



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Written in Heaven – Part 2

Guest(s): Joe and Tamara Battaglia

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- Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust for the family you love. I'm Roger Marsh, and I'm so glad you've joined us today because we've got the second half of a wonderful conversation coming your way. Once again, I'm sitting here with two friends of our ministry, Tamara Battaglia and her husband, Joe Battaglia. Now, if you were with us on the last Family Talk broadcast, you heard the sweet story of how God brought these two together, a story that honestly sounds like something right out of a Hollywood script. On today's Family Talk program, we're going to dig a little bit deeper into the heart of Tamara's brand-new book, which is called *Written in Heaven: His story, Our Lives*. Joe and Tamara, it's good to have you back on the program. Let's dive right back in.
- Joe Battaglia: A lot of what we do, we're really privileged, you and I, Rog, to do the things that we have done and continue to do. And so the way all these things transpired, I think you take one step at a time and then you trust God for the next one. And he kept lining the steps up. And I think you understand that well enough, and I think many people listening understand it as well. The Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. It's not a floodlight.
- Roger Marsh: Amen.
- Joe Battaglia: So God doesn't want us to know what is a mile down the road. He just wants to help us know what's tomorrow. You just want to enjoy the relationship that God has put together.
- Roger Marsh: Yeah. When did you know, both of you know, that marriage was the right thing, was the right next step for you? Because you could have stayed good friends, you know, very easily, you know, and you get to a certain season of life and say, I don't know if I can put myself out there again. Who was the first one to blink, if you will, saying, I really want this to happen?
- Joe Battaglia: Well, I wonder if it... so many things lined up after that. We met in L.A. in January after we met there in November and we went to dinner and that was

fun. Because I was there on business and Tammy was there visiting friends. We happened to be there at the same time.

Roger Marsh: Interesting. I didn't realize that was a coincidental connection again.

Joe Battaglia: That's another one.

Tamara Battaglia: My friends that were in L.A., they don't live in L.A. They actually had been there RVing. Her husband got very ill and they didn't have family there. So I was going out there to help them.

Roger Marsh: Interesting. Interesting. Just so happened.

Tamara Battaglia: Same week.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, another holy coincidence. I love it.

Joe Battaglia: Same week. You may remember that the day after NRB ending, that weekend, was when the pandemic took a turn and everything got closed down. So Tammy wasn't flying at all. And I wasn't traveling anywhere at all either. So basically for the next four months, we talked to each other every day.

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Joe Battaglia: I went out for a walk at 3 p.m. every day because I really had nothing much to do. And she didn't have anything to do. So she'd go for a walk and we would talk for like an hour. And then at night, we just decided to FaceTime each other for another time to talk. And we grew really as good friends and finding out about each other and praying it became very evident that something was going on here that we had not orchestrated. And it was time to decide whether to fish or cut bait.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Joe Battaglia: And so the real test would be if she would meet my daughter and see what my daughter thought and my staff at my company.

Roger Marsh: Right.

Joe Battaglia: Because nobody knows me like them.

Roger Marsh: Exactly.

Joe Battaglia: And they would sense. So basically, she came to visit for a couple of days, met my daughter, who kind of liked her. And my daughter really didn't like me talking to any other.

Roger Marsh: I'll bet. No, seriously, that's real. I mean, as long as you and Luann were together. My goodness.

Joe Battaglia: Yeah.

Roger Marsh: That was a tough one to crack.

Joe Battaglia: And so and my staff loved it. I mean, when you meet Tammy, you just fall in love with her and you feel like.

Roger Marsh: Of course. Yeah.

Joe Battaglia: So my staff loved her. My daughter loved her. And then I went to visit her. And her friends just really liked me as well. So I had to go to Colorado Springs for a Way FM board meeting. And they were headquartered in the Springs back then. And so I decided, hey, let me get together with my friend Ken Harrison, who was the president of Promise Keepers. And you know him.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, good man.

Joe Battaglia: Because I had worked with Promise Keepers as a client as well. And so Ken said, hey, let's get together for dinner with his wife, Elliot, who I had not met previously. And we're having a great time at dinner. And they're also saying, well, what's going on here? And then Elliot says, well, you know, I'm a jewelry broker. No, I didn't know that.

Roger Marsh: Oh, man.

Joe Battaglia: And she said, I certainly can get you a great deal on a diamond if you want one.

Roger Marsh: In case you were looking for one, Joe.

Joe Battaglia: Yeah, In case I was looking for one. And a week later, she sends me a picture of this amazing diamond engagement ring. She put on her finger to showcase it for me. Sent me a picture and then sent it to me in the mail.

Roger Marsh: Wow. Forward.

