



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Paula Faris: Called Out to Prioritize Faith Over Career

Guest(s): Paula Faris

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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: Hello and welcome to Family Talk, the listener supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and today's program was recorded at the 2021 National Religious Broadcasters Convention and features special guest and former ABC news anchor, Paula Faris. She sat down one-on-one with our own Dr. Tim Clinton for a heart to heart that is sure to inspire you. Paula Faris spent over two decades working in broadcast television, nine of those years were spent at ABC News where she co-anchored Good Morning America weekend and launched the podcast, Journeys of Faith with Paula Faris.

She's reported on everything from politics, breaking news and entertainment, to sports and faith. She's interviewed world leaders, politicians, Hollywood stars, and pro athletes, but just when Paula was at a high point in her career, she heard God telling her to slow down. Today on Family Talk, Paula Faris will be sharing with Dr. Tim Clinton, why she decided to "pump the brakes" as they say, and focus on her true calling. Their conversation will center around Paula's new book called, *Called Out Why I Traded Two Dream Jobs for a Life of True Calling*. Let's go now to this fascinating conversation right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Paula, thank you for stopping by here on Family Talk.

Paula Faris: Thank you. It's great to be with you here at NRB. I hear that you flew in just to talk to me, right? I'm kidding.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I did. Paula, what a storied career. I think what most people don't realize is you don't just kind of step into those things. There's so much that goes into the heart and soul of that world. You've got to give everything. Take us on a little journey about what it was like to migrate if you will, into such prominence.

Paula Faris: Yeah. Well, thank you. I mean, it's true. You don't just step in and you don't just step out, which is what I kind of did a couple of years ago. But people will ask

me, Tim, "Did you grow up thinking that you wanted to do network news?" And no, I didn't even know it was a possibility. I grew up in a small town with a cornfield in my backyard. I didn't even think about broadcasting as a profession and it wasn't until high school, when my high school drama teacher, he recognized my ability to tell stories. I was the narrator in all of our productions, which annoyed me because I was like, "Why?" His name was Mr. Barsoon. I said, "Mr. Barsoon, why won't you cast me as an actress? 'I'm an actress." He said, "No, I want you to narrate all of the stories."

And he said, "You're good at inflecting. And you're good at pulling people in." And so that was the first time that I ever thought about broadcasting, because I didn't know what I wanted to do when I grew up. I didn't know what I wanted to major in, in college. And he said, "You should go into broadcasting." So I did. I majored in broadcasting at Cedarville University, had some great experiences working for the Atlanta Olympics and interning at CNNSI, which I'm dating myself, CNNSI no longer exists. But then I really emphasized in production behind the scenes producing, writing, editing, shooting, mainly because of my fears. Fears that I wouldn't be able to hack it. I wouldn't know what I was going to say in front of the camera. Even though my college professors were speaking life into that, I let my fear paralyze me.

And after graduation in '97, I took some various jobs in media and video production, all behind the scenes and then 9/11 happened. And that dream that others had for me kind of caught up to me and I finally embraced it. And I said, "Okay, God, I think you're calling me to do this. So I'm going to step into it. And I'm going to press into my fear." And that began a very long journey in broadcasting. I got my big break in Dayton, Ohio, where I was hired to be a production assistant. But because I knew how to produce and edit and shoot and write, nothing's wasted in God's economy.

I put together a tape and I handed it to the news director and I said, "Just take a look at it. Just give me some feedback." And he gave me some great feedback, and then he put me on the air. So I moved from Dayton, Ohio to Cincinnati, Ohio, where I was the weekend sports anchor for three years, then moved on to the local affiliate in Chicago, was there for six years at the NBC affiliate. And then most recently spent nine years at *ABC News* where I was co-anchor at *Good Morning America* and co-host of *The View*, and then I left *ABC*, stepping into the unknown. And we moved during the pandemic from the bright lights of New York City to a small town in South Carolina. As my daughter says, "A very small town in South Carolina."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, we're going to talk a lot about that transition. Some of the interviews you've done, just amazing. Highlight one or two that maybe just really stand out for you, that impacted you.

