



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Being a God Follower

Guest(s): Steve Saint

Air Date: February 25, 2026

- Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we're going to bring you a powerful conversation about faith, forgiveness, and God's redemptive power. Our guest is missionary Steve Saint, and his testimony is one that Dr. Dobson held very dear. Today's program begins with a conversation that I had with Dr. Dobson about our guest and his incredible story. Let's listen in.
- Dr. James Dobson: His name is Steve Saint and he has dedicated his life to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, and yet his life has been fraught with difficulties. He's the son of missionaries, Nate and Marge Saint. His father was brutally murdered with four other men, including Jim Elliot in the jungles of Ecuador while they were trying to bring the gospel to the Waodani tribe, whom most people know as the Auca tribe.
- Roger Marsh: Well, that's right, Dr. Dobson. Most people would recognize that tragic story captured in the popular book and the movie called *End of the Spear*. Many years after that horrific incident. I remember hearing this so often when I was growing up, the words of Jim Elliot found in his diary where he wrote this very profound statement, "That he is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."
- Dr. James Dobson: Well, that's brilliant. I tell you.
- Roger Marsh: It is a powerful concept of laying down our lives for the gospel and the eternal life that only Jesus can offer, and that really was the view that these men had as they paid the ultimate price for sharing that gospel.
- Dr. James Dobson: It's also the view of our guest today as we're going to hear Steve is no stranger to suffering and loss and great faith.
- Roger Marsh: Yes.
- Dr. James Dobson: Some may know that he suffered a serious injury that left him paralyzed. He was hit in the head with a device that he was testing for his ministry. His ministry is

called ITEC, and it works to find better ways of giving indigenous Christians the tools that they need to be self-sufficient and spread the gospel among other tribes. From the very first moment of the accident, Steve was still pointing people to Christ.

Roger Marsh: That's right, Dr. Dobson. To remind our listeners, in 2012, Steve Saint was injured while conducting tests on a small flying car, a prototype that would help missionaries get into and out of small areas with much needed supplies. And while he was working on the project, Steve was brutally struck by one of the aluminum wings, so he underwent invasive surgery and very, very intensive rehab that allowed him to walk and function again. However, to this day, he still has his struggles. By the way, you can visit our broadcast page to see a video produced a few years ago talking about that journey. Go to Dramesdobson.org and then click onto the broadcast tab. Well, let's get to the point of this message today. In just a moment, Steve Saint will reflect on his childhood and the strong bond that he had with his dad, Nate Saint. He'll also touch on his passion for evangelism, especially toward the tribe who actually killed his beloved father.

Dr. James Dobson: Despite the heartache of that little five-year old boy when his father was speared, his deep love for the Waodani people remained, and I'm told that he and his family stayed in that region of Ecuador throughout his childhood, but he returned to the United States as a young man to attend Wheaton College. On a later trip to Ecuador as an adult, Steve met face-to-face with the man named Mincaye who had actually speared his father.

Roger Marsh: Oh my goodness.

Dr. James Dobson: What transpired after that can only be understood as a testimony to God's sovereignty and the power of the gospel.

Roger Marsh: Well, this is a very, very powerful story full of grace and hope, and we're going to get to it right now. Here now is Steve Saint on today's Family Talk broadcast.

Steve Saint: We lived on the edge of the Amazon jungles and my dad was my hero in our garage. We had an airplane instead of a car, but I thought that was normal. And every morning I would get up and I would go outside and watch and try to help my dad put supplies and passengers, oftentimes missionaries into his little plane. And then I would stand on this little bank by our house as I would watch Dad in that little yellow piper, PA 14 fly off into the jungles. And then in the afternoon, it was always exciting because in the afternoon I'd go up and I'd wait on that little bank for my hero, my dad to fly back in from the jungles, sometimes with my friends. Missionary kids that were living out in the jungles who were going up to school in the mountains, oftentimes with sick and hurting Indians who'd been bitten by snakes or they liked to fish in the jungles.

And we fish down there a lot with dynamite. And in that, in a lot of things in life, timing is very critical. And I remember seeing dad bring in a man who had blown off his hand and his back was just terribly burned. The fuse wasn't quite as long as he had thought, but every afternoon, no matter what happened, it was exciting because even if dad came in empty handed, it was still my dad coming in. And then one day I watched my dad fly off into the jungles and he didn't come back. Not that afternoon, not the next afternoon, not the next afternoon. Finally, several days later, my mom called me in and took me into the house and took me into a room and said, "Stevie boy, daddy isn't ever coming back." And I couldn't imagine. I knew not only did I love my dad, but I knew my dad loved me.

