



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: How One Couple Came to Believe in Adoption – Part 2

Guest(s): Robert and Karine Baltodano

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Family Talk is the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and today's program is going to be of tremendous benefit to you and your family, especially if you know someone who's going through the challenging season of infertility. As you know, expecting parents are so excited to see their new baby for the first time. They look forward to all the firsts they'll get to experience as well. The first laugh, the first steps, and the first words. Sadly though, it is heartbreaking for the young couple that is struggling to welcome that new child into their family on their own. And today, here on the broadcast, we're going to continue a conversation with a couple who've gone through the pain and confusion of not being able to conceive and carry a baby to full term. And yet, through God's guidance and love, they have now opened their hearts to adoption.

Robert and Karine Baltodano are back on the program again for part two of this powerful conversation. Robert is the general manager of the Bridge Radio, serving listeners in New York and surrounding areas. He served in pastoral ministry since 1998 and in addition to his broadcasting roles, also serves as associate pastor of Calvary Chapel Old Bridge in New Jersey. Karine Baltodano earned a master's degree in marriage and family therapy and in education, and served as a middle school counselor for 10 years. Currently, she is managing her home alongside Robert, and together they have two children that are such a blessing.

Recently, the Baltodanos joined our co-host Dr. Tim Clinton at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention in Orlando, Florida. Let's return there right now for part two and the joyous conclusion of this special conversation right here on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Robert, Karine, welcome back to Family Talk again. What a program yesterday, but I think everybody's waiting to hear the rest of the story. And so, hey, let's just jump right back in. We're talking about infertility. Hey, upfront, this is

something that's about what?, one in five couples, one in six couples battle with?

Karine Baltodano: Easily.

Robert Baltodano: Yeah.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And people don't realize how prevalent this is and the journey that people go on. Do you guys see it a lot in your own community around you?

Karine Baltodano: Absolutely.

Robert Baltodano: Yeah.

Karine Baltodano: When they do hear about our story, then people are more open to talk to us about it.

Robert Baltodano: We have good friends right now going through it, going through a lot of pain, a lot of heartache because it is a rollercoaster ride when you're not where we are. And this is just our journey. We're not saying that this is everybody's journey. This is our journey that God specifically put together and everybody has a different story.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yesterday we got to the point where adoption was settled in as an option for the two of you. You finally get there, and knowing the two of you, you wanted to be private and let's go through this journey. But this initial phase, if you will, on the adoption process was pretty bumpy and it kind of blew up on you. Do you guys mind telling us what happened?

Karine Baltodano: Well, I'll share that. Our first journey started with Ted Youmans, our adoption attorney, and he had said, "We have two children that have to be placed right away and the family is picking who will be their parents." And it was a whirlwind. We found out-

Dr. Tim Clinton: So private adoption.

Karine Baltodano: Actually, it had dabbled into Foster-Adopt because the parent had passed away and the system had stepped in, but not so far that they were placed out yet. And so the family, the grandmother and uncle were going to find the parents. They get to pick. So we got the call.

Dr. Tim Clinton: So you guys had to apply and?

Karine Baltodano: That's what threw us.

Robert Baltodano: On this one it was different, because Ted Youmans kind of got us in front of the line, if you will. He was able to-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Your attorney?

Robert Baltodano: Yes. Our attorney, yes.

Karine Baltodano: You could get a temporary guardianship.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Gotcha.

Karine Baltodano: Even without a home study.

Robert Baltodano: So he had that case and he thought of us. Says, "Hey, here's an opportunity for you guys."

Karine Baltodano: So we went, we met with the family, we talked. It was a Thursday, we were going to find out by Friday, and the children would be in our house by Monday. It was a whirlwind experience-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow!

Karine Baltodano: ... and we were chosen by the grandmother and we were super excited and we're thinking, "I need to quit my job this weekend. We got to go get a crib at Walmart. We got to do everything."

Robert Baltodano: We were in this two bedroom town home in Newport Beach and we're like, "Oh boy, here we go." And that's when God began to really bring this reality to my heart. I'm like, "Ah, it's going to happen. I'm going to be a dad." And so it really got me excited.

Karine Baltodano: Friday morning we get the call that the uncle had chosen another couple and the lawyer said, "We can fight this." And we said, "No, the children are priority and we're not fighting this." And the uncle chose the couple. And then we were devastated and brokenhearted, but we got a taste.

Robert Baltodano: It didn't depress me, it got me angry. And I said, "We're doing this. Let's do this."

Karine Baltodano: And that's when we did the home study. We jumped in, started doing our home study.

