



DR. JOHN TOLSON

Biography

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Dr. John Tolson is a nationally renowned teacher, speaker and author who has spent more than 30 years making a profound impact on the lives of others. As Founder and Chairman of The Tolson Group, he oversees a collection of ministries across the country that specialize in outreach and discipleship training for adults and students.

Of his many leadership roles, Tolson is also the Founder and Chairman of the Board for The Gathering USA, Inc., a national outreach movement formed in 1978 that teaches men leadership principles and motivates them to be active in their families, churches and communities. Through Tolson's Gathering ministry, about a half million men in 16 U.S. cities (and soon to begin in South Africa) have been mentored and served. The Gathering has developed a following among many prominent business, professional and government leaders nationwide.

Tolson's background also includes being a spiritual "coach" for some of the nation's leading executives, celebrities and sports teams. He is credited with establishing the NBA's first chaplain program in 1978 and over the years has been the chaplain for teams such as the Houston Rockets, Astros, Oilers and the Orlando Magic. His inspirational touch off the field has been affirmed by many notable sports figures. Through the years, he has developed connections with Tiger Woods, Monica Seles, David Robinson, Justin Leonard, Julius Erving and the legendary Coach John Wooden to mention only a few.

Tolson's motivational message for balancing life, family and faith has inspired many groups and individuals. Because of his expertise, he is frequently tapped as an educational and motivational speaker by media and business organizations. His work includes presentations to major churches, corporations, universities, the military and other groups. Those that have called upon his real-world, winning life principles have included Walt Disney World, Promise Keepers, Hyatt Hotels and the leading sports marketing group IMG. Tolson also has been featured in publications including *People Magazine*, *Sports Illustrated* and *The Orlando Sentinel*.

Aside from his road travels, Tolson is the creator of a number of church-based workshops and seminar programs. In the last three decades, he has authored countless messages with topics ranging from marriage and fatherhood to work management and leadership training. His latest workbook, ***The Four Priorities: Life is Too Short to Get It Wrong***, is an adaptation from a successful 40-week discipleship program that he co-wrote for The Gathering.

Tolson is a native of Bradenton, FL. He graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA and received a Doctor of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA. He also attended and played basketball and baseball for Northern Arizona State College.

Tolson also teaches at the 4200 member, Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, TX where he runs several leadership programs. He is married to “Punky” Leonard Tolson, who is also active in his ministry. He is the father of two grown children from his late wife Ruth Anne and he has two granddaughters. Before moving to Dallas in 2002, Tolson spent 20 years in Central Florida.

When he’s not coaching a person in need or speaking at an event, Tolson stays focused on spreading the well-rounded principles of his Four Priorities discipleship book. Through this newest work, his goal is not only to teach discipleship but to show others how to reproduce these principles in others.

“Achieving balance in all things is the truest measure of success. It’s not letting what you don’t do well interfere with what you do best.” —Dr. John Tolson