I could ask him a million questions. I've still got a lot of questions. I can remember him saying just like it was yesterday, "Stevie, boy, you've got more questions than I have answers." And I couldn't understand why would my dad not come back to me? And then my mom explained that he had gone to live with Jesus. Wow. That was exciting because I had learned already at that age that that's what we were looking forward to. That's what we had to look forward to in life, is that finally we were going to go live with Jesus. But I couldn't understand and I was confounded as to why he hadn't come home to take us all with him. And then it seemed just a short while after that, it was a couple of years, there was excitement in our home again because my aunt Rachel, my dad's sister, who was like a second mother to me, was going to go in to live, hopefully to live with those very same people that had killed my dad and four men, his friends that I considered uncles, Pete and Ed and Jim and Roger. About a year after that, Aunt Rachel felt that maybe it would be safe for a male member of the outside family. The people call you kuwodi. It's because most of you have real white skin. It looks like you've been hiding in logs, like bugs that live inside trees. And when they come out, they look real pale.

Some of you don't qualify. And Mincaye says to me, he says, one day he was telling me that I was Waodani, that's the name of the tribe. And I said, "Look at my skin, I'm kuwodi." He said, "No. I say you're waowoding." He says, "But it is true that your skin is wewa. It's not good." He said, "Look at my skin. This is very good." But when he found out that there were people that had darker skin than him, he just started praying, "God, when I go to Your place to live with You," he said, "You promised You're going to give me a new body." He said, "I want red hair and black skin. It's real strong." So you'll be able to find grandfather Mincaye in Heaven. Just look around a little bit. He also has holes about this big in his ears. And then the day came and it was time for me to go in and to meet these people that I'd been praying for with my mom that I almost considered were part of our extended family, which may seem unusual to you, but we had been praying for them so long and I had anticipated getting to know them.

I knew that my dad had loved them so much that he was even willing to die in order to get to know them. And when I got out of that little bush plane on that airstrip, I expected them all to come crowding around me like most of the other Indians in the jungle and other tribes would coming to feel my skin and to try to

see what I was made of. And I had real blonde hair, which is very unusual out there. But the people stood back and they seemed to be a little bit concerned about me and they were talking amongst themselves. And finally one old woman separated herself from the group and came over and she came up and she started patting me very carefully and she still seemed to be uncertain about something. And so she grabbed my elastic waisted pants and pulled them out and looked in.

And then she started giving the people a running commentary apparently of what she was seeing. And then they all giggled. And I was at this point fairly self-conscious. It turned out I was almost as tall as some of the adults at 10, and they didn't know what I was and I didn't have real obvious features and they weren't sure if they could find out without upsetting me so they sent an old grandmother because grandmothers aren't worth very much. Some grandmothers are. And so they sent her over to check me out. And once they knew what I was, they still didn't know why I was trying to hide it. Now, I should probably fill in that they didn't wear clothes. They only wore a string around their waist, so they weren't hiding anything from me and wondered why I was hiding so much from them.

At any rate, these people from the stone age then reached out to me and took me into their lives. And then one day when some of the young boys were taking me out to go blow gun hunting, I didn't have a blow gun, they said, "Take Mincaye's blow gun." And I thought Mincaye will get upset because only his own sons were allowed to go and take his blow gun. And they kept insisting and insisting. And finally one of his sons took me in and took the blow gun and said, "Mincaye says you can use his blow gun," being like a son. And then I realized that this warrior from this group that had killed my father and Uncle Jim and Ed and Roger and Pete, having become a God follower, was adopting me informally into his own home and into his family. And I learned just a short while later that he was the one who finally ended killing my dad.