Paula Faris: I mean, gosh, there's been so many and I don't take for granted that I had a really cool job for a very long time. One interview that will stay with me forever is when I interviewed Tom Hanks, he was just getting ready, he was doing a

bunch of press for *Toy Story 4*. So this is a couple of years ago and we're doing the interview in Orlando, at Disney World, outside, right in Toy Story Land. And there was a chance of very light showers, but it ended up pouring during the interview and we did not have really a whole lot protecting us. So he's getting drenched. I'm like, "Why are we continuing the interview?" At any point he could have said, "Forget this. I'm a big name. I don't have to sit here."

But he not only had a great attitude, he started playing with the character and he morphed into his character from *Castaway* and was catching the rain in his hands and he had such a great attitude. And I just thought about, that, that's one interview. That'll stick with me forever because it's nothing that he had to do, but he chose to make the best out of a situation that was out of our hands truly. But that's one of my favorite interviews and interviewing, I like Star Wars. So getting to interview the cast of Star Wars and Avengers, those are pinch me moments for sure.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I think back to where we started, it takes a lot. I mean, you've got to step up. You've got to give hours that nobody even thinks about. They don't understand the level of preparation that goes into a lot of this and the stress and anxiety begin to just go. You hit kind of what I'd say is a fever pitch, stress and anxiety level. Take us there, tell us what happened.

Paula Faris: It's almost like you read the book, right? That I wrote, *Called Out*. Yeah. I got to a point where I was just chasing this call on my life. I thought this was my purpose. And I was at the height of my career. And in 2018, when I'm anchoring *Good Morning America Weekends* and co-hosting *The View*, I felt, God say, "Slow down, pump the brakes." And I was like, "Wait, what? God, didn't you call me to do this? Isn't this the one thing I was born to do?" But you're right. I looked around and what good is it for a man to gain the world, but lose his soul in the process? And that's truly what was happening to me. My choices were contradicting with my values. My health was suffering. I wasn't spending a lot of time with my husband and my children.

And it's just, I knew God wanted me to pump the brakes. I struggled with that for a long time. And the fear that prevented me from even getting into broadcasting then prevented me from pumping the brakes, because, what are people going to think of me if I pump the brakes? They're going to think that I was a has-been, that I couldn't hack it. And it wasn't until God allowed a series of tragic events to happen. And I do believe God can allow tragedy to get our attention. And that's what he did with me. And I write about it in the book, how five tragic events, health scares and mishaps, led me saying, "Okay, God, I'll slow down," because I really felt God was trying to get me to slow down, but I refused to slow down. He said, "All right, Paula, if you're not going to slow down, I will slow you down." And he did that. And that's why I decided to pump the brakes in 2018.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Paula, how do you know when God's trying to get your attention?

Paula Faris: When I look back at how God was trying to get my attention, I looked around, my values were clashing with my choices. My health was suffering. I wasn't spending time with my husband and my kids. I wasn't going to church. So the person that I wanted to be and professed to be, was different than what I was living. But God speaks to us in many different ways. He speaks to me through scriptures. He speaks to me through songs all the time. And I think it's just really knowing where to find God, that it's not going to be the clouds parting and speaking through a burning bush. He speaks to us through our trusted friends. And I'm not talking Instagram friends. I'm talking if-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kind of like through the wounds of a friend.

Paula Faris: Yes. If you're not doing life with a very small group of people who have seen under your hood and I mean it, they have seen the rust and the warts and the scars-

Dr. Tim Clinton: But look and you and say, "Hey, you're not doing this."

Paula Faris: Yes. God speaks to you through those trusted people. He speaks to you through scriptures and sermons and the song that you've heard 7,000 times. But for whatever reason, the day that it comes on the radio, he speaks to you through that conviction in your spirit. God is speaking to us. It's just do we know to decipher that it's Him and are we in tune with the Holy Spirit enough to know that He is speaking to us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's interesting when your cup gets to a point where you can't get anything else in it, it's overflowing, and all this insanity is going on. And the pull is happening in both directions, the body, kind of the soul, the heart, of who you are begins to just kind of fade or disappear. It's like you lose yourself.

