



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Safe All Along

**Guest(s):** Katie Davis Majors

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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.

**Dr. Tim Clinton:** Hello everyone and welcome into Family Talk. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host of the broadcast here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I also serve as president of the American Association of Christian Counselors and I'm honored to serve alongside Dr. Dobson as resident authority on mental health and relationships here at the JDFI. We're so glad you joined us today.

Relationships are important to all of us. What's fascinating is how we now can connect with people all over the globe with a push of a button from a phone that's in the palm of our hands. One courageous and bold lady took that a step further. She even opened up her heart to serving overseas and adopting many children to love and guide with God's wisdom. You may have heard her name before she'd been on the broadcast, Katie Davis Majors. In 2008, she founded Amazima Ministries, which is located in Uganda.

Amazima Ministries is committed to making disciples of Jesus through relationships, education, and by strengthening communities. Katie began her journey on her first mission trip to Uganda when she was 18 years old. She then dedicated her life to helping the people there and adopted 13 Ugandan children with her husband, Benji. They also have two biological sons for a total of 15 children altogether. I really love that. I grew up in a family of eight, but I can't imagine 15. Katie is a *New York Times* best-selling author. Some of her books include *Kisses from Katie* and *Daring to Hope*. Her newest book, *Safe All Along*, is going to be the focus of today's broadcast. Katie, welcome back to Family Talk. Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, the entire team send their regards.

**Katie Davis Majors:** Thank you. I'm so happy to be here and great to be with you guys again. Big fans of Dr. Dobson and hello to them as well.

**Dr. Tim Clinton:** Hey, Katie, as we get started, my goodness, I'm going to step back for a moment, and I know you've been on the broadcast, but I don't assume people really know a lot about you and your ministry. Let's go back to an 18-year-old

missions trip, showing up in Uganda and God does something special. Can you take us from there?

Katie Davis Majors:

Absolutely. So like you said, when I was 18 years old, my senior year in high school, I went on a mission trip with my mom to Uganda. We were there for three weeks and I was just really captivated by the people and the culture. It's such a beautiful, beautiful place. And while I was there, I was invited by a pastor and his wife to come back and live with them and work with them at their orphanage. And so I went back to finish high school, but all I could think about was how do I get back over to Uganda? Long story short, I ended up moving there straight out of high school to live with this pastor and his wife and help them out at their orphanage. Now, the orphanage had about 120 kids and about eight staff, so it was super crowded, super understaffed.

The kids weren't getting what they needed, and I think as I just got to know these kids and really fell more in love with them, they became really important to me. I started to talk to them, ask them some questions, ask them about their families, and was really surprised to learn that a lot of these children had living family members not too far from the orphanage. A lot of them even had moms and dads that lived kind of in this same village where we were. And I think just coming from the United States, my mindset had really been, if you live in an orphanage, that means you have no family, everybody has died, but it was really different. And as it turns out, the statistics kind of say that about 80% of children living in institutionalized care in East Africa actually have at least one living parent.

And so it isn't really that their parents don't want them or even necessarily that something terrible has happened to their parents. But a lot of times just severe, severe poverty forces these parents to feel like they have to send their children to an orphanage in order for them to have kind of the basic necessities of life, for them to eat three meals a day in order for them to go to school. In order for them to have access to medical care, they feel that they have to send them to live somewhere else. And that just didn't sit right with me. I found that to be devastating. And so as I got to know the community members more, I was just asking them questions, "Would you keep your children at home if you had access to things like nutrition and medical care if you could afford to send them to school?"

Because predominantly in Uganda, school is not free. And so a lot of the families in the village I was living in, their livelihood was farming. So they never actually had an exchange of cash money that they could then use to send their children to school. And unanimously, as I asked these questions, as I asked parents, "Do you want to keep your kids at home?" They said, yes. Uganda and East Africa as a whole is a super hospitable, welcoming culture where they're actually more commonly bringing people into their homes than sending people out of their homes. But it was just this perception that they wanted their kids to have a better future. They wanted their kids to have an education. And so I just began paying for the two children of one of my friends in the community to go to

school so that he could keep them at home and not have to send them to the local orphanage.

And as I called home to friends and family in the United States, I was telling my mom this story and she said, "Oh, I want to help with that. Are there other kids in your community that need to go to school?" And I said, "I'm sure there are." I was starting to get connected with just different neighbors and different even government leaders in this village. And so they were starting to point out to me, "This is a family that needs help with food and this is a family whose child is sick, but they can't afford the hospital bill." And so really organically in that way, I started collecting money from friends and family in the United States and started sharing it with friends and neighbors in Uganda who needed the help. And I had been keeping a blog and the blog got really popular almost overnight. I was just writing it so my grandmother and a couple people that had sent me some money to survive for the year in Uganda could keep up with what I was doing, but it was only the Lord ...