Robert Baltodano: We got aggressive with it.

Karine Baltodano: Got a lawyer, got a social worker.

Robert Baltodano: It got me over. That was the tipping point for me. I was like on board.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Isn't that something? Wow!

Karine Baltodano: So we did, and we said, "If the situation occurs again, we're ready." And so then I was reading Adoption for Dummies. And so there is a book, and in the very first chapter, "If you're on the process of adoption, tell everyone." And so we wrote in our Christmas card, "Going through our home study, we're going to be adopting soon," because we were praying for a family unit. We wanted a family of four and done. I really wanted orphans. I was hoping that parents were out of the picture and we would be good. We are done. And then in our Christmas card, when I said we're going to be adopting soon, it went to some close friends.

Robert Baltodano: We just asked, "Just pray for us," is what we asked. So I'm at work, and so this is the first of the year and I get this phone call from our friend, "Hey, I received your Christmas card and I noticed that you guys are wanting a prayer for adoption. But listen, there's a lady in the church who has a daughter who's pregnant. She's a believer, she's very healthy. She just unfortunately got into some bad things and she's pregnant now and they're looking for somebody to adopt the baby." And it was surreal for me. I'm like, "This is not that easy, is it?"

Karine Baltodano: Well, it was exciting because they were-

Robert Baltodano: It was, and I called you.

Karine Baltodano: ... waving our Christmas card, praying for us, and her grandma's there.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I can see it in your faces.

Karine Baltodano: That's crazy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I mean, as you're going through that. I could see what was happening to you.

Robert Baltodano: Yeah, because I called her right away. I said, "I just got a call from our good friends. They said that there's a young girl who's pregnant who is thinking about adopting her baby and he's thinking of us." And her and I were like, "Ah." We were almost saying almost, no.

Karine Baltodano: I said no.

Robert Baltodano: I mean, that's how dumb we were because we were so like, "Is this real?" And we're like, "Well, maybe not. I don't know." We start getting scared.

Karine Baltodano: Well, when someone is choosing to give their child up for adoption, the world is open. It's a beautiful thing honestly. They can choose anything. And it's not like they lost their child and the system's deciding. So here's a situation. She got to call the shots. She could know that she was in control. And so we befriended her. We loved on her.

Robert Baltodano: We went out for coffee and we were there talking and then we weren't thinking-

Karine Baltodano: Just encouraging her.

Robert Baltodano: ... we would be the ones to adopt your baby. We weren't thinking that. We were kind of deflecting it. And then she's like, "No, I want you guys to be the ones." We're both like, "Okay." It was odd it. It was weird. Here we are, right, we're struggling. We're wanting to have a baby and whatnot, and here's an opportunity, prime opportunity of this healthy young girl who wants to just give up her baby to adoption to us. It was a weird thing, it wasn't hitting home.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There's a piece of me that wants to stop right here for a moment. Just put a bookmark in it. I wish a lot of the girls who were carrying babies and they were conflicted, could hear the joy that flows out of people who would love to adopt their child. You see that? And I think about all those kids out there who have gotten placed in foster systems and more who are lost and how there are couples out there just dying, wanting to embrace them. What an opportunity, what a ministry. You know that?

Robert Baltodano: Yeah.

Karine Baltodano: What a privilege. What a privilege for us, because they choose us. It's not us choosing them. It is a privilege.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I go back to the human side of this.

Karine Baltodano: Yes, please.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And that is the excitement, the fear, the complication of being rejected and now figuring out how to keep going and be hopeful. Because I think there are a lot of couples out there in that state. It's like a grind, if you will. You've got to keep grinding. Take us through that.

Robert Baltodano: So after we met with her, we finally said, "Okay, let's do this." We contacted the attorney that we had, Ted Youmans, and he started the process. And to make a long story short, we just start going with her to her appointments. Every time she had an appointment, either me or her together, we'd go and sit there with her. She could see the baby. She's growing and stuff. So we're on this journey with her. But there were some moments that it was hard because she was also dealing with the dad, the father who wasn't cooperative. And so that threw in a lot of issues in her life where she would be MIA, she would be missing in action for a while. Then we're like, "Oh, here we go."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Talking about a rollercoaster.

Robert Baltodano: Oh, big time.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Goodness.

Robert Baltodano: And we're like, "Oh, it's not going to happen." So I start getting mad. I mean, we poured a lot of money into this. She's not returning calls, we're not hearing from her. We're trying to get ahold of her. And at that moment we're like, "We lost this one." And in my mind, of course, I'm thinking like, "We poured money into this so far." And I'm thinking now she's going to run off because there's still that chance. She could easily say, "I don't want this anymore." That was the-

Dr. Tim Clinton: That's a lot of the challenge of private adoptions, right?

