that pushing people to choose one way or the other. So I began wrestling with my sexuality. I had these desires and temptations that I couldn't explain and no one to talk to. So it wasn't until my early 20s, I'm originally from Chicago, and I was accepted to dental school, pursuing my doctorate in dentistry. My father was a dentist. And it was in my early 20s, I was then going to University of Louisville School of Dentistry. And there I came out. I embraced this. This is who I was. I told my parents, and this is what's so amazing, Roger, God used that crisis to bring my mother to faith.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: And then within a few months, my father did as well. And, you know, we talk about this in our memoir my Mom and I, that I co-authored. She wrote a chapter, I wrote a chapter. We go back and forth and back and forth, which is very intentional. We wanted to, not at all to justify this, but to tell my side of the story, which is so twisted, to show how prodigals, even though they're the ones just doing everything wrong, which I was, I felt like the victim. And which ties so much into the worldview today, which everything is seen through the lens of victimhood and the oppressor. And so I viewed myself as the victim. My parents are, they're clueless. They don't know. They don't love me, even though nothing was, their actions were not at all showing that they didn't love me. But so my mom came to faith, my father did. And I was like, you know what? Good for you. Not for me. I kind of thought they lost their mind, whatever. This is just a little trend that they're doing. And I went in the total opposite direction.

So while in dental school, I was doing what all my other classmates were doing, which is surprising. You would think in graduate school, you would have people very serious about school, which they were. But just as much as they were serious about school, they were also very serious about partying. And you would think in college, you know, that's where I'll party. Well, my goodness, it was... bars and clubs. And I'm not even talking about those that identified as gay. It was very common to go out on the weekends. Well, then I found the gay club. And at that time, before that, I wasn't out and open. But gradually, I found the gay clubs, I started going out, and then I became much more open.

But spent most of my free time in the gay clubs, you know, after I told my parents and I kept, you know, unfortunately I started doing drugs and selling drugs. And I always need to put this caveat, not all gay men or lesbians do drugs. I'm just telling my story. Drugs do cost money. And so I supported my habit by selling drugs. I sold to friends, classmates, even a professor.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Well, eventually I was expelled from dental school and I moved from Louisville, small, it was a small, big city, we would call it. And I moved to Atlanta, Georgia. There I kept doing what I knew how to do best, which is have fun, live it up. If there's no God, why not live it up? Just do whatever feels good. Love is love.

Roger Marsh: You drink and be merry. Yeah, sure.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: And so I kept selling drugs. I actually began supplying drugs. I was living very promiscuous life. My parents came to visit me one time and I actually kicked them out. I was believing the lie that all my friends were telling me, your parents don't love you. Kicked them out. My dad gave me his Bible before he left, and I took my Bible, and this is how much I hated God and religion. I threw it in the trash can.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: And it was just obvious to my parents that I was hopeless. But my parents committed not to focus on hopelessness, but upon the promises of God. And along with over... hundred prayer warriors. They had grown so much in their faith, very involved in churches. They were like Christian conference junkies. They just couldn't soak up enough. They got literally over a hundred prayer warriors and they began to cry out to God for me.

My mom began to pray a bold prayer. God, do whatever it takes to bring this prodigal son to you. She fasted every Monday for seven years and once fasted 39 days on my behalf. She spent hours every morning in her prayer closet, interceding for me, for many others, because she knew it was going to take a miracle. And this miracle came with a bang on my door. I opened up my door. On my doorstep were 12 federal drug enforcement agents, Atlanta police.

Roger Marsh: Oh my!

Dr. Christopher Yuan: And two big German Shepherd dogs. So I was arrested. I found myself in jail. I tried calling home. I did not want to make that phone call. And I just, you know, Roger, I was thinking I'm going to get an earful from home. But mom's first words were, son, are you okay? No condemnation.

Roger Marsh: No condemnation.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: No parading words. Just words of unconditional love and grace. I'm reminded now of what Paul says in Romans 2, verse 4, that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance. It's not God's wrath. Paul doesn't say that it's God's anger, but it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance. And on that miserable day, God was pouring out his grace and drawing me to himself through the words of my mom. Well, a few days after that, I was walking around the cell block, passed by this garbage can, and I'm like, that is my life. I'm from upper middle class suburb of Chicago. My dad had two doctorates. I was three months away from receiving my own doctorate I had made.

Roger Marsh: And you could have followed him in the dental practice.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: I was going to be partnering with my dad and it was going to just, his practice was going to be my practice. Everything was set. I was about to walk by this garbage can, this trash, this mound of rubbish, but something on top of the trash caught my eye. Bent over, picked it up. It was a Gideon's New Testament.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Took it back to my cell, opened up that good book for the first time I read through the entire gospel of Mark that night.

Roger Marsh: Oh my.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: But Roger, I wasn't thinking this is God's word, this is the answer. I thought I've got tons of time on my hands and I better pass it somehow.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: But as you know, as many of your listeners know, watchers know, what we have in our Bibles is not just ink on paper. It's the very word of God.