It doesn't make any sense, right? That God just kind of threw these doors open and people started wanting to give money and wanting to donate to this need. And then where I was in Uganda, there were always needs arising. And so that's how I founded my ministry. Amazima Ministries decided over the course of the next six months to a year, to really formalize that and make it a nonprofit so that we could raise money in the United States to send children in Uganda to school and provide them with some of their basic needs so that they could stay at home with their families and be raised in their families, in their culture and still have access to what they needed.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Katie, my wife Julie and my daughter Megan, really got excited about caring for children around the world through compassion, and they went on trips and they would come back and say, "You have no idea," and fell in love like you're talking about with these children because there's such brokenness. And you're right, poverty is everywhere and it just changes the game. Katie, let's go a little deeper on this. What's interesting in your story is I think you guys adopted 13 children, and I know you and your husband have two boys.

Katie Davis Majors: Yeah, so my husband and I met in Uganda in 2010. He was actually doing other mission work with YWAM in the area, and that's how we connected. And it was a pretty small expat community, and so we just got to know each other as friends. But even before I met him, I had started the process of foster care and fostered many, many children over the course of years, some of them for only a short time, some of them for a very extended period of time. And 13 of those young women actually we came to adopt them as our daughters into our family. Long-term fostering turned into adoption. And so my husband Benji and I were privileged to adopt our daughters and then also went on to have two sons.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You started a ministry and that ministry is flourishing. Tell us a little bit about what God is doing in and through your work together.

Katie Davis Majors: Absolutely. It's been so incredible and it's just all the work of God. I stand in awe, but from the very beginning, I think it was really important to me that we weren't just supporting children with their physical needs and families with their physical needs, like schooling and nutrition and medical care. I really wanted them to know the gospel and to become disciples of Jesus. And so relationship was really, really key. And so originally when we were really small and had about 40 kids, I was doing these Bible studies with the students on Fridays, but then also throughout the week with their parents and guardians in their homes. And then once we got a bit bigger, it was very clear that I wasn't going to be able to do that on my own.

And so we were able to hire several Ugandans who were actually just friends of mine in the area who had kind of come alongside me in this work already, and I was able to hire some of them and we just kind of called ourselves mentors, people that were going into the community with the desire to make disciples and to teach people about Jesus. And so that has continued.

Today, Amazima has actually built two schools. We've got about 600 students at each campus. So we've got a lower campus with the younger kids, 13 and under. And then our high schoolers are at a different campus, but everything on our campuses is set up so that our students are being mentored and disciplined. And then in addition to that, we have our community engagement programs. So we're not there just for the children, we're there for the community and to strengthen the entire community. And so mentors are also spending time going into the villages, going into the homes, doing what we call community clusters, where we bring together neighbors who live together in a central area to study the Bible together, to pray together. We've started some cool village savings and loans programs where they have the opportunity to save money, but they also have the opportunity to financially give to each other when a neighbor is in crisis or in need. And so we really want to empower them, that they can take care of each other and then they can share the gospel with their broader community.

Dr. Tim Clinton: How amazing. Started from an 18-year-old doing a missions trip and God has placed that country, if you will, and those children on your heart. Tell us where you're going with the ministry and maybe you could spell it out for those who are listening right now, so they can become more familiar with your ministry and how God is working in and through it.

Katie Davis Majors: Yes, absolutely. So the ministry is Amazima. And so Amazima actually means truth in the local language Luganda. And so for the reason that that name came about was like I said, for me it was so important that these kids weren't just having their basic needs met, but also that they were learning the truth of who Christ is and who he made them to be. And so that's something that really anchors us, that we're always going back to, how are we sharing the truth with the children we serve and with their communities? And so today, like I mentioned, Amazima has grown. We support a ton of children and families. We have a staff of over 300 of the most incredible people. And our goal is really

now, we're looking at students. There are students that I met when they were 3, 4, 5 years old going into kindergarten that have now gone all the way through high school and are about to graduate.