Robert Baltodano: It is.

Karine Baltodano: Private and agency. The mother at any moment can back out. And it should be that way. This is a huge decision.

Robert Baltodano: Sure it is.

Karine Baltodano: This is not light-hearted. And I decided to commit to her. That even if she backed out, our baby girl would be fine. We knew she was a baby girl at 20 weeks. And then we decided, because we got calls from Foster-Adopt saying, "Hey, we have two, we have this." And I was tempted to jump off that private adoption and jump into, "We can have them." But I said, "We have to commit with her." She's going through this. She's making this really hard decision. Even if she changes her mind at the hospital, we've walked this journey with her, and really loved on her in that way.

Robert Baltodano: So we passed through that issue, that little kink that we had, a little moment that I thought we were going to lose this opportunity. Then-

Karine Baltodano: We got to be there.

Robert Baltodano: ... we're at home sleeping. 12 o'clock, we get this phone call. She's in labor. We got up quickly, put on our clothes and drove over. We get there and there she is. And they only allowed one person in. So I had to sleep in my car in the parking lot. Because they're like, "You can go get a hotel." I said, "I'm not going to the hotel. I'm going to sleep in the parking lot."

Karine Baltodano: He literally was outside the window.

Robert Baltodano: So we had a SUV. I put the thing down, I'm sleeping all uncomfortable. She stayed in the room with her and then she texts me. She goes, "The baby is born." And I'm like-

Karine Baltodano: Well, the exciting thing about all this, do you know how there's no coincidences? You think you have this plan? And our birth mom had decided, "I am going to sign the 24-hour waiver, but I'm also going to sign that I don't want to be on the maternity ward. I want to be up in recovery on another part of the hospital." And we have all the lawyer signatures to do so. And they say, "Nope,

sorry. You can't, if she does that, the baby's taken into NICU and no one gets to touch." And I'm thinking, "This is not okay, and this is not healthy for the baby." So we talked and she agreed "I'll be in the birth unit." And I said, "Okay." And I went to the nurses and pleaded the situation. I said, "We need a suite. I need to be in there with her. She's allowing me to."

And God opened up the suite because it wasn't available. They moved us in. I was in one bed with the baby on my chest, and she was in the next. She needed to know the baby was well. And I would see our little girl. She would be resting on me, and then she'd hear her voice and lift up her head, but then rest on my chest. And I'm feeding her and she'd hear her voice. And it was this thing. I know it doesn't happen in a lot of adoptions, but this miraculous 12 hours, even though you're in your car sleeping, was needed for our little girl. It was needed. And so it was sweet and it gave us a way. And she chose not to hold her. She chose not to feed her until the very end when all the paperwork's done, we're signed out. And then they asked her and she said, "I want to see."

And she takes her little girl, she unwraps her and names all of the body parts. This is her dads. This is her aunts. And I wrote it all down. And to see how loved our little girl was. And of course we documented all this. I have a book with all these emails and texts and conversations. So she knows she is loved on.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And there's that connection. I had the privilege of meeting her today.

Karine Baltodano: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And what a beautiful moment. And I think about the joy that God has brought to the two of you in and through her.

Robert Baltodano: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In this journey together, the two of you decided to go ahead and adopt again.

Robert Baltodano: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: This is a unique story. And can you tell us a little bit about what happened?

Robert Baltodano: Yeah. Well, our little girl, we had her. I'm super excited. I'm like, "This is all I want. I don't need anymore. This is it." And then my wife, of course, who's always running ahead says, "I want another baby." I said, "Honey, we just went through this. This is a lot, not financially, but emotionally." She goes, "I found this ministry that they do embryo adoption." I'm like, "What is that?" I'm like, "Why go there? What is this? What do they do to you? How much is it?" I'm going through all this stuff.

She goes, "I carry the baby." I'm like, "What?" And she's just like, "I want this." I'm like, "Here we go again." I'm thinking, "Okay, what does this mean?" So she

explained what embryo adoption. "You mean they're frozen embryos and then they insert them in you?" And she's telling me all this, and my head is just like, "This is too much for me." And my wife, she's the initiator in a lot of these things, so I trusted her. I said, "All right, how do we do this?" And we started the process and she found a ministry, a Christian ministry who actually took our information, and all of our stuff went out. And I said, "All right, here we go again." And then we get a call. There's a family who has five embryos frozen, and they picked you to take them. And I'm like, "Oh boy." So here we go again. So now this a whole different process.