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: And it began to convict me. It began to reveal my sin, and it wasn't a pretty sight. Well, things got worse. I was called to the nurse's office. The nurse sat me down, and I knew something wasn't right. So she wrote something on a piece of paper, slowly slid it across the desk to me. I looked down. There was three letters and a symbol. It read HIV positive.

Roger Marsh: Positive, wow.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: The days after were dark, lonely. I was sentenced to six years, better than 10 years to life, but news of my HIV status felt like a death sentence.

Roger Marsh: Yeah. What year is this now?

Dr. Christopher Yuan: This was back in 1990, end of 98, December of 1998.

Roger Marsh: Okay, so we're still just a couple of decades into HIV and people panicking about AIDS.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Oh, absolutely. And I mean, you know, things were looking better, the medications were better, but we just, you know, middle of 90s, just people were just dropping like flies.

Roger Marsh: Right. Right.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: So I was laying in my bed a couple weeks after that in my prison cell, look up at the cold metal bunk above me. Someone just scribbled something and it read, if you're bored, read Jeremiah 29:11. For I know the plans that I have for you declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future. At the most hopeless point of my life, God used the words written by a prophet thousands of years ago to a rebellious nation, Judah, to tell me that if God could have a plan for Judah in rebellion, in exile, he might even still have a plan for me.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: I didn't know where that plan was going to take me, but God gave me enough faith and strength to get through that one day and the next and the next. My transformation was gradual. God was convicting of my idols, obviously drugs.

Within a few months, he delivered me from that addiction. God kept bringing in mind other idols. And there was just this one thing that I felt like I just couldn't let go of, my sexuality. So I went to a chaplain and I asked him his opinion. And to my surprise, this chaplain actually told me, The Bible does not condemn homosexuality. And he even gave me a book explaining that view. So Roger, think about it. I, with much curiosity, I took that book. I wanted, as we all do, we want our cake and eat it too, don't we?

Roger Marsh: Sure.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: I had that book in one hand and the Bible in the other. From my human perspective, I had every reason in the world to accept what that book is claiming to justify the way I had been living. But God's indwelling Holy Spirit convicted me that those assertions were a clear distortion of God and his word. I couldn't finish that book, and I gave it back to the chaplain, which meant I turned to the Bible alone. I went through every verse, every chapter, every page of scripture looking for justification. I wanted to find any shred of evidence that might bless a monogamous same-sex relationship. I went through the whole Bible. I went cover to cover several times. I had time. I looked and I looked and I couldn't find any.

So I was at this turning point. I was at this crossroads. Either abandon God and his word, live as a gay man, pursue a monogamous same-sex relationship by allowing my attractions to dictate not only who I was, but also how I lived. Or abandon pursuing a monogamous same-sex relationship by freeing myself from my sexuality and live as a follower of Jesus Christ. By God's grace, God saved me. As the days and the weeks and the months of abstinence passed, I realized that my sexuality should not be the core of who I am.

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: You know, of course, we know God loves us unconditionally, but... I, you know, as sinners, we sometimes like to add to God's truth. And so I added, so therefore he doesn't want me to change. Similar to your friends who might say, God loves me just the way I am, so leave me alone.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: But I realized that unconditional love is not the same thing as unconditional approval of my behavior.

Roger Marsh: Good distinction.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: My identity shouldn't be defined by my sexuality, shouldn't be grounded in my desires. My identity is not gay. It's not ex-gay. It's not even heterosexual for that matter, because my identity as a child of the living God must be in Jesus Christ alone. God says, be holy for I'm holy.

Before I become a Christian, I was under the impression to become a Christian, I had to be heterosexual. I needed to be sexually attracted to the opposite sex indiscriminately. I was even under the false impression that the more sexually attracted I were to lots and lots of women, the more of a Christian man I would be. But I realized that even if a man had opposite sex attractions, he would still need to flee temptation and resist sin. So heterosexuality, it's the right direction, but it's not precise enough. It's too broad. God doesn't say indiscriminately, be heterosexual for I'm heterosexual, but neither does he say, be homosexual for I'm homosexual. They're actually both secular Freudian categories. Instead, God says, be holy for I am holy. So the opposite of homosexuality is not heterosexuality. That is not the right goal. But the opposite of homosexuality is holiness. As a matter of fact, the opposite of every sin is holiness. I don't need to focus upon whether I'm struggling, whether I'm tempted, but I need to focus upon living a life of holiness and living a life of purity. Because change, it's not the absence of temptations, but change is the spirit-wrought ability to be holy even in the midst of temptations. Because the ultimate issue is not whether I'm struggling or tempted, but the ultimate issue is that I yearn after God in total surrender and complete obedience.

Roger Marsh: What an amazing testimony.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Yeah, and then God called me to ministry and I applied to Moody Bible Institute while I was in prison, got accepted. Came out of prison in July of 2001, started the very next month in August. So imagine the surprise of my classmates when I answered their question, what did you do this summer? I went on to get my master's in exegesis and then got my doctorate of ministry back in 2014.