Paula Faris: You forget why you're doing what you're doing. You forget that God has placed you there to be a light. Well for me, work became my narcotic of choice. It became my drug. I needed another hit of achievement and spotlight and success and accolade. And I totally misplaced my purpose and misplaced why God had me there. And he had me there in a dark space. I say, "Light shines in dark spaces." People ask me all the time, "How could you work at The View? How could you work in secular media?" And I'm like, Check out Matthew 5. Aren't we supposed to shine our light?" And where does light shine? Light shines in dark spaces. So I was trying to shine my light and I did, but I also burned out and I forgot why I was placed where I was placed, and it became more about me and not who I was doing it for.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The tipping point, when you make a move and you're going to go to the president of ABC and say, "Hey, listen, I'm pretty much torched here. I've got to do something." Okay. Take us into that moment, just for a second. And again, what was driving your decision?

Paula Faris: Yeah. I had a conversation with the president of ABC News. I called a meeting for him in the spring of 2018. And I knew that I needed to tell him that I needed to walk away from *Good Morning America Weekends*, and I needed to walk away from *The View*, and I just needed to get my life back. I still was going to work at ABC, but I wanted to take a much less prestigious job as just a general correspondent. And I was nervous. The first line of my book is, "There's no rational way to kill your career." And I was angry because I felt like God called me to the space, to a prestigious position, and now he's calling me out, okay? So there are a lot of feelings of conflict, anger, frustration, fear, but I had a peace about it. And I think that's one thing that we have to get used to feeling-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Somewhere you were wrestling with God in the midst of these feelings.

Paula Faris: I was totally wrestling with God. But I had a peace about it. I had a peace that this is what God wanted me to do. And that's where I think I had to get used to these feelings of peace and fear coexisting. Because so often we feel like God's calling us to do something, but we're scared to do it. And so we're like, "Okay, maybe that's my intuition," but I was still so scared to step away. I didn't know what was on the other side. It's not as if God said, "Paula, I want you to pump the brakes, and then I've got something great over here." I had no idea what was on the other side of it. And I really felt like I was killing my career, but I knew that I needed to obey and I needed to take this step of faith. And that's what I did. So I trusted that peace in my spirit. And I pressed into my fear. You talked about tackling fear and conquering it. There's this notion especially in Christianity, that-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Fear is weakness.

Paula Faris: Fear is weakness, but that we should overcome it. And then we think that it's behind us and then it creeps up again and we think, "Oh, I did something wrong." And then you get frustrated. What's wrong with me? But I think I've had to learn that fear is part of the journey. Fear is something that we get to press into, but it's up to us to take that step. Fear is normal. That's why God mentions it hundreds of times in the Bible, but he asks us to take that step. "Have I not commanded you to be strong and courageous?" So it's God's commanding us, he's commanding me to be strong and courageous, even in this moment where I have no idea what's going on, but I trust the peace that He's given me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, cohost. Our special guest today is Paula Faris. Her new book out called, *Called Out Why I Traded Two Dream Jobs for a Life of True Calling*. Paula, I think that's really the heart of our discussion today. It's this transition that was going on inside of you. And that's the heart of this book. And for those who are out there struggling with God, and trying to move their way through what's a pretty insane, difficult, tough world. And we all hit the wall. We all get to those places where it's time, something's got to change. Take us into a little

bit of your discussion on faith, your faith calling and your vocational calling, and what you're trying to teach us with.

Paula Faris:

So I don't know about you, Tim, but we get these messages from society and from culture and from church that we're supposed to lean in, we have to find our calling, right? I feel like every week at church, we're told we have to find our calling and calling is synonymous with career, right? Find the one thing that you were born to do. Lean into that. Your worth is your work. Your value is your vocation. Your calling is career. And that's what I did. I found this one thing that I was really good at. And then I burned out and God called me out of that space. And I had no idea who I was outside of it. So for me, when I stepped away, God said, "Paula, do not confuse your calling with your career."

And I really felt him saying, "We have two callings in our life. We have a faith calling, which is unwavering. It's our purpose. It's to love God and love people. That's why we're here. And then we have vocational calling," which will change. It's going to change. So I need to know who I am outside of what I do. And I can't do that unless I embrace my faith calling and my purpose to love God and love people. But so often in faith communities, our purpose is tied to a job. When job changes, we don't know who we are outside of it, we have an identity crisis. Jesus said in John 12, "I have come to fulfill my purpose, to offer myself as a living sacrifice." He didn't say I've come to fulfill my purpose to be the best carpenter, to offer myself as a living sacrifice. And we often conflate calling with career.