Isn't that incredible? I was back out in the jungles every time I didn't absolutely have to be in school. And a few years later, I was out there when my mom and my younger brother and my sister came in to visit and my sister had reached the point in her spiritual walk where she decided that she wanted to be baptized. And I thought I was about 13 then I think. And I decided I've been God follower as the Waodani call those people who follow after God for a long time. And I decided I should be baptized too. And my mom had suggested to Kathy that since we didn't have a father of our own, that she should pick some man who had had a spiritual influence in her life and ask him to baptize her. And you know who Kathy picked? She picked Kemo, another one of the men who had speared our father and I asked to be baptized too. And so Kemo and Dewey, two of the men who had killed Nate and Roger and Pete and Ed and Jim took Kathy and myself and Enewa and Oncaya, two Waodani young people into the little river and baptized us there at the very same spot where those same men, very different inside, but the same men in appearance had killed five men brutally thrown their bodies into the river to be eaten by the fish and by the

turtles. Do you know how something like that happens? This is how it happens. And this is, if it weren't true, it would be hard to imagine. It says in 2 Corinthians five, starting with verse 17, it says, "If any man or any woman is in Christ, if they're immersed in him, if they live in his love and in his plan for their life, it says that they become a new creature." It says the old things pass away and everything becomes new. Isn't that incredible? We see somebody like Mincaye grew up as a remorseless killer. Now, a gentle and kindly man that you would love to have in your home.

Roger Marsh:

Well, what an incredible perspective about God's transforming power from missionary Steve Saint. On this edition of Family Talk, here's a man who personally understands the earthly cost to reach those who need Jesus Christ the most. Now, before we hear the remainder of this presentation, I want to remind you of your role in the ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute because we are completely supported by listeners just like you. And you can learn how you can partner with us by going to drjamesdobson.org or by calling 877-732-6825. Again, the number to call is 877-732-6825. Now as we rejoin the broadcast for today, Steve Saint will open up about another heartache that has impacted his family, and he reminds us that the key to our enduring faith is to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Steve Saint:

Do you know what? God doesn't promise if we allow Him to write our stories, if we allow ourselves to become part of His supreme plan and part of His epic story. He doesn't promise us that everything will be smooth. He doesn't. Jenny and I found that out in a poignant way just four years ago. Pastor said we had three sons, and then finally we got it right and had a little girl. I remember Stephanie sitting on my lap and I made her promise that she would never grow up, but she did. And then she went off to the University of Florida. That's as far as we'd let her go just from Ocala up to Gainesville. And she was home every Wednesday and every weekend. And then she came home. Well, actually, we were traveling and somebody recruited her to travel with a singing group. She could just play the piano beautifully and she could play the bass and sing, and they wanted her to go and travel with them for a year.

And I remember having this discussion and it was somewhat selfish. I wanted her to stay home, and I tried to convince her that there would be time for things like that later. And finally she said, "But pop, this is an opportunity now. And there's people out there who don't know what I know, and maybe I can..." I said, "Steph, how many people do you think you're really going to be able to affect in a real way?" I wanted my little girl to stay home with me. And she said, "Pop, if it only changes one person's life, isn't that enough?" And I thought, "No. That's not enough for me. I want you home with me. You're going to be gone soon enough." But I knew that that couldn't be. And so I gave her my blessing and Jenny did and she left. She was gone for a whole year.

And then the day finally came and we went down to the Orlando airport to meet her and grandfather Mincaye from the tribe, he was there at our home because we were going to go speak at a Billy Graham conference for itinerary

evangelist over in Amsterdam. And so we all went down to the airport and we made these signs, "Welcome Home, Stephanie." We wanted her to be embarrassed appropriately and to know and grandfather can't read. So he had his sign upside down, and he's fairly small. So he was jumping around the airport just outside the jetway up and down, and he wasn't blending very well, his headdress and his earplugs. And he was jumping up and down and Stephanie tried to pretend she wasn't seeing us and walk on past us. But grandfather dropped his board and he went over there and put his arms around this young girl that he considered to be his granddaughter.

And he grabbed her and he just started dancing around saying, "Nimmo, you came back. Nimmo, you came back. I see it so well, you came back to see me." And then we went home to Ocala and we were having Stephanie's welcome home party. Now, I know it may not seem like a long time, but this was my little girl, and she'd been gone for a year and she had finally come home and my heart was so full. Stephanie passed me in the hallway and she just leaned on me and she said, "Oh, pop, I'm so glad to be home." Oh, I thought, God beam me up. It can't get any better than this. And just a few minutes later, Jenny came and got me and said, "Let's go back. Stephanie's in her room." And we went back there and Jenny sat on the bed and began to rock Stephanie. She had a headache and she wanted me to pray. I mean a headache, but God cares about the little things.

