



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing – Part 1

Guest(s): Nicole C. Mullen

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. As Christians, we can all expect to go through trials of some sort, both big and small. And during a season of trial, we can take great comfort in knowing that even though you're going through hardship, the Lord is walking with you, and will always make a way forward for you. On today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we're joined by multiple Dove award-winning artist, Nicole C. Mullen. Now, if that name rings a bell, you will definitely remember her worldwide hit songs like "Redeemer" and "Call on Jesus." Well, Nicole has certainly walked through her own seasons of heartache and abuse, learning to find hope through God's redemptive love. And she's also written a brand new book to encourage you. It's called *It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing: Courageous Stories to Inspire Godly Decisions*. Now, today's conversation was recorded shortly before Dr. Dobson went home to be with the Lord and Nicole's story will remind you that God can transform even your deepest hurts into something really beautiful. That's coming your way on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Nicole C. Mullen: Thank you so much, Roger. Thank you for having me. And thank you to Dr. Dobson and his wife. I too grew up on them. Just like Tori was saying, she grew up on me, well, I grew up on them, so we're all in the same race and the baton is just being passed around.

Roger Marsh: I love that.

Nicole C. Mullen: It's an honor to be here.

Roger Marsh: Well, it's great to have you here. And of course, the renaissance woman, Nicole C. Mullen, I mentioned in the intro, you are a Dove Award winner as far as your singing goes. You're Grammy nominated. So the question that will always be asked, of course, is how'd you get started? I mean, a lot of people love to sing, but not enough to necessarily follow it into a ministry of career like you have.

Nicole C. Mullen: Well, great question. Thank you, Roger. Well, I grew up singing in my home. My dad sang like Nat King Cole. He taught my two sisters and I to sing. I started

singing with them, I think at the age of two so it was kind of a family affair. My grandparents were Pentecostal pastors on both sides of the family. My parents were deacons, and so we were in church like 8, 9, 10 days a week, like always. And so we had a great platform to practice on.

Roger Marsh: Sure.

And it was probably around the age of 12 when the Lord used someone in our church named Sister Dottie to speak over me, that He was going to use me in song and in songwriting, and that He would give me songs in the night. And that very year I wrote my very first song. And I firmly believe that unless we give God our first offerings, our best, even the things that seem like they are not as special unless we give Him those things then He cannot entrust us with the greater things later. And so had I not written my very first song at the age of 12, that was glorifying Him and giving Him praise, I'm not sure if He would've entrusted me with other songs later.

Roger Marsh: Interesting.

Nicole C. Mullen: Yeah. So that's a part of my beginnings of a musical career. And I grew up in a great family. My parents loved each other. They modeled the Word well. They disciplined us. Well, we were speaking about Rebecca St. James and I came on her podcast one day and we were talking about how to properly love and discipline our children in a way that will have them going in the direction that they need to go, but at the same time that they will respect God and His voice and His ruling. And so my parents did that and I honor them, and my mom is my next door neighbor.

Roger Marsh: Oh, wow.

Nicole C. Mullen: To this day because of it.

Roger Marsh: That's neat. That's wonderful to hear that you and your mom still have that relationship. Now, you grew up in Texas, you're in the Nashville area now. Did you grow up in Texas?

Nicole C. Mullen: I landed in Texas for a while, but I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Roger Marsh: Oh, okay. So

Nicole C. Mullen: I'm from Ohio, and then I went to Texas for Bible school, and then I came to Nashville.

Roger Marsh: That's right. You're kind of a Bible nerd. I mean, when you get right down to it.

Nicole C. Mullen: Yeah. I am a self-proclaimed Bible nerd. I love the Word. I really do. I mean, I grew up with the Word in my milk bottle, but around the age of eight, when I

gave my heart to the Lord, I began to love the Word for who Christ is and for the stories that He showed me. And then at the same time, the examples that He left for us to follow. And so I am a Bible nerd, and you ask my kids, they'll say, I'll spin anything into it's time to learn something from the Word moment.

