

SHOWNOTES - James Pullen (20/50)

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SPEAKERS

James Pullen (Guest), Scott Hilton (Host)

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Scott Hilton (Host) 00:16

Welcome again to another episode of that's my dad. James pulling this here my column Jamie gays and he's just a little guy. He's just my love friend now I'm only what three years old? Are you? Yeah, three years older. And we've been buddies since middle school. And we were just sitting around before we went on the, on the air talking about some good old times. But James came up here, long, five and a half hour drive to be here, and he's in town for some other business. So thanks for coming, Jamie. Oh, I'm glad to be here. So let me introduce you to folks. First of all, you've been married to him for 31 years. I went down and stayed with him. Emma is a sharp lady. I went down to stay with you for a few days, several years ago and Emma was remodeling your your kitchen. Yeah, miter saw and everything man, it made me feel bad. I'm thinking how poor James is. Ego must be? Yeah. Yeah, she can do anything. Yeah, she's talented and fearless and just you know, take you on anything. Beautiful, beautiful. Air. Everything. So James is y'all been married? 31 years. 31 years. got five kids. Jackson, Jared. Janie. Sarah and Sadie. Yes. And one grandkid, Brad. So Brad. Yeah. Brad with our so it's

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01:31

not the 80s Yeah. So you had to confuse me on that. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. All right. Red. Good deal. So Jamie, they, by the way, I'm gonna tell you, Jamie is fine. Yeah, that's what yeah, all my family. They call me. I say you know who she close friends. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So they say that. The proof is in the pudding. That's an old say. And we have so man, your kids came and spent the day with me a while back. And

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Scott Hilton (Host) 01:59

I'm so impressed with your five kids. And so that tells me that you you you know something about being a dad, you figured out a secret something and we're gonna try to dig into that. So to get this thing started, why don't you just start by telling us about your kids?

J

James Pullen (Guest) 02:17

Yes. So the oldest one is Jackson. And he's married have a wonderful daughter in law, Terry. And they were highschool sweethearts and Mary Jackson is a financial planner. And works in they actually live in flow Woods right right beside us. So and then so then there's Jared Jared works at Duke University for football operations and equipment. And then we have Janie and she's a rising senior at University of Alabama majoring in communications and advertising. And then we have certain citing the twins and so they just now finished high school and they're gonna be starting Vanderbilt University in the fall so

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Scott Hilton (Host) 02:58

so what are your kids are just super solid, Christian kids and and they've also managed to get into some kind of interesting jobs like Jared was a manager with the New Orleans Saints. Yes, yes. It was with the saints. Yeah, we'd be watching the NFL. Yes, I know that God I was, I know his dad Janie's Got she might not want us to talk. But she's kind of in a little connection with a little high profile situation there. Yeah. So in Alabama at Tuscaloosa, and then you probably get tired of hearing about this. But you babies were co valedictorians.

J

James Pullen (Guest) 03:37

Yeah, they were. Yeah. They did very strong academically.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 03:41

Yeah. And both scored a 36. On your AC T. Yes. Yeah. Both, which proves that they take after their mother. Right. That's right. And you notice the Oh, genetics versus environment? Yeah, they didn't take after their daddy because 36 Both of them score 36 I was just telling you before we came in, I had some guys that score 36 at the ranch, but took three of them to do it. Each of them score 12 Yeah, exactly. Exactly. You gotta be proud about those guys. Bachelor kid kids. So tell me what's the secret? I mean, what do you and Emma do that you bring up such not just smart kids but responsible and respectable kids? Well, you know,

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James Pullen (Guest) 04:23

it's really, I'd say, you know, I tell people, I'll probably count my parent my wise decisions on one hand, you know, only, I think a few things very well. One of the things you know we did was something that my parents gave my brothers and I, that was very special was, you know, when Emma and I moved Mississippi, we moved there from Richmond, Virginia. We were there probably, I guess, probably two or three weeks. And at that point, we, you know, visited like one other church, visited a Church after being down there about three weeks and that's what we we just saw This is our church and it was Lakeside Presbyterian, it's been a great church for us to raise our kids in. And, you know, it was something my parents, you know, they raised my brothers and I and Bellevue Methodist, right up the road here. So, you know, we had that consistency in our life. And I think that that's one thing that my, we were trying to give to our kids was that consistently, so they have a faith family, you know, around them. And I mean, I