And so Jenny was rocking Stephanie, not only her daughter, but her bosom friend. And I was praying that God would take my little girl's headache away, and He did in an unusual way. While Jenny rocked her and I prayed, she had a massive cerebral hemorrhage. Rushed her down to the hospital. And you know what? When we got down to the hospital and Mincaye came with our son and my whole world was coming apart, I just couldn't get my arms of faith around the concept that maybe God could even make sense of this. And then grandfather Mincaye came. He had seen these people come in this car with lights all over it. He didn't know that anybody was coming. And they rushed into our house and they grabbed his granddaughter and they ran out with her without any explanation with me trailing after them.

And then they were gone. And then our son, Jesse came down with Jenny and Mincaye was with them. And when he came into the emergency room, he grabbed me and he said, "Baba, who's doing this?" I say, "Who's doing this?" And I saw a look on his face that I'd never seen before. It was the most fierce image I'd ever seen. And I understood Mincaye was ready to kill again if he had to protect his granddaughter from these people that were doing this terrible thing to her. And I said, "I don't know. Nobody's doing this." And just like that, this Savage Indian just coming out of the stone age, he grabbed me again. He said, "Baba Baba, now I see this. Well, don't you see? God Himself is doing this." I thought, "Mincaye, how can you be saying this? How could God possibly do something like this?"

And there in the emergency room of Monroe Regional Hospital, Mincaye, whom my dad had died to take a message of love and forgiveness and salvation to, wrapped his arms of faith around me and helped me go on believing that God really does have a plan. I remembered a short time later that I'd been praying and asking God to change my heart. I was going out and speaking, I was working for the Waodani, and I really believed what I was saying. I really believed that God could transform, but I didn't have a passion to be telling people and going to speak to audiences like you. And it was more an intellectual process from my head, and I just beg God, God, please, if you want me to keep doing this, please change my heart. I need to see the world the way you see the world. And you know what I saw for the first time in my life, I realized that there's something worse than people going into a Christ-less eternity. It's that our loving heavenly Father every day is being separated from children whom He loves so much that He sent His only son to die, a cruel death for them. And He has entrusted to you and me to tell the world that He loves us and He wants to be reconciled to us. He wants us to be His children and His heirs, joint heirs with Christ, His son.

I don't know what plan God has for your life. I don't even know what plan He has for my life. We live in a culture that almost worships plans. People ask me now, "so what are your plans for the next five years?" I haven't the foggiest idea. I was in business in the lime rock mining business up in Ocala, absolutely sure that I was doing what God wanted me to do, supporting missions, encouraging people to go, making it financially possible for them to go, and then boom, like that, God changed the whole thing. But God does have a plan for your life. And if you want to find significance in His will, if you want to find hope, the surest only way, and I didn't get this from books, I've gotten this from my own experience, is that you and I quit writing our story and we turn it over to the master author of the universe and let Him incorporate these little chapters of our lives into His epic story. Let God write your story.

Roger Marsh:

Let God write your story. That's the invitation Steve Saint leaves with us today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and I pray that you've been moved by his testimony, by his faith, and also his zeal for evangelism. This unforgettable conversation with missionary Steve Saint is available for you to listen to again or to share with someone who needs to be reminded of God's redemptive power. You can find it when you go to jdfi.net. Now, if Steve's message has stirred something in your heart about trusting God through difficult seasons, I want to share with you about a free resource that will encourage you even further. It's a 10-day email series called "When God Doesn't Make Sense." If that title sounds familiar, it's based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book with that same name. There are certainly times when we struggle with heartaches and trials so severe that we really can't understand how God could allow them in the first place.

Well, this series explores the depths of hardship and examines its purpose, and it also strengthens your faith by showing you how dark valleys can bring life's greatest blessing, which is actually a closer walk with the Lord. Now, to sign up for this free email series, go to jdfi.net and search for that title "When God

Doesn't Make Sense.” Again for the free 10-day email series, “When God Doesn't Make Sense,” go to jdfi.net.

Programs like the one you just heard exist because friends like you believe that families need to hear about the transforming power of the gospel. Every day the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute reaches millions of listeners with messages of hope, healing, and biblical truth. And that's only possible because of your generosity. Your gift today of any amount helps us continue broadcasting programs that strengthen marriages, equip parents, and point people toward the eternal hope found in Jesus.

If you've been impacted by what you heard today, I invite you to partner with us. You can make a secure donation when you visit jdfi.net. You can also give a gift over the phone. A member of our constituent care team will be happy to take your call when you dial 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

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

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