Roger Marsh: That's fantastic.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: And then in 2011, I had the really cool privilege, co-authored my book with my mom. It's called *Out of a Far Country*, which you mentioned. And then my newest book, *Holy Sexuality in the Gospel, Sex Design Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story*. And that's where then I adapted that into our newest projects, which is on a video series geared just for the family, for parents and their teens to go through this video series at home to really develop some home discipleship patterns to discuss sexuality at home. Which is where it should be talked about primarily.

Roger Marsh: Amen. Amen to that. Dr. Christopher Yuan is our guest today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. And that remarkable testimony, which you learn more about Chris's path every time you have this conversation. But this new Holy Sexuality Project, I know there are a lot of parents, maybe some grandparents listening to us right now, Christopher, who are saying, well, we're going to walk the straight and narrow. We're going to, you know, we model biblical Christianity at home. So this is something, I mean, it's happening in the world, but it's really not impacting our homes. And I know you would push back on that, you know, respectfully, kindly.

But first of all, help us understand, if you can give us a frame of reference, it seems like in the past three, four, five years, this has really just completely turned on its ear in terms of the LGBTQ being the new standard and the world kind of adopting that, even some people in the church using that as the standard instead of saying, well, what's God's standard? Help us understand what's going on in the culture right now that we may not even be aware of how subtle it's been, but how impactful it's been.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Yeah, and it's too often we keep wanting to borrow from the world and accommodate. And it's not just ways to be relevant to be able to share the gospel better, but it's taking on these secular humanist, distorted concepts wrought in things like these philosophies and worldviews like critical theory that then distort God's truth. And what do I mean? What I see right now that pastors, youth pastors, church leaders, you know, Christian authors are getting wrong on sexuality, it's this. That they're conflating sexuality to be who we are. So they might even say, I have an orthodox view of sexuality. Or they might even say, I believe that gay marriage is wrong, which I'm happy they do that.

But once you concede that sexuality is, to get philosophical or theological, an ontological category, or to put in layman's terms, that it is a category of personhood, then we're not going to get anything right after that. Why? Because the Bible teaches against that. Never do we make our sin struggle who we are. Never do we make a feeling or a desire who we are. We need to be really clear who we are, that we are created in the image of God. That is something that's essential to who we are. But the world says something different, don't they, Roger? They say, no, your sexuality or your gender confusion is essential to who you are. Wrongly ordered desire is lust. So if a man looks lustful at you, desiring a woman, he's already committed adultery, Jesus says. He doesn't say, he's good, just don't act on it.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Dr. Christopher Yuan: Which is kind of what this movement, this gay Christian movement is promoting. Just don't act, but the desire is okay. People are even promoting and saying, no, gay can be sanctified, which is nowhere in Scripture does it say we sanctify sin. We put it to death, right? Paul says in Romans that we mortify it, the good old King James word. We put it to death. We don't toy with it. We don't play with it. So it's really key. And I think that's very important that we talk about this, address this with our kids because our kids are swimming in this and address this with the teenagers and helping them go through this. And I think it needs to be best done at home because I think a lot of youth groups are, in their attempt to be winsome, they're accommodating to the world and they're causing more confusion.

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Well, today on a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, you heard part one of my conversation with Dr. Christopher Yuan. We've been discussing

holy sexuality, identity in Christ, and his new video curriculum for families and teens called *The Holy Sexuality Project*. Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast, or if there's a parent or grandparent that you would like to share it with because they would benefit from this kind of biblical grounding, go to drjamesdobson.org. You'll find a link for the audio. You'll also find information about Dr. Christopher Yuan's book called *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel*. And be sure to look for the links for the *Holy Sexuality Project* video series. There are two different tracks you can explore when you go to drjamesdobson.org.

You know, the topics that Dr. Yuan raised today, like biblical sexuality, gender confusion, and how to talk with your kids and teens about all of it, these issues sadly are not going away. And if you're looking for a solid, grace-filled starting point to discuss this issue, I want to tell you about a free resource from the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. It's called *Transgenderism, Truth and Grace*. It's a five-day email series developed in collaboration with Dr. Owen Strand, author of the book called *What Does the Bible Teach About Transgenderism?* For more information on how you can sign up for this free five-day email series, go to drjamesdobson.org and search for that title, *Transgenderism, Truth and Grace*. Again, you'll find all that information at drjamesdobson.org. If it's easier, just type in jdfi.org, one in the same URL.

Conversations like the one you heard today here on Family Talk and the resources that go along with them exist because people like you have chosen to stand with the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Every day, we work to strengthen marriages, equip parents, and defend biblical truth, as well as introducing people who may not know him yet to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We invite you to partner with us in this mission. Your gift of any amount helps keep these broadcasts on the air and these resources in the hands of families who need them. To give securely online, go to jdfi.org. Or to speak with a member of our constituent care team, call 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to join us again next time right here when you'll hear part two of my conversation with Dr. Christopher Yuan discussing the *Holy Sexuality Project*. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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