Joe Battaglia: And said, well, this is the price. I'll give it to you. I said, really? So I showed it to my daughter, and she said, "Dad, if Tammy doesn't want it, I'll be glad to take it."

Roger Marsh: A little daddy-daughter gift if she doesn't come through.

Joe Battaglia: That's right. We'll see. And then to kind of put an ending on how this then came to pass. We were going to be in Nashville, in Franklin. And Kathy Lee had moved to Franklin a year earlier. And I call Kath and I say, well, you know, since you're

responsible for us getting together, she, you know, came to the thing that we did in Nashville.

Roger Marsh: Right, right.

Joe Battaglia: You want to play this out and have fun. I want to propose to her, can we do it at your house? I'll just say, hey, we're going to go, stop in and see her and say hi. So Kathy is always up for something to have fun.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, sounds like it.

Joe Battaglia: She said, sure, let's do it. I say to Tammy, "We're going to go see Kath for a few minutes and just say hi while we're close by in Franklin." We did. And on cue, we were chit-chatting for about 10, 15 minutes, small talk. And then on cue, I give her the wink and she starts singing a Beyonce tune, put a ring on it.

Roger Marsh: Oh!!

Joe Battaglia: So I get that on my knee and propose. And Tammy says...

Tamara Battaglia: Yes!

Roger Marsh: Oh, I was waiting for her to say, I'm not so sure.

Tamara Battaglia: That time I didn't hesitate.

Joe Battaglia: Didn't hesitate. She said yes, I think three times.

Roger Marsh: Oh, nice.

Tamara Battaglia: Yes. Yes. Yes!

Joe Battaglia: And so Kathy then is recording this on her iPhone.

Roger Marsh: Nice.

Joe Battaglia: And then she starts interviewing us and says, "OK, Joe, why do you think you deserve a girl like this? And Tammy, why do you think this is the man?" So we're doing 10 minutes of Kathy Lee interviewing us.

Roger Marsh: Of course. Yes. Nice podcast there.

Joe Battaglia: Yeah. And so. That's how all that comes together. And that's why we say it's nothing we planned. And it's certainly nothing that we ordained. And we got confirmation all along the way. So to us, there's no doubt. She is just perfect for me. And so we have just a great time and she's become my best pal. My everything. We share just about everything there is to share as husband and

wife. And as I like to say, the opportunity for God to complete us further continues.

Roger Marsh: I love it.

Joe Battaglia: And Tammy, I'm going to have to use my saying again, that marriage covenant, if people truly understand that it's the only place in the universe where plural becomes singular. And so that's the way it should be, and that's our story.

Roger Marsh: Well, it's such a beautiful story. And to hear Joe and Tamara Battaglia tell this story today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk is so encouraging. And now Tamara has written this book, this 40-day devotional, which includes this story, *Written in Heaven: His Story, Our Lives*. And Tamara, I want to talk about the book a little bit because there are so many people who have gone through something similar to your love story with regard to maybe there was pain or there was some kind of uncertainty. And you have to ask the question, like in your case, of a difficulty with infertility or, you know, going through a divorce. There are certain people who I'm sure are reading your book and they're saying, you know, I felt abandoned by God at some point in my life and your book is giving me hope. Talk about what it's like to be able to speak into those lives in a way like that.

Tamara Battaglia: Well, the devotional is a unique devotional. It is 40 different women of faith. I do have my story in there about infertility, but there are 39 other women that poured out into this book a personal story from their own lives with the Lord, their own God stories. And you will find in there women that have been through divorce. They've gone through illnesses. Every season of life is in that book, and it will deeply encourage the readers that God, He's in every moment of our life. He has planned out our lives. Each day of our life is, I call him a love note from the Lord, that every day of our life, He writes it, and we need to just let it go and trust Him that He will direct our steps, and He plans every moment. And we just need to look for Him and relax and let go and just give it all to Him. And He will show up in fun ways and surprises. Like Joe was such an amazing surprise.

Roger Marsh: Yes!

Tamara Battaglia: But one that I never thought or dreamed that I needed or that I could have even imagined. And being married to Joe has just been something I never dreamed that I needed or wanted even. And it's just so sweet how the Lord orchestrates our lives. And in the book, you see how God has orchestrated each one of these women's lives.

Roger Marsh: Was there one particular story? I mean, there's 40 entries here and yours being one of them, of course, was there maybe yours or someone else's you think is kind of like, this is the one that kind of gave the book its heart, you know, kind of gave it its formation where, you know, 40 stories are great. You know, they're nice to read, but when you start thinking about how do I put this into one devotional book, was there one in particular that stands out?