And so we're looking at how do we support these students to go out into the world as disciples and make disciples. And so we're working right now on plans for getting them into universities and getting them into different vocational schools and exploring some different ways of how we continue to walk with them and also allow them to have independence. And so we want to continue in those mentoring, discipleship relationships because even as I've seen in my own life, this is a really, really critical time. My husband and I, we have kids who have launched into college and it's just a really critical time when kids are kind of figuring out, "Who am I as a young adult and what do I really believe about the world?" There's not as much of that safety of home or our students won't have as much of the safety of our programs. And so really wanting to deepen those relationships now while they're in high school so that they have a safe place to return to as they launch into university.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Katie, as you were talking, my mind was going to the Book of James where it says, "Religion that's pure and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit the orphans and the widows and their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

When my daughter Megan, Katie, was 13, we went on a trip to Dominican Republic and went into Santo Domingo. Megan was going down to visit her World Vision child at the time, and we landed and we met the team and they said, "Hey, we're going to go to her home tomorrow, but we want to prepare you for that." And Katie, as we made our way through the countryside out to her home, I'll never forget the sights and more and what it did in my heart. That as I think about God's children, we had that movie come out recently with that line in it, "God's children are not for sale."

And you begin to think about the horrific nature of things that these kids often see and experience. And by the way, it's even happening here in our land in America. It's horrific and someone has to be advocates for the children. Somebody's got to become that voice. Someone has to step into this and make God raise up people, more people like you to do that very thing. God, help us to do that.

Katie, at the end of the day, it's all about hope. We recently had a world conference for the American Association of Christian Counselors, seven plus thousand people coming from all 50 states and 40 countries around the world and more. But Katie, we realized at the end of the day, hope is a person. It's about Jesus Christ. That's where our hope is. And that's what you're doing. You're bringing a cup of cold water in his name. And Katie, what does that do to the soul? You've started the ministry. We know what it's done in your heart and you're seeing it now in these children and more who want to bring that back.

That's the beauty here. That's what James was referring to. That's what we have to be, the hands and feet of Christ to a broken world.

Katie Davis Majors: Absolutely. And it's just so encouraging to see that I think those things paired together, right? I'm meeting your physical need, but I'm also telling you of a hope that doesn't go away today, right? When the glass of water runs out, you have a hope that's far more lasting.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Katie, you've come out with a new book called *Safe All Along: Trading Our Fear and Anxieties for God's Unshakeable Peace*. I love that. As a counselor, we're seeing anxiety everywhere. I don't think that we've ever seen more fear in culture than we're seeing right now. And by the way, a lot of moms just overwhelmed with anxiety, all the pressures and demands, the pace, the pain of modern day life. Katie, what I love about you is you're very transparent. You begin to share a lot about you. You open up the book, I mean with the story about being on family vacation and your daughter. I want you to go there for a moment, but at the end of the day, talk to us about why a book on peace to overcome anxiety.

Katie Davis Majors: Absolutely. So I was not actually planning to write this book. It was not in the works, but like you mentioned, we were on this family vacation. We had had a really tumultuous season as a family. We'd had some medical needs arise in our family that were really difficult to deal with, that led us to actually be traveling back and forth from Uganda to the United States a lot. And just as a mom, that had really increased my anxiety, to not know if our loved ones were going to be okay or if we were going to have access to what we needed. And so I had really struggled for about a year with my own anxiety, and we were on this family vacation. My daughter and I decided to go swimming in the river. It's a river we swim in a lot, but the current is pretty strong.

And we just kind of got stuck in this rapid and instead of being able to kind of turn and get back to shore, which what we thought was going to happen, we were being pulled just so quickly downstream. And I remember just being in the water, you can barely see. It's white and foamy. And I'm reaching out my hand to my daughter as she is getting further away from me. And simultaneously with my other hand, I'm trying to paddle and reach for something I can grab onto on the shore. And I was finally able to grab onto a tree branch and kind of pull myself up, but my daughter was too far away and I watched her-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Oh my goodness.

Katie Davis Majors: ... get taken around the corner. So yeah, I mean, mother's worst nightmare. It was like a terribly suspenseful movie scene or something. I mean, you couldn't have scripted it to be more intense.

And so I'm sitting there on this rock and I'm sobbing and I'm praying, and I'm imagining the worst case scenario. And after a few minutes, or I don't know,

who knows how long it was, right? It feels like forever. It was probably only a few minutes. I heard footsteps running from the opposite direction, and I caught this glimpse of her yellow swimsuit. She had gotten out of the water further down, and she was okay, and I was so relieved. I mean, I feel relieved even telling this story. I was so relieved. But I kind of climbed up this hill and my husband had come over to check on us with some of our kids, came over and just hugged my husband and was saying like, "I'm so sorry. We shouldn't have done that. That was stupid." I can't believe I would've done that. I thought I had lost her.