think that's one of the things that, you know, is just really been, you know, real, you know, beneficial for them, that we have people who can support all the things that we're teaching them. And so, you know, it's been just a great, you know, family of people surround your kids with other believers. And I think that's, you know, something that we had growing up, and, you know, I know, it's not always the case for everyone, everyone can do that, you know, it's either move or, you know, it's hard to find, you know, there's no perfect church out there. But, you know, I think, you know, so I'm just, you know, put put your kids in that situation. And, you know, even this past year, when Sarah and Sadie graduated some of the notes that people from the church wrote, you know, you just, you know, just have, you know, a lot of people in their lives, I think, and then, you know, and the other thing that, you know, I've tried to do with my kids, and I know, You've done this a lot with your kids is, you know, teach our kids to serve. And you know, and that's, you know, all my kids have been on mission trips with me, we've all been to the same place, saying that, you know, in Belize, belmopan area, Belize, and, you know, just like kids just to be there and serve. And I think, you know, I can see that in all their hearts, you know, they all have a common desire to serve. And that's, I think that's something that you can do with your kids. You know, both those are things that don't really cost anything, but I think they have a huge impact do

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Scott Hilton (Host) 06:44

you think that does to a kid to go to another country? What it was it? What does it do to them emotionally, mentally, spiritually?

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James Pullen (Guest) 06:51

Yeah, I think it's a great, it's a great experience, you know, I always tell people, you know, a lot of times I'm in, you know, Belize, I get as much, you know, I get as much out of it as I feel like I give I get way more out of it. And just being, you know, they get to see, you know, how other people in the world live. And you know, what other people in the world have, you know, it's not, you know, and just kind of how, you know, one of the things I'm always moved by people in Belize, how they serve each other, because they know, they don't have a social safety net. And, you know, it's really, people just kind of take care of each other. And that's the thing, that's a great thing for kids to see, you know, it's not as much about, you know, just seeing what other people don't have, but just seeing how people how much they care for each other. I think that's one thing, you know, you probably see a lot in, you know, Central America is just people, they just take care of each other, and families, you know, take care of, you know, older members. And that's just,

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Scott Hilton (Host) 07:42

you know, I've spent a lot of time there. I know what you mean. So you think exposing your kids to those type things and surrounding them with with the right kind of people really helps a lot in that parenting process. Oh, yeah. So your mom and dad did that, too. Yeah. Let me just get let me go back a little bit for the sake of the listeners, because Jamie, you and I are so such good friends. I think we just jumped into this thing. But your your older brother, Jerry was my ninth grade football coach, and a mentor and a guy that I just think the world up to this day. And your other older brother, Joe is one of my best friends today. And Joe and I get together

every week now. But I had the honor, when I retired, of helping you, you guys take care of your dad, and your mom and dad, your mom still live and she's in a nursing home and suffers with dementia. But your dad passed away. Three years ago, I think two of the most wonderful people I've ever met. So if you would take us back to what it was like growing up, first of all, as as the as the little brother Joe and Jerry, but tell me about your dad and the impact he had on your life?

J

James Pullen (Guest) 09:00

Well, you know, I'm both my parents had a you know, tremendous impact. My dad was just a typical, my dad made life very hard on us, because he set such a high example, you know, is always kind of, you know, hard to kind of live up to that. It was a my dad was very interesting person he had you know, one thing that, you know, a lot of people didn't know, until, you know, compr up until the end was you know, he'd fallen Korea and been in combat in Korea, and was decorated over there. And, you know, I think that shaped a lot of the way he kind of saw things. You know, one you know, I remember he you know, he's always saying count your blessings, you know, anytime anything happened is always count your blessings. I think that's because, you know, just what he had seen, you know, growing up and he grew up in Aniston, Alabama growing up he had seen his older older cousin whose more like older brother was killed in the battle the bulge. And so, you know, I think for him, you know, and then what he saw in Korea, which he didn't ever talk about Korea, but, you know, from his diary and just, you know, the entries and everything, he saw some pretty, you know, difficult things. And, you know, he was, you know, I think it made me put things in perspective. You know, he never really got rattled, you know,

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Scott Hilton (Host) 10:14

he's he, he's always cool as a cucumber. I took him. I took him to the doctor's appointment when they, they said, Hey, you got cancer on your neck? And I was like, No, I've got cancer. I'm freaking out. But yeah, he's never never got rattled about anything. I always kind of had a jovial, not a careless, carefree, but I confident kind of demeanor about him. I'm curious, what kind of dad did your dad have? Do? You know?