So, I just want to set people free. We're here to love God and love people full stop. That's our purpose. Vocational calling can and will change. And God calls us to do different things in different seasons. Right now, he's called me to be the best mom that I can be. And within that, anything that I choose to do, another bucket, I launched a podcast, the *Faith and Calling Podcast*, which I really love, that has to fit in with me being a mom. I'm launching a company probably by the end of the year, which I never thought that I could do because my fear prevented me from going for it. Who am I? I'm a broadcaster. It's hard to see yourself in a different capacity. You're scared of what other people are going to see you in a different capacity. But God just said, "No, as long as you stay connected to your vine."

I love visuals, Tim, so think of the vine, every vine as your faith calling and your purpose to love God and love people. A healthy vine produces many branches. God will call us to do many things in our life, okay? It's different seasons of vocation, different branches. And so embracing that message like, "Oh my worth isn't in a job. My calling isn't just my career because God's going to call me to different things in different seasons. I'm going to take the gifts and talents that I have, into each of those areas," whether it's the vocational calling of being home with my kids, whether it's the vocational calling of launching this podcast or this new company, I'm going to take what God has given me and hold it loosely, because at any point he can call me to do something different.

But I think we hear so often that we're called to do one thing, and when that one thing doesn't work out or it changes, we have an identity crisis because everything that we know, our identity and purpose are wrapped up into that. The only thing our identity and purpose should be wrapped up in is loving God and loving people. Once we embrace that, a healthy vine produces many branches, and we just have to think about our life. God calls us to different things in different seasons. I hold it loosely. I don't know how long I'll do the podcast. I don't know how long I'll do the company, but I'm holding it loosely. And I'm just stewarding what's in my hand, I'm a curious question asker who likes to champion and challenge people. That's who I am. And that's what I'll take into these other areas, whether it's parenting, whether it's podcasting, whether it's company.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You're saying, be rooted. So much of our identity is based on what I do and what others think of me. And if I get lost in that, I'm really going to hit the wall. It's going to come.

Paula Faris: Yeah. Introduce yourself to me without saying what you do. "Hi, I'm Paula. Nice to meet you." But then typically I would say, "What do you do for a living?"

Dr. Tim Clinton: I would say, "I'm a counselor. I help people. I do a little radio, television." So I'm thinking a lot of people listening out there, they're in these places where they want to be used by God. Maybe they've been wrestling in their own spirit. They're hearing you and saying, "It's easy to say when you've been on top of the world, blah, blah, blah. But do you know what it's like to not talk to people maybe all day long, now as a mom? And sometimes I feel lost. I don't know if I'm accomplishing anything." But you're pushing us into our rootedness, our identity in Christ. And when you say, when I am anchored there, no matter what I do, because you can get lost even in the big, as well as the small, that if you're not rooted. That's where the spin begins. And you can lose yourself.

Paula Faris: Yeah. And there's moms that are out there that feel like they're stuck at home and there's no value. Well that's because society might tell you there's no value, but this is a season of your vocational calling and God will call you to do other things. But for now, take what you're good at and what you love. I like to ask people these questions, "what are you good at? And what do you love and what do trusted people notice you're good and you love?" Not what you're just good at. I did an interview with Chris Tomlin and he says... He majored in psychology. He thought he was going to go into sports medicine. He's like, "I was good at it, but I didn't love it." Okay, so what are you good at, and what do you love?

You say you're a counselor, you're an encourager and what do other people notice? And you take those gifts into these different seasons of vocational calling. What I'm good at and what I love and what other people notice, I'm good at and I love, I'm curious. I ask questions. I like to champion and challenge people. Guess what? It worked great when I was in broadcasting and I take it into my vocational calling as a mother. I like to champion and challenge my children. And I'm curious. And so I take those gifts and talents that I have been

given, into every season and chapter of vocational calling, because there will be many of them. So it's not about what I'm doing. It's about who I am and what I'm doing and who I'm doing it for. And it just, again with the company, it's a perfect example. I'm not a business person. I thought the MVP was most valuable player, not a minimal viable product.