And he said, "Hey, I want to show you something." And so he walked me up this hill further up the riverbank, and from that place you could look down and you could see the whole river. And I just kept hearing these words drop into my heart, "You were safe all along."

I remember just watching the river for a long time, and you could actually, from way up high, you could see everything. You could see, "Oh, we could have gotten out over there because there's a little bay where the current slows down," or, "Oh, look over here, there's a little island. We could have swam ashore there." But it really seemed reflective of the last few years of my life, like God was saying to me, "Hey, look what I can see." Because you're down here in the rapids. We can only see today. In fact, we can only see this moment.

And a lot of times it can appear like everything is going wrong. And you're right, life is so chaotic and this pace and this success that we feel like we have to achieve or whatever is driving our anxiety, and we can get so stuck in this spiral of what is right here in front of us. But God sees this bigger picture and he knows all the twists and turns, and he knows where he's bringing us and how he is keeping us safe. And so it wasn't just that I was safe all along in the river, it was that I had been safe all along for the last few years of my life, and I just sat there and wondered what joy I had missed out on and what relationship and dependence on God I had missed out of because I was down in the rapids just panicking. And really, he was holding me and my family safe.

And that didn't mean that it was without hardship. That didn't mean that we didn't face some things that maybe we would rather not have. But really, ultimately God was keeping us safe because he was moving us with him closer to eternity. And so that's kind of the premise for the book is how do we truly not just say with our mouths, "Yeah, I trust in God." Because that's easy to say and I would say it and you would say it, but how do we live in our world, in our bodies in a way that says, "I trust in God." And Jesus says that he leaves us peace. Paul calls it a peace that passes understanding, but I can move through many of my days not actually feeling peace. And so in the book, *Safe All Along*, I'm really exploring some different practices that have helped me to experience and live out of the peace that Jesus gives us.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Yeah, Katie, I love the story because in the backdrop and as we've gone through the broadcast today, you can be doing a lot right. And matter of fact, you can be

involved in wonderful things for God and be getting pounded, and by the way, blinded, if you will. You can get lost. You can get caught up in the river of life, which can be very sweeping, overwhelming. As a matter of fact, if you have any real value for God, I'm going to venture out here and say, I believe all hell will be against you in the midst of the storm. What I sensed as I hear you talk and as I look at the content of the book, *Safe All Along*, in distresses, God can be found. He's in the midst of it. He's the author of that story. Katie, if people want to learn more about you, the ministry, maybe how to get a copy of *Safe All Along: Trading Our Fear and Anxieties for God's Unshakable Peace*, where should they go?

Katie Davis Majors: Absolutely. *Safe All Along* is available anywhere that books are sold. You can order it online or you can buy it in some bookstores. To learn more about what Amazima is doing, they can check out [amazima.org](http://amazima.org). That's our website. There are ways to get involved there, and then they can also follow us on social media, Instagram, Facebook.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wonderful. Katie, on behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, the entire team here, we are amazed at what God's doing in and through you and pray that God continues to give you boldness and courage and strength for the road forward. Thank you so much for joining us.

Katie Davis Majors: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, that was the conclusion of a truly encouraging conversation featuring Katie Davis Majors and co-host Dr. Tim Clinton here on Family Talk. Now, if you'd like to share today's program with a friend or loved one, just visit our website at [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). That's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk).

As you heard in today's episode, parenting comes with its own challenges, especially no matter if you have one kid or 15 like Katie, and the demands are even higher if you have an extra effort or strong-willed child in the bunch. Even children who are sweet and mild-mannered most of the time, come with their own set of challenges on occasion. It's understandable that if your son or daughter is in fact strong-willed and or defiant, that child can wear you out emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and even put a stress on your marriage as well. If you have one or more of these independent youngsters or adolescents in your home, you know how difficult life can be. But please be assured that with the Lord's help, there's always hope.

Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we want to walk alongside you as a parent during the important child-rearing years, especially if you have a strong-willed or defiant child in the mix. That's why we've developed a new 10-day email series based on Dr. Dobson's bestselling book called *The New Strong-Willed Child*. The series is designed to equip you to wisely lead your kids through even the toughest of trials. The resource is free, and to sign up, all you have to do is visit [drjamesdobson.org/strongwilledchild](http://drjamesdobson.org/strongwilledchild). Again, that's [drjamesdobson.org/strongwilledchild](http://drjamesdobson.org/strongwilledchild).



I'm Roger Marsh, thanking you so much for listening and for making Family Talk a part of your day. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

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