Roger Marsh: Love that. I love that. Nicole C. Mullen is our guest today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. And we're getting into a conversation about her book. *It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing: Courageous Stories to Inspire Godly Decisions*, and talk about inspiring godly decisions and courageous activities. Nicole, of course, best known for the song "Redeemer," and now that it's taken kind of on a life of its own 25 years later, what have people said to you about the song? I mean, we were talking before we started our recording here, and of course Tori, one of our producers onsite said, "Hey, I've been singing that since I was little. I love that song. It's incredible to meet you." It's one of those songs where you hear it. We used to call them driveway songs in the radio world where you've got to listen to the whole thing. Even if you just got home and you're sitting in the driveway, you're like, "I will sit in the car and listen to the end of this song." What have people told you? I mean, can you give us an example or two of a life that was changed because of someone hearing that song?

Nicole C. Mullen: Yes, I've heard everything from the Lord used it to save me from taking my own life, to the Lord using it to help me get through cancer. The Lord using it to give me hope that he was going to redeem my broken pieces, using it to give them courage to get out of just horrible situations, and to have that hope dangling that even though it might be messy now, I get messy. I understand messy, but that hope of there is a Redeemer who will buy back my pain and my shame. And because He lives, I can face tomorrow as well. And so I've heard the whole gamut.

Roger Marsh: I love that. And Bill Gaither just called, by the way, and he says, thanks for saying, because he lives.

Nicole C. Mullen: Anytime. Anytime. Oh, lemme say one more thing too, Roger. Yes. One of the other special things too, I've had a couple of really just great moments, stellar moments where the Lord has used the song, and the song is way bigger than I am, and I know that. But I've gone into prisons and I've been able to sing among those who've been incarcerated. But one of my favorite things is I've seen a choir of prisoners who were imprisoned in the natural, but on the inside, they were free and they were signing and singing, "I know my redeemer lives." And that moved me to another level. And then we had another occasion. I used to sing back in the day with Dr. Graham and then with Franklin, and then his son Will Graham. But during a Franklin Graham crusade, I was singing, and I think I had, I don't know, thousands, I don't know if people on stage with me singing in the choir. And all of a sudden, and this was in the days where we had the CDs and the CDs, we had our performance track on it, and all of a sudden the CDs started skipping. I'm singing, "I know my redeemer lives. I...I...I."

Roger Marsh: Yeah, right. Yeah, the wiki wiki.

Nicole C. Mullen: Yeah, the wiki wiki. So in the middle of it. So actually I was singing the verse and I was just about to get to the chorus, and I did this kind of motion of just cut the track and I kept singing. And before I knew it, the whole choir stood and rose and they joined in and we sang the rest of it acapella. And it was like a moment from Heaven because God showed up. And it was just one of those witnesses of sometimes we want to give up in the midst of hardship. We want to give up in the midst of embarrassment. We want to give up in the midst of disappointment. I get it. But it's in those moments that we're called to push forward. We're called to run for the hope that is set before us. And so just like you had said earlier, our suffering, it produces perseverance and perseverance. Character and character hope. And hope maketh us not ashamed.

Roger Marsh: Amen to that. Those great words from the apostle Paul and a song like "Redeemer" and a book like this new one from Nicole C. Mullen, *It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing* show us that courageous stories will inspire us to make good and godly decisions regardless of what the culture says. And even a song like "Redeemer," people don't realize, if I understand correctly, this was written during a pretty dark season for you, let's say a dark night of the soul, if you will.

Nicole C. Mullen: Absolutely. I think too, and I'll talk about that too, Roger, I think sometimes people assume that songs and stories that seemed to move them were probably written on mountaintops.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Nicole C. Mullen: That they were from the experience of victory. But oftentimes I find that the things that move me most have broken this in the midst of it. It's like that olive; it has to be crushed in order for the oil to come out.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Nicole C. Mullen: And so for me, a part of my story was even though I came from a stable home, my grandparents were married for 60 plus years. My parents were married for 54 years, five months and 14 days until my dad went to see Jesus. And my mom probably knows down to the minute as well.

Roger Marsh: Yes, yes. Good for her.