J

James Pullen (Guest) 10:42

Yeah, so my, it was interesting. My father, he had a, my grandfather was doc Poland was his nickname. And he was from, you know, lived here in Gadsden. So he started working when he was 14 years old and steel mill here and get, you know, the skill, right? You're where you grew up. And so, you know, he worked in the steel mill at 14 to support his family. And, you know, and then he went, and did, you know, some other jobs and but, you know, he was a great father, you know, and it's just always been interesting to me, because he never knew his father, his father was actually a Civil War veteran. He was, you know, and so he, his father was, you know, old when he passed away my grandfather's like, you know, three or four years old. So what that led to was, you know, my grandfather, though, he had some, you know, just great traits, he passed down, and he formed a really, you know, incredible family, with my father and his two twin sisters. And, you know, my grandmother, and they were, you know, we're members of Wilmer Avenue Baptist Church and Aniston. And, yeah, it wasn't very outspoken

about his faith, but he was very solid. And he was very caring and very loving. And, you know, and I've always wondered kind of where that came from, because he didn't experience that. I mean, there's not a much, you know, 14 year old kid goes into steel mills in Alabama. I mean, you know, what, what led? Yeah, make some changes? Or, you know,

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Scott Hilton (Host) 12:10

yeah, I mean, that's gotta be a message to tell our target audience for with a podcast, which is guys are growing up without a father, you know, that's where my heart is to reach those guys. Your grandfather lost his dad when he was three. Yeah, had to go to work when he was 14. But he figured out how to be a good dad and look at what he did. Look at the generations. I mean, we're your fifth generation now of, or fourth, whatever it is. Have good, solid, solid people, solid citizens, solid, Christian people. Yeah. And it's just a minor choice. And I think that's such a message that we've got to get to, to the young man out there who would say, Well, you know, I didn't have such a great upbringing, so my family's not gonna be so good. No, you know, you can turn it around, you can be a script flipper, as we call them on the broadcast. That's interesting that your granddad I didn't know that. You know, I want to ask you, Jerry, your brother called me the day your dad died? Or I called him one. And, and he said, I said, How do you feel about it? And he said, You know, before my dad, I got to talk to him and tell him everything I wanted to tell him. So we've made it a tradition here on the podcast, and it's a little strange to some people, I guess. But what what would you like to say to your dad?

J

James Pullen (Guest) 13:32

Well, you know, first, I guess, you know, just thank you for just the love that you showed for my brothers and I was just tremendous. And, you know, just the way in which he loved our mother, you know, I don't know if I ever got to tell him that. But that was just, you know, he was so in love with her. And that was just such a great example, for my brothers. And I, you know, and just looking at our marriages, you know, hope that we've held on to that, you know, and just the way he you know, he always provided for us, and he always put us first and just the way in which, you know, he just led us and just, you know, all those days are just doing everything right, you know, whether it you know, just you know, getting up every morning going to work, not complaining about anything. And just, you know, just the way in which he led us, you know, and just that gift of bringing us to church, you know, getting three little boys ready for church every, every Sunday morning, pullin boy, yeah, exactly. Just, you know, putting up with the wildness and everything, but just the fact that he did that every you know, and just what a wonderful gift that was his faith. You know, the thing he left us with, you know, most price thing and we'd like to say to him, as you know, just those prayer journals that he ended just seeing how he was praying for people at the end of his life. And just, you know, the tremendous, you know, gift that's been to us. You know, just to be able to read that, yeah,

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Scott Hilton (Host) 15:02

he left the Journal of how he met your mother and their courtship and everything. That's awesome. I wish we all had. So, Jamie, James, you're about a month away from the empty nest? Yeah, I've been there. I can tell you, it's not easy. You're gonna just come in the day that you

and M are gonna sit down at the table, and there's gonna be five empty chairs. How often, by the way, did you guys sit down? When everybody was home? How often did you have dinner together?