Dr. Tim Clinton: This would be a snowflake baby adoption.

Robert Baltodano: A snowflake baby. Yep. Snowflake baby adoption.

Karine Baltodano: He is an official snowflake through night lights.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Preserving life because we believe that life begins at conception.

Robert Baltodano: Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And so here you have five embryos, five babies.

Robert Baltodano: Five babies on the East Coast that we had to ship over to California.

Karine Baltodano: And it was really neat to know this. The IVF couples that have the leftover embryos, they really only have three options. One to donate to an anonymous bank, two to destroy them which 90% do, or three adopt them. And the adoption part was awesome, because we get family history, we get to know the process. There might even be some open adoption in it. So I thought it was worth, I mean, it's minimal in the adoption world when you think of snowflake adoptions, 8,000 private, 20 agencies, 40. And then in international 60 plus. It was a great option for us.

Robert Baltodano: So we got back on board. Doctors. We searched for the best doctors that deal with this embryo adoption. The part of this process of preparing her body was not fun, because I had to inject her with, was it progesterone? And I hate needles, but I had to do this to my wife. I had to inject needles in her stomach.

Karine Baltodano: You practiced on the grapefruit.

Robert Baltodano: Oh, I hated that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: People don't really understand this journey that people are going through. It's amazing.

Robert Baltodano: It is. Because you're jabbing your wife every week.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Really?

Karine Baltodano: Every day.

Robert Baltodano: Oh, every day in the stomach and then in the thigh. And you're going through this and you're just thinking like, "Oh Lord, I hope this works." And so you prep her. And so here we go, right? The first two, we got a date. Okay, we're excited. Here we go again. And they survived defrost. And they insert him in her. And there's a waiting game now. Now you wait. Pregnancy test. Okay. Not yet. All right. Waiting for that phone call. Nothing. All right. We're waiting. Nothing's coming through the pregnancy test. Then we get the call.

Karine Baltodano: It was negative.

Robert Baltodano: It was negative.

Karine Baltodano: It was heartbreaking.

Robert Baltodano: And we're like, "God."

Karine Baltodano: Because they tell you, these are the most beautiful embryos. And that's again, with our doctors, our IVF doctors we'd say, "You're not God. God is truly in control." And we were like processing. "This is not your will. Okay Lord, we're walking through this." But we were heartbroken. We tried again and did two more. They defrosted two more. They tried to want to put all three in. I said, "No, there's not enough money in therapy for three embryos." So most people, one or two. And so they transferred two. And then we got our little boy. We got the positive pregnancy. It was cute. When we looked at our pregnancy test, our little girl was three. And we were like, "Do you see lines?" And she's like, "Yeah, there's two lines." "You really see two lines?" We didn't believe it. And then we got the phone call.

Robert Baltodano: And then we got the phone call. And I remember the day. We started jumping up and down like, "Oh my gosh, this is happening. This is happening."

Karine Baltodano: But then again, "Oh my, it's happening."

Robert Baltodano: Then you think pregnancy, then there's the miscarriage. So now you're thinking of that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The fear of everything.

Robert Baltodano: Now you got several months.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a ride.

Robert Baltodano: And it was because there was a point when we were, at the time in California, I was teaching at the church we were part of, and then I was also doing a young adult ministry. And after one of the ministry Bible studies, we went home because we were in Chino. And then we drove all the way to Orange County. And she started bleeding. And we were like, "Oh no." She comes to me, she goes, "We got to go." I said, "What's wrong?" She goes, "I'm bleeding." I'm like, "Oh."

Took our little girl with us. We start driving. And I remember on that freeway driving and looking at her, and I'm like, "We lost him." And I'm just trying to process this. Because we went right to the ER, got her in, and of course Google's the other doctor. So I'm Googling all these different things and I'm like, "I think I just diagnosed. This is what you have. We're okay. We're okay."

Karine Baltodano: He really did. He walked in with his phone and says, "I know what's wrong with her." And he's holding his phone. And he was right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And the doctors come in and was he right?

Karine Baltodano: Yeah, he was right. It was hemorrhaging on the outer side. But they said, "Just take a rest. Be careful. It may or may not." And just again, you trust the Lord.

Robert Baltodano: And he wasn't touched.

Karine Baltodano: Trust in the Lord.

Robert Baltodano: It didn't affect him at all. And so that was a big scare because we were thinking, "Okay, here's another bump in the road. Another investment might go down the tubes, whatever." But-

Dr. Tim Clinton: But God.

Robert Baltodano: Our boy was born.

Dr. Tim Clinton: But God, and he's a fine young man.