Tamara Battaglia: No, what really happened was we had a bookshelf in our house or when we combined our stuff, we had one bookshelf and it had all these women, many of them have written books. And I was looking at this shelf one day, I was dusting, which is unusual. And I was also on an eight foot ladder, but I was pulling out each of these books and many of them, were Joe's books. And I started reading about each one of these women and I was just blown away by their stories. And I thought, gosh, wouldn't it be great if we could put all these in one book? And so that's kind of how it began. And then at the same time, my daughter was expecting and I was praying Psalms 139:16 over her every day.

And so that verse right there would make me ponder my own life. And then also wonder what God was ordaining for my grandchildren or the one that was going to be born. And he already knew that baby. And that was such a comfort to me to know that He knew that baby before she was born and all of her days of her life, He had ordained.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, I was going to say, in getting to know your story, Tamara, one of the things that I was taken with was when you're battling infertility, then you have a pregnancy that we would call a crisis pregnancy in terms of, you know, premature birth and that type of thing and wondering what's going to happen and what God is up to. I'm sure there were moments where you're thinking, oh, this is looking so bleak. And other times you're realizing, wait, God knows. God's here. He's walking. What was it like for you to feel His presence during those moments? And then again, as you're putting these stories together and saying, I know that these stories are going to touch people's lives.

Tamara Battaglia: Well, when I went through all of that with my girls, probably the thing I learned the most is watching Him not only orchestrate everything in her life, and then the Bible verses came alive. I had 10 Bible verses that I read every day. And so each day I got to see each one of these verses in reality. He would answer them. And it was so strengthening to me to be able to read His Word and then trust Him and know that He was going to answer this the way He wanted it answered. And, you know, like you said, I had days... rollercoaster emotions and wondering what was going on and what was going to happen. And also because it's your child, it's like your heart is just there. And, you know, being a baby, she couldn't relate to me what was going on. I just had to trust the Lord that He knew exactly what was going on and He was going to orchestrate it and take care of her. I couldn't, but He could.

Roger Marsh: Joe, what was it like for you, I mean, especially now looking at the book *Written in Heaven: His Stories, Our Lives*, this great 40-day devotional, and knowing that Tamara was basically raiding your bookshelf and coming across stories of people that you had worked with or people that you had known, and they were such an inspiration to her. What was it like to see this product come out of those resources?

Joe Battaglia: I think what you look at is, what's my role in her life, right? And you've asked that question. I think all of us should. When I asked, her, what is on your heart? And she said, I'd like to see a book. I have a title called *Written in Heaven*, but I don't know what to do with it. So that's a great title for a book, particularly for a devotional. I said, well, let me help you fulfill that because that's my job, right? Our spouses have a calling as much as we do. So my job is to help disciple that in her.

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Joe Battaglia: And so what, what it told me was something is in her heart. I'd like to make that a dream happen. And that's what that spoke to me about. My job is to hold her arms up so she can part the Red Sea in front of her.

Roger Marsh: Exactly.

Joe Battaglia: And her job is to hold mine up when I need it, right? To do likewise. And so if we hold each other up, not just in prayer, but literally. We find an amazing opportunity to help them grow into the people that God wants them to be. And I'm not sure that everybody looks at marriage that way. And so if the opportunity arises, then that's one of the things I'd like to tell men. Find out what your wife's heart is about and help make that happen. And so that's what that spoke to me about, to do.

Roger Marsh: I love it, the way you shepherd her heart and care for those dreams. And of course, with your prolific background and knowing people, it's just wonderful how God brought your paths together. We're talking with Joe and Tamara Battaglia today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. The book is called *Written in Heaven: His Story, Our Lives*. And we've got a link for it up at jdafi.net. Tamara, you've included some prayers and some action steps alongside the Scripture and the stories. And you mentioned those Scriptures that kind of helped you when you were going through a season of infertility and people going through grief and loss and disappointment. Sometimes people will just kind of randomly throw a Scripture verse their way like, Jeremiah 29:11. It's like, yeah, but I need something a little bit more than bumper sticker theology here. How did you determine, how'd you settle on the Scriptures? What kind of process did God take you through in crafting this resource?

Tamara Battaglia: Well, the uniqueness of this book is that it is 40 different authors and they, my prayer was that God would speak to their hearts and give them the right story, the verse that went along with it, their prayer, that whatever God put on their heart to share. And so you get 40 different perspectives on prayer and verses. And so each one had their Bible verse pertaining to their story. They had a mission statement and they all had prayers. And then also they had their bio.

And for me, it's very important if you purchase the book and read the book, look up these women. They are doing mighty things for the kingdom. Many of them have written books. Some of them have just released new music. Some of them

are artists. Jen Lilly just has a new devotional. There's three or four that have devotionals. Jen Lilly's new devotional is called *Wake Up Faith*. I love that it is their story and those pages that each one of them have, it is their story and it is what God put on their heart to write.