J James Pullen (Guest) 15:36

We tried to eat dinner, you know, as much as we possibly could eating dinner together. And, you know, always asked one of the kids to pray. And it's always been, you know, just a great, because, you know, that's something we had, you know, we took turns praying, and just, you know, try to sit down as as often as possible, you know, I mean, it's hard sports and just hectic schedules. But I mean, I think that's something we always want to do and sit down and eat together. And

S Scott Hilton (Host) 16:04

how important do you think those those dinner discussions were in the development of character and your kids?

J James Pullen (Guest) 16:10

I don't think it's huge. You know, it's, you know, a lot of times, you know, one thing that I see a lot is, you know, I think a lot of times people, especially social media fuels this, Facebook, that, you know, there are no perfect families, you know, even though we think they're a perfect fan, everybody wants you to think they're perfect families that everything's great. And, you know, those were a thing, you know, those were opportunities, you get to sit down and just hear, you know, kind of what's going on. And I think, you know, a lot of times, you know, on Facebook, people want to have these magical experiences, they share crazy vacations and things, but, you know, really what your kids need is they just need time, you know, they need, you just need to be present, you know, be present, you know, I think for parents, you know, sometimes, you know, it's probably but you know, sometimes we have to, you know, put down the phone, put down the golf clubs, fishing poles, turn off the TV, just, you know, it's just, you know, and just be there with them, you know, and, you know, listen to what's going on, and, you know, hear the stories about, and because it's generally over time, you know, if you think you're going to get all done in 10 minutes, when they walk in the door, you're kidding yourself. But you know, if you wait, you know, a lot of things come out later, you know, the more you're with them, you know, that all of a sudden, something will come out that you kind of find fascinating, or, you know, something you didn't know was going on in their lives, they'll kind of share it with you, and everything, and

S Scott Hilton (Host) 17:39

what would you think, is the key to being a great dad?

J James Pullen (Guest) 17:44

Cash, you know, first, I think that you have to make that your number one priority. You know, I

Gosh, you know, I just, I think that you have to make that your number one priority. You know, I think that of all the things that we you know, try to accomplish in life that'll have the, you know, the most meet, you know, you know, no one knows what your, you know, bank account balances are when you die, no one knows, you know, all the things that, you know, you and I, you know, we played in some very big football games, football games, were there 10,000 People there screaming, and, but no one's gonna remember, you know, most people can't even remember those games, but your kids, those are the things that will last, you know, those are the things that you know, I mean, that's what will really last is kind of the, you know, what my grandfather, you know, you know, talking about, you know, what he passed down to my father, and, you know, those are the things that really have eternal value. And I think that that's what is, you know, as parents, we just have to, you know, you have to focus on that this is the most important thing. Excuse me, this is most important thing you ever do, you know, so, you know, athlete, you know, it's, it's fine, because I think you as men, were naturally fighters, you know, but, you know, this is kind of the one thing worth fighting for. But you know, I mean, but we argue about everything else, you know, we argue about Auburn, Alabama football, or, you know, or the different things, you know, and people, you know, go back and forth. And, you know, they want to fight about, you know, thanks politics and everything, but this is, you know, your family's kind of one thing, that's, you should be the most important thing.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 19:19

You've kept it a priority. And, man, you you just, you deserve a lot of praise for the family. And I kind of started down this road, the days come in when, and it's not too soon. It's just weeks away for you. Are you and am I gonna be sitting around that table? And there's gonna be five empty chairs. Yeah, you're gonna look at each other. A lot of people are going to say what was I thinking because they're going to have an attic full of trophies and travel ball. Yeah. And they're not going to have those memories that you've built. So we thought we're gonna give you a little gift that you can sit down Look at when you and Emma get to that point, your kids did a little something for you. We want to share that with you.



20:10

Think about it. Most of all, my dad is willingness to serve and help other people with such a positive attitude. No matter how busy he is, he's able to help others with such grace and compassion. never seems to be an annoyance or an inconvenience to help someone when they're needed. Or when somebody asked for help, no matter the situation, and something I've always admired about you.



20:29

One thing I've always loved about my dad is his genuine kindness and positivity. Anytime I'm having a bad day, or going through anything, he always has a great positive attitude about and a smile on his face. And he can really help me see the light at the end of the tunnel. Whenever I'm struggling with anything, he's also just the kindest person. I know. He goes the extra mile for everyone around him, not just his family, but anyone in his life. He'll he just truly has a servant's heart. He really just wants to help those around them and be kind, and really show them you know, that he's there for them in any way that he can. And I just think that speaks to so much to like, who he is as a person. And I've always strived to be like him in that way.