Nicole C. Mullen: Yes. But I came from a stable home. We got up in the mornings at 5:00 AM and we prayed as a family. We had family night on Thursday nights. My dad was our youth choir director. We went to church on Friday nights. We went to church twice on Sunday. So I came from a good stable home. My dad had a stable job, so I wasn't familiar with brokenness. And then when I was around the age of 20, I had already gone to Bible school in Texas and graduated, and I thought I was

grown. I was all of 20, Roger, and I just thought I was a full-fledged adult who could just rightly divide everything. And so when I met Mr. Wrong, and I thought he was Mr. Right and he had asked me to marry him. And anyway, my mom said, this is not of God. And I was at a moment where I felt like I had to prove that it was.

And before I knew it, we had said I do. And I went through three years of horrible physical, mental and spiritual abuse.

Roger Marsh: I'm sorry.

Nicole C. Mullen: And we were in Christendom. And so we looked good on the outside, but on the inside, it was a different story. And so I remember the Lord got me out of that situation. I had to eat some humble pie, but if I'm honest, Roger, I had a chip on my shoulder because my chip was, here I was, I was a good girl. I grew up in a Christian home. I gave the Lord my heart at the age of eight, I went to catechism at the age of 12, Bible school at the age of 17. I felt as if a lot of us will feel and can feel sometimes erroneously that God owed us something, God owes me nothing.

I owe Him everything. He promised in this world we would have tribulation. But He said, what do we do in the midst of it? Be of good cheer, why? Because He's already overcome it. Because He has, we will. So fast forward, so before I know it, the Lord gets me out. I make a secret vow to myself, and then before I know it, I'm in another relationship. Now I am pregnant. And I'm like, okay, what do I do? I'm in Christendom. Things look good on the outside. I asked God to forgive me. But now I'm like, okay, Lord, what do I do? This is where not just I live, but these are stories also Roger, that I hear from thousands and thousands and thousands of other women. And so before I know it, I'm like, okay, Lord, have I blown it so extensively that You can't use me? And so before I knew it, we said, okay, I do. And we were trying to make it right. And God graciously blessed me with a beautiful baby girl who is 31 years old now. I'm so grateful for her and for her life. Yes. And of course, I'm just 32, so I'm just saying.

Roger Marsh: I was going to say it's a miracle.

Nicole C. Mullen: Of course. It's a miracle, people. It's a miracle, yes. But in the midst of that season, I went into another season of heartbreak and I began to read, and my heart was I was having to learn to forgive for different reasons. Now, my heart was going through different cycles of betrayal and cycles that I pray no other woman has to go through, no other wife, but God is gracious. And in the midst of it, I began to read the book of Job. And normally we don't read the book of Job for encouragement. We're reading it because we're like, okay, he's woe is me and I'm going through my own woes.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Nicole C. Mullen: I was singing during this time, I had done background for lots of people in Christendom and I love them still, and I learned a lot from them. But this day I sat here in this very room that I'm in now, and I began to read the book of Job, and I saw that this man went from richest to rags in the back, from rags to riches again. The midst of his night season, he began to declare hope against hope. And Job said basically, I don't know what's going on, but I do know that my redeemer lives, and in the last day he's going to stand upon the earth and though my body be destroyed and my flesh, I'm going to see God.

So in the midst of my brokenness, in the midst of my heartache, I picked up my guitar and I began to sing the words of hope that became a song of healing for me first. And then it took me about a whole nother year to actually finish the song. But in the midst of that year, it had become my song of comfort that I would sing even on my bed, and it became my sacrifice of praise. And I didn't know that God would use my song in the night to become a song of light for so many other people around the world. I had no clue for me. It was, again, me giving Him my loaves and my fish.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Nicole C. Mullen: It was me giving Him my seed. And so the things that He has multiplied with it and through it and the places He has taken it, and the deliverance He has wrath through it is His glory and His glory alone. And so, I am so grateful that He chose to use someone like me as a poster child of what I can do with somebody who's under construction and does not have it all right. But He in the midst of it, my glory is for Him because He has shown brightly in my life and I've seen Him flex on my behalf. And so I want to give that encouragement to other people.

Roger Marsh: Oh, that's great. Encouragement from Nicole C. Mullen today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Her brand new book is called *It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing: Courageous Stories to Inspire Godly Decisions*. And we have a link up at drjamesdobson.org for all the music that you have written and performed, but also satisfying that kind of inner Bible nerd as you were talking about earlier in terms, now comes this brand new book, and this is kind of a departure of sorts for you, but what was the heart in wanting to write this thing? I mean, you've written songs before, you've performed before, you've done stage and screen, but this was kind of a new venture for you.