Roger Marsh: Some of the names, just a name drop here, but to give you an idea of who is contributing to this, in addition to, we mentioned some of the people, Jill Kendrick is involved in this, but also June Hunt, who has a tremendous testimony. Priscilla Shirer, we quote her just about every week in our household. Lauren Green, the list goes on. Lisa Robertson, Cynthia Ulrich-Tobias, Roma Downey. I mean, this is, there are so many different varied backgrounds of these women who have, in many cases, prominent ministries of their own, but are saying, hey, look, this was a vulnerable place. for me. This is a place of brokenness or grief or healing where God met me. And it's so encouraging. I mean, Joe, isn't it nice to hear from people who have, you know, their names are well-known household names and to find out they go through the same stuff we do.

Joe Battaglia: And I think that's one of the wonderful things about this devotional. You have a peek into somebody's life who you know on another level.

Roger Marsh: Yeah.

Joe Battaglia: And it humanizes everybody even further. And I think, again, that most people who, you know, follow anything in our Christian circles will know at least 90% of these names. And yet when I ask them to participate, they gladly say yes. So that's the fun part of getting to know people on a different level. And some of these stories are fantastic. We all love a testimony and we all love to know what incident in someone's life really, really enabled God to do something that shows that the same thing can happen in our lives.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Joe Battaglia: It happened in theirs. There's nothing. The foot of the cross is the greatest level playing field of all time, right?

Roger Marsh: Amen. Amen. It really is. And, you know, from a proud husband, Joe Battaglia talking about his wife, Tamara Hester Battaglia's new book *Written in Heaven*. And Tamara, someone's going to read this book and they're going to look at it and it's going to hit them on a lot of different levels. I know it did me. If there is, is there one maybe lasting truth from this devotional that you're hoping that your readers will take away from having read all 40 entries in this devotional?

Tamara Battaglia: I really hope that people will... sometimes it's hard to grasp that the Lord has us in His hands and that He has taken care of us. And I really hope that people will see in all of these beautiful ladies' lives how you may be in a season, a very hard season right now, but God hears you. He sees you. Whatever dreams that you have, if God has planted them in your heart, He will make them happen. I hope

it strengthens women, and I hope that it strengthens their walk with the Lord, but also that people will see that Jesus loved them deeply, and that He cares about every single moment of our life, and He's in every moment of our life.

Roger Marsh: That's beautiful. Joe, what is your hope for this resource?

Joe Battaglia: Well, I can only echo what my lovely wife said. The whole point of doing anything is to help people see beyond themselves and to know that God has them in the palm of His hand. He has written our names there. He knows us from the beginning. And that is comforting.

Roger Marsh: Yes.

Joe Battaglia: If you really grasp that, it's just great to be able to help people see something that will help themselves. And if we can do that in our walk here on earth, then we will have achieved much. And so we pray over the book that God will use it, not because we want to see a ton of sales, but because we'd like to see a ton of hearts encouraged and strengthened and people's walks with God improved or affirmed or however way that needs to work.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, it really is. It's very helpful. And Joe Battaglia, Tamara Hester Battaglia, thank you for the time that you've put in, not only into this resource, but time into our conversation here today on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. *Written in Heaven: His Stories, Our Lives*, a 40-day devotional is up at jdafi.net. And Joe and Tamara, it's been great to spend some time with you and get to know you. Thanks for being with us today here on the broadcast.

Tamara Battaglia: Thank you, Roger.

Roger Marsh: You know, I love what Tamara said near the end of our conversation here, that no matter what season you're walking through, God sees you and the dreams He plants in your heart, He is able to bring to pass.

You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's family talk and the conclusion of my conversation with Joe and Tamara Battaglia. And it's been a real gift to spend these past couple of days with them. If you'd like to hear this program again or pass it along to someone who could use a word of encouragement today, you'll find it waiting for you at drjamesdobson.org. And when you click onto our website, you'll also find information about Tamara's devotional, which is called *Written in Heaven: His Story, Our Lives*. 40 entries of real women, real stories, and a faithful God at work in the middle of all of their lives. Again, you'll find information about the devotional book as well as the audio when you go to drjamesdobson.org.

Every day, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute is working to strengthen marriages, to build up families, and to introduce men and women and children to the saving love of Jesus Christ. We are standing for the sanctity of human life, for religious freedom, and for righteousness in our culture, and we can't do this

work alone. So today, I want to personally invite you to join the team. When you make a donation of any amount to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, you're helping to keep this trusted voice on the air and to carry hope into homes all across the nation. Now, to make a donation securely online, go to drjamesdobson.org, or you can just type in those initials, jdfi.org. It'll take you to the exact same website. You can also mail your donation to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. Once again, our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, or just use those initials, JDFI for short, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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