I know nothing about the entrepreneurial or business space, but, I'm curious. I ask questions. I like to champion and challenge people. So I'm taking that into this space. I'm taking the gifts and talents that I have, that God gave me into the space, and I just trust that he fills in all those puzzle pieces around me. So take who God has uniquely created you to be, love God and love people, and take that into every branch, every vocational season, every chapter of your life, whether you're home, whether you're being called to do something else. And remember, when God calls you, He equips you. But God isn't going to call you to do one thing. He's going to call you to do many things. So just release yourself from that lie that you have to find the one thing, no, you don't. God's going to call you to do a lot of different things throughout your life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. I was reading in Philippians 4, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything through prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guide your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." And you go down to verse 9, Paul basically says, "Those things you have both heard, learn and seen in me, do them in the peace of God. Again, I'll be with you." What I see in you is a peace. I see a settledness as if there's a difference. It's like it's okay. Even more than that, there's the modern day definition of the word tragedy, being successful in the things that really don't matter. It's getting over that and getting into the lane that brings real hope and healing. Let me add the word healing to your life because there is a healing piece here.

Speak to our listeners out there. A lot of them, majority of them, are women. They tune in everyday, trying to get sort of a download from the Lord, if you will. I don't want to waste this moment. This is for her. This is for the truck driver, who's driving down the road too who's saying, "Hey, wait a second. I've been thinking a lot about what I'm doing." And you camp in Psalm 1:39, again, "Anchored in Christ, knowing that you are formed by him for a purpose." Your title of your book again, *Called Out*, close us on it.

Paula Faris: *Called Out Why I Traded Two Dream Jobs for a Life of True Calling*, and I just want to speak to anybody that's listening. If you feel like God is moving and you're too scared to take that next step, follow the peace. You have a peace in your spirit and then ask yourself, "What's the best thing that can happen if I go for this?" Because so often, Tim, we think what's the worst thing. And the worst thing is enough to scare me off. I don't want to fail. But if you have a peace, proceed, if you don't have a peace, pause, but get used to the peace and fear. You can feel God is calling you to do something, that's going to be really scary and might feel a little risky and people might call you crazy. I've been there.

Get used to that feeling of peace co-existing with fear. If you have a peace, I say expect and anticipate fear because it's going to come in and it's going to say, "You're not good enough." But remember Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you to be strong and courageous, don't be afraid and don't be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you everywhere you go." We're commanded to be strong and courageous and God promises he's going to be there. Step out into faith. It's like the GPS. If you're in your car listening, you plug in the directions, right? But it doesn't know where you're going to begin. So you're in a parking lot. You put in the directions and you're like, "Do I take a left out of the parking lot or do I take a right?"

You don't know until you start moving. And that's how it is when God is calling you to do something you get a peace, but you have to take that first step. And then, "Oh, I took a right out of there? Shoot, it's rerouting me. I was supposed to take a left." It's when you start moving that God starts guiding you and ask yourself, "What's the best thing that can happen, if I step out on faith and do this?" What's the best thing, and focus on that. And know that when God calls you, God equips you in the same way he was with Moses. He will be with you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, it's just about taking that first step.

Paula Faris: It is. It is. You have to take the first step. Have I not commanded you brothers and sisters to be strong and courageous? Take that step.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Our special guest again today is Paula Faris. Amazing new book called, *Called Out Why I Traded Two Dream Jobs for a Life of a True Calling*. You heard it here. I know Dr. Dobson wishes he could say hello to you. But on behalf of Dr. Dobson's wife Shirley, the team at Family Talk, we celebrate the good work God's doing in and through you. Thank you for joining us.

Paula Faris: Thank you, blessings to you.

Roger Marsh: In Proverbs 16, verse 3, King Solomon says, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Paula Faris was highly successful before she stepped away from ABC News. But when she heard God calling her to spend more time at home with her husband and kids, she ultimately knew that she needed to obey, even if it didn't make sense to her at the time. And we can be confident that obeying the voice of the Lord is always the right decision.

Now, if you want to learn more about Paula Faris, her current podcast or her book called, *Called Out*, please visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Or you can always give us a call at (877)-732-6825. Thanks for making Family Talk a part of your day. We are so blessed by your support. From all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, God's blessings to you and your family.

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