21:13

The thing I admire most about my dad is his commitment level to his family and his church, second to none. It's how he spends the vast majority of his time I've seen him get home late in the day from work and then turn right back around and go to a long session meeting that night. The five of us are extremely blessed to have a such a godly example in our lives.



21:35

The thing I like best about my dad is that he has so much patience and compassion for everyone, even people, he doesn't really know that I'd like to thank you for being an amazing role model and for setting such a positive example for us of how to show grace to others. And be kind. Thank you for always giving the best advice. And thank you for always being there for all of us.



21:56

Hi, my name is Emma, and I'm married to James this past June 2, we celebrated 31 years of marriage, we have five children, one grandson and another grandchild on the way, James and I met in college. And I knew very quickly that I was going to spend the rest of my life with him. And he has been a wonderful husband and a wonderful dad. But he had a little bit of a cheat sheet. His dad Jerry was just a wonderful and godly example of not only a man, but I have a dad and a husband, a grandfather and a father in law to me, and we miss him terribly. But he he was a great example. And James tries to emulate him in his life. And so as a result, we we have a wonderful dad and a wonderful husband. James is exceptionally kind, he never meets a stranger. And in fact, he's had so many conversations with strangers that were so enthusiastic that I had to ask him well, did you know that person and he says no, I just met them, but they were having a great time. And this happens a lot where he just meets someone and they become instant instant friends. James and I have always tried to raise our children in the church. And we always had them there when when the doors were open. And he's also been the spiritual leader in our home. And one of the things I loved about him as a dad, at night when he would tuck our children into bed, he would say I love you and God loves you. And I asked him about that one night. And he said, Well, that's what my dad always said to me. And I said, Well, your dad still says it to us. And he's he was always pouring words of affirmation and love and encouragement into all of us and total strangers that he would meet as well. So we've had a great example. And James has had a great example. And we are fortunate and blessed to call him Mars. We don't tell him that enough, but we love him so much. And he just means the world to us. And on a side note, James thinks the world of Scott and Scott's ministry and Scott comes up quite a bit in our conversations. You know, James will say, Well, Scott Hilton would say this, and Scott Hilton would say that. So James has the utmost respect for you, Scott and loves you like a brother and we are fortunate and blessed to call you a friend. So thank you for this opportunity to allow me to brag about James and thank you. Bye. It Mike fields.



Scott Hilton (Host) 24:14

Oh. aosh.

J James Pullen (Guest) 24:15

that's so incredible. What a great gift. It's like, you never got anything else for rest of your life. That'd be Yeah, like all Christmas and father's days and everything else. It's all taken care of birthdays wrapped up in one. Yeah, present right there. That's incredible. Thank you for doing that. That's yeah, what a blessing.

S Scott Hilton (Host) 24:33

I started out with it. Lastly, and the proof is in the pudding. And you're at the end of the year at the end of the most the biggest stretch you never quit being a parent. But in a few weeks you're going to understand what the empty nesters like for hopefully briefly because get those grandkids Yeah, but congratulations James and you've done a great job man.

J James Pullen (Guest) 24:56

Well, thank you Scott. I you know, I had a lot of great Uh, teammates, I think you know what Emma said just, you know, just so proud of what you've done here, you know, and just the way you you know, what you accomplished in your life, you know, just taking care of these kids here in Gadsden, and you know, I think I had I had one teammate make the Pro Bowl all my teammates from Tennessee Military Institute made the Pro Bowl game and then had another teammate Brian bufton was commanding officer, Marine One for all four presidents. But I think I'm proudest of you, you know, Scott, and everybody, you know, you've done some incredible things here. And appreciate what you've done in appreciate you doing this podcast.

S Scott Hilton (Host) 25:39

Thank you. I appreciate that. We better wrap it up, but we're gonna. Yeah, we're gonna get the desk wet. Thanks, buddy. Appreciate that. That'll conclude this episode of that's my dad, where we're inspiring young fathers to become great dads and we're seeking to break cycles of generational fatherlessness. Thanks again, James. See you next week.