Robert Baltodano: Oh, boy. He's a joy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Got a lot of fire.

Robert Baltodano: Oh, boy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: A lot of energy.

Robert Baltodano: I mean, it's incredible.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I know that you're speaking a lot of words of hope and encouragement to people today. One embryo left.

Karine Baltodano: Yes. So to go with that, a year after a boy was born, I got pregnancy melanoma. And honestly, I feel like God was showing me why I probably never did get pregnant. You don't get those answers this side of heaven usually. But I do feel like that would've happened in my twenties had I gotten pregnant anyways. And so I couldn't carry. They said, "You can't carry the next one. If you do, you could jump to stage four cancer." And some people, again, they're like, "Just do it. Let God take care of it." And we did not have a piece in it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I said, "Nope."

Karine Baltodano: And we didn't know what to do. Nightlight, "You can return the embryo." We didn't feel peace about that. And a friend, a dear, dear friends, the husband and wife, Jonathan and Kayleigh stepped in and said, "We really feel like we're to walk this journey with you." And like everything of adoption, it's a dance. You take a step forward. Does everyone feel comfortable? And she was going to be my surrogate. She went through all the counseling, all the lawyers, all the paperwork, everything. And honestly, we set it up organically, I could say. Because she had four healthy children, she didn't have to do any of the shots. They just literally timed up her cycle. And then they were coming in to be able to transfer the next baby. It's an embryo transfer.

And I prayed that morning. I did really lay it before the Lord. I'm like, "Lord, if for any reason, any reason you're not wanting for multiple reasons, I give you my heart. You have the right to take this child." And we went, and the doctor took a little longer and he called us in and he apologized. He said, "This never happens. This isn't usually what it does." And the embryo had passed away in defrost and we were not able to do the transfer. And so we all four of us grieved together for a long time like that. Because it takes her on a journey too, to be our surrogate. And it took us on the journey of relinquishing again a baby in another womb and watching it grow and being reunited. So then I feel like I could tell everyone we know about foster-adopt, embryo adoption, private adoption, surrogacy, we've walked those roads.

Robert Baltodano: Yeah.

Karine Baltodano: I hope there's no more roads than that. I don't know.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As I'm thinking about our closing words to our listeners, I'm thinking some would love to learn more about the two of you and your story, because maybe it would bring a lot of hope and encouragement to people if they wanted to do that. Where could they go?

Robert Baltodano: They can email us, robkarine@gmail.com. R-O-B-K-A-R-I-N-E@gmail.com. Or they can message me on social media. I'm on Instagram and Facebook at Robert

Baltodano, and I would love to talk to any husband that needs some help, and help them process this because they need to be on board.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I go back where we started with Hannah, it went deep into her soul. And walking through this, I know at the end of the day, the question is, how do we glorify God in the midst of the moment we find ourselves in? And that really is the challenge. God has done something special in your lives. And there's no doubt in my mind that you have spoken words of life and hope and encouragement into a lot of couples out there today. And our prayer is that God would give them that peace, that he would give them strength for the journey.

Hey, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, our entire team at Family Talk, we appreciate you being so vulnerable, open and honest, and pray that God would continue to strengthen the family you've got for His glory. Thank you so much for joining us.

Robert Baltodano Well, thank you. It was an honor to be here.

Roger Marsh: In Psalm 127, verse three, we read, "Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a reward from him." And believe me, they truly are. That was such a heartfelt conversation today here on Family Talk featuring Robert and Karine Baltodano and our co-host, Dr. Tim Clinton. If you missed any part of today's conversation, please visit our website @drjamesdobson.org. There you can go back and listen to the conversation in its entirety. You can also share it with a friend or loved one who may need these words of encouragement as well.

Now, before we leave the air for today, I want to remind you that Family Talk is a listener-supported broadcast outreach. When you partner with us financially, you're helping us reach others as well as your own family, and may maintain a strong Christian and conservative voice in the public square. With every dollar you donate, we are able to provide one more resource that can touch the heart of someone seeking God's love in a tough situation.

And I am excited to share that for the rest of this month of June, we have been blessed by some special friends of the ministry with a \$300,000 matching grant. That means that every dollar you donate this month will automatically be matched up to our \$300,000 goal. Now, if God has placed it on your heart to give, just visit drjamesdobson.org. That's [Dr. James Dobson.org](http://Dr.JamesDobson.org). You can also make a donation over the phone when you call 877-732-6825. A member of our customer care team is standing by ready to speak with you and to help you place that donation. And from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, please know how much we appreciate your prayers and your faithful support of this ministry. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening today to Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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