Nicole C. Mullen: Yes. Okay. So normally, Roger, when we are given a song, we have about four minutes, okay? Three and a half these days, okay? Two and a half these days to get your idea and the story across. And like "Redeemer." "Redeemer" is based on the Scriptures, have another song called "One Touch" is based on the woman with the issue of blood. There are lots of songs that I've written that are really directly from the Scriptures, but I thought, what better way for me to actually expound upon some of these characters who have heavily influenced my life for the good? They have been examples of how to walk through night seasons. And so the opportunity came where I was able to sign with David C. Cook and Esther Press to be able to deliver this book full of heroes and sheroes in the faith who

have encouraged me and that I want to pass on to other people so that they might be encouraged to make right decisions in the midst of a wrong kind of world. And so the book was born and it is to be delivered to you as soon as you get it.

Roger Marsh: Yes. I love that. Well, I love that term, the sheroes, because you talk a lot about the heroes, the faith, and more and more people are taking a look at Scripture and saying, "Hey, there are a lot of women who have just been overlooked." It's not that there was, in some cases, maybe there was a conscious effort, but in other cases too, I think once we get into the kind of church routine, there are certain stories we say over and over again. I was talking to Jonathan Erwin about the House of David Project. He said, yeah, you say David and Goliath and the whole world knows who you're talking about. But when you say Hannah and Peninnah for example, it's like, well, what are you talking about? Who's that? Who's Hannah? Who's Samuel? We don't know. But that's one of the sheroes that you point out in the book.

And I love, there's a quote that I want to pull from here and get your reaction to it. You talk about the fact that here she is, she's barren, she really wants a child. And you wrote "Like Hannah, once we have poured out our pain to him," to God, "we must discipline ourselves not to take it back." Talk about why that is so important for us because you and I both know it's one thing to come to the altar and say, I'm going to lay my pain. I'm going to lay my burden, but Lord, if it's too heavy, I'll just keep it in my lap while You're trying to heal me from it. Talk about that.

Nicole C. Mullen: Yeah. And I have to say, it is sometimes hard to be that Hannah type character, but she has laid a blueprint for us to follow. And it is so true because when we have hurt, when we have been wronged, when we have done wrong, sometimes we are so quick to want to hold onto it like a blanket and make it our identity.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Nicole C. Mullen: But like Hannah, who was grieved in spirit and she was just so depressed that she couldn't eat, that's a whole nother other. Because normally when I'm depressed or if I'm not doing good, I want some chocolate chip cookies. I'm just saying.

Roger Marsh: Right? Homemade.

Nicole C. Mullen: Okay. Homemade. But yes, you get it. But Hannah here, she was depressed and she decided to take her pain and not to pour more sorrow upon sorrow by ingesting things that were bad for the body, whether it was self-medicating or whatever it might be. But she decided to pour out her heart and her pain to the Lord. And when she did that, the Bible tells us that her face was no longer downcast and her appetite returned.

And so I believe that when we have truly poured out our hearts to the Lord, that it will show on our faces. You know that song, “If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.” I think it'll show in our countenance and our appetite for life will return, and then we have to do our part to make sure that we don't go back and pick up that old baggage and live in that old place or live from that same reservoir that's toxic. And so I just believe we are called to live in that fashion, and it takes discipline because we live in the flesh. And I think that's a part of the reason why Jesus gave us the Lord's prayer that the disciples asked Him teach us how to pray. And a part of it was “give us this day our daily bread.” And then He said, and “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” So Lord, in the same way that I need you to forgive me completely, I'm asking You today to help me forgive. And as an act of my will, I choose to forgive. We have to sometimes say, these are the people I'm forgiving. These are the deeds I'm releasing. And in doing that, then we're able to receive what God has for us and not what the enemy wanted us to be shrouded in.

Roger Marsh: And you had to bring up chocolate chip cookies.

Nicole C. Mullen: I did.

Roger Marsh: And I say that somewhat playfully, but also very seriously too, because it's such a great way to remember when you're dealing with a painful situation, when there's the things that are happening in your life and they're big things, and maybe it's painful because God's blowing up something you shouldn't have in your life and He's trying to redirect you and reroute you. But there are so many distractions in the culture, and I think it just breaks my heart when I see young kids three, four or five years of age staring at the screen, playing with the tablet. Parents are just trying to keep them engaged and entertained and quiet. And instead of saying, “Hey, wait, if there's a discipline issue here and we need to work through it, it might cause them a little bit of pain right now, but it's going to cause them a lot of pain later if they don't work through it.” And here you are saying, don't go to the proverbial chocolate chip cookie when you're trying to deal with a painful situation. Bring that pain to God and let Him deal with it. Don't keep taking it back. So my favorite dessert, homemade dessert that my wife makes. I'll never look at chocolate cookies again, Nicole, thank you. Thank you for that.

Nicole C. Mullen: But look, Roger, these days I'm making them with honey and with a lot of good ingredients, and so I don't feel as bad when I'm eating them now because I'm not just eating a bunch of just sugar sugar.

Roger Marsh: Well, we still have a lot more to cover in this brand new book by Nicole C. Mullen. *It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing: Courageous Stories to Inspire Godly Decisions*. But we're running up against the clock here. Nicole, can you join us again next time so we can continue this conversation?

Nicole C. Mullen: Absolutely.

Roger Marsh:

Nicole C. Mullen's powerful testimony reminds us that our most beautiful songs often come from our most broken seasons. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and Nicole C. Mullen's inspiring story of how God transformed her darkest moments into the hit song, "Redeemer." Now, if you missed any part of today's program or if you'd like to share it with someone who really needs a word of encouragement, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And by the way, when you're online with us there, you'll also find information about Nicole's new book. It's called *It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing*. Again, you'll find that information at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

In the weeks following our founder's homegoing, we are inviting Family Talk listeners like you to visit the Dr. James Dobson memorial website to reflect on Dr. Dobson's incredible legacy. You can read tributes from families whose lives he touched. You can share your own story of how his ministry impacted you, and you can also leave a memorial gift in his honor as well. The web link is jamesdobsonmemorial.com. That's jamesdobsonmemorial.com. And please keep in mind that these daily broadcasts exist and continue to exist to strengthen families through biblical truth and practical wisdom. Your support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute helps us reach parents and children with messages that build stronger homes and healthier relationships. And your tax-deductible donation of any amount helps us continue promoting the institution of the family and the biblical principles it's build upon. You can make a donation online through our secure website at drjamesdobson.org. You can also give a gift over the phone when you call our constituent care team at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Or if you prefer, you can send your tax deductible contribution through the mail. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949.

As parents, we all want to raise children who will make wise decisions even when we're not around to help guide them. If you're looking for practical help with this challenge, I encourage you to sign up for our free email series. It's called, "Raising Kids with Love and Limits" based on Dr. Dobson's timeless principles. This series will equip you with biblical strategies for setting boundaries while showing unconditional love. Now, this is a free email series. All you have to do is go to drjamesdobson.org and find the signup link right there, click onto it and you'll be good to go. That's drjamesdobson.org.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time for part two of my conversation with Nicole C. Mullen, talking about her life, her incredible ministry, and her brand-new book called *It's Never Wrong to Do the Right Thing: Courageous Stories from Scripture to Inspire Godly Decisions*. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

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

Dr. James Dobson: How does a father teach character to his sons and daughters.

Roger Marsh: With another Dr. Dobson Minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: One of the best ways that Dad's influence is transmitted is through consistent modeling. Character training is instilled through his demeanor and behavior. Your kids will imitate much of what you do. If you blow up regularly and insult your wife, your boys will tend to treat their mother and other females disrespectfully. If you're selfish or mean or angry, you'll see those characteristics displayed in the next generation. Fortunately, the converse is also true. If you are honest and trustworthy, caring, loving, self-discipline, and God-fearing, your boys will be influenced by those traits. So much depends on what they observe in you. Someone said, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one." There's truth in that statement.

Roger Marsh: For more information on this topic, go to drdobsonminute.org.