



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Pray Big Things – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Julia Jeffress Sadler

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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:** In James chapter four, verse two, the Bible says, "You do not have because you do not ask God." And then in Matthew seven, verse seven, Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you." Now it's very easy to read those Scriptures and move on. It's much harder to take God at His word and put those words into practice because as humans, we have all experienced disappointment. You may have prayed for something with everything you had, and God didn't give you what you asked for. This situation is one of the hardest things for a Christian to explain and move on from. But for our guest and her husband on today's edition to Family Talk, it was a series of miscarriages. I'm Roger Marsh. And if you struggle with reconciling the fact that God is good and yet still allows suffering or seems to allow a prayer to go unanswered, well, I'm glad you found us today.

You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and we're about to share the second half of Dr. Tim Clinton's recent conversation with Julia Jeffress Sadler. Julia is an author, a licensed professional counselor, and the Next Gen Director at the 14,000 member First Baptist Church of Dallas. She's a regular conference speaker and also the host of *Unapologetic with Julia Jeffress Sadler*, an outstanding podcast. Yesterday, Julia talked about a series of miscarriages that she and her husband experienced. She'll share more about that devastating season today.

Many couples can relate to the physical and emotional pain of infertility, miscarriage and infant loss. As a counselor, Julia described the grieving process as necessary and crucial. We hope you'll find today's honest, tender message to be encouraging for you or someone you know. Let's join Dr. Tim Clinton and Julia Jeffress Sadler right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Dr. Tim Clinton:** Julia, welcome back to Family Talk. So excited to have you back. We've got a lot to talk about, but hey, congratulations again on your new book, *Pray Big Things: The Surprising Life God Has for You When You're Bold Enough to Ask*. I love that. And Julia, I'll tell you what. It's convicted me. It's challenging, but it's also encouraging because when you realize that we do have a God who loves us and

who loves His children like a father loves his sons and daughters and more. It means everything to us. He's there for us, isn't he?

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Absolutely. Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Julia, your story yesterday was pretty fascinating. God calls you and Ryan to begin to really look to Him and to be courageous enough to pray with expectation from a great God, and you start praying some pretty bold things and kind of stunning things. Give us the list again of things you were praying for. And we're going to talk about how God began to answer them and then the challenges that come with all of that expectation.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yeah. So, we decide we're going to make a list of 20 things we were going to pray until God said no or until He clearly said yes. And we weren't telling anyone. So it was just the two of us. And we just decided to dream as big as we could. And what were those things if we weren't embarrassed to ask God, what were those things that we would ask Him if we could ask Him anything? And on that list were three children. That was just our heart's desire. We wanted three, and we wanted multiples, twins.

I didn't really ever think anything differently, but that was something I remember. It was just Ryan and me, so it was something we'd always wanted. For our student ministry to just catch a love for evangelism and really Ryan and I developed a love for witnessing as teenagers. And we wanted that to happen in our student ministry. There were different people that we were really hoping to get sober from their addictions, so that was on there. But the main thing we talk about in this book is the three children multiples and for God to do more than anything we could ever imagine.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And by the way, a TV show and-

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Oh, right. Right. Oh, yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: ... maybe writing a book and things like that.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Mom brain. Sorry.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's amazing though, because God begins to go to work and probably not the way you thought he would. Julia shared yesterday about three failed pregnancies and where it took you.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And it was a dark place. Just share again a little bit of what happened.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yes. So, we ended up praying these big prayers and getting pregnant immediately and thinking, "That was easy. God just wants to bless us

apparently.” Then ended up losing three babies in less than seven months. And we definitely, I always say it was God's, one of God's biggest graces to me that I became a therapist before all this happened, because I did know, at least I knew that I needed to feel. I needed to stay close to Ryan. I needed to stay close to God. But it was very much the most spiritual warfare we'd ever felt because every loss coincided with a huge spiritual milestone going on in our ministry or in our church. And so the temptation to give up was real. I mean, it really was there. I remember one time just feeling so much, not give up my faith, but give up on, okay. This pray big things, I mean, come on. What was this?

And one time I had, it was when my 13th friend got pregnant and she was announcing it. That's just unheard of to have 13 pregnant friends while you're going through all this. And everybody was cheering down the hall at work, and I just shut my door. And I really just felt taunted. That Satan was just mocking me. And I stood up and I said, "I know my God hasn't forgotten me. So you better bring it because I'm not going anywhere." And I just felt like I had to say that, because I was like, I'm not going to give up my faith. I mean, I was saved, so I don't believe you can lose your salvation, but I was like, I'm not going to suddenly fall off. I'm going to go all in and maybe I'll get pregnant and maybe I won't, but I'm not going to give in to you. And I mean, I really felt like that was the biggest moment in all of this.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

And it's easy by the way, to get caught up in a lot of emotional dysregulation, insanity, if you will, meaning I just like can't get control of myself. I go back to what we were talking about yesterday. What is it? One in five, one in six women aren't able to get pregnant. And think about Hannah in the Bible, what she went through. I think a lot of people around her thought she was a crazy woman. Hear what I'm saying? Because it goes deep into your soul. And I know you work with a lot of women and families, marriages, trying to bring hope into that kind of darkness. Speak into that. You talk the book and this is important about getting wise counsel, about keeping your head here, about pressing into a God who is there for you and battling through the discouragement, the confusion, the anger, the depression, and more, and you give a lot of time to dealing with anxiety or fear.

Julia Jeffress Sadler:

Yes, I do. I think realizing there's only so much you can take even if you're a Christian. I mean, that's just not something we here usually on Sunday morning. "Remember, there's only so much you can take." People are like what? That wasn't very encouraging, but no one explained to me that whenever you go for, whenever you lose a baby, it's the same hormone wise as giving birth. So how everyone understands postpartum depression and postpartum anxiety and just the postpartum period in general, that time period. No one explained that to me that anytime you go from being pregnant to not being pregnant, even if that baby isn't born, your emotions are still messed up. So that was three times in a year, which we haven't even got to. So technically it ends up being six babies in a year. So that was very up and down.

And I think going back to, I mean, there's really only so much you can take without getting help from other people. And I told you yesterday, there was just a time where I really ... not that I could only talk to counselors. I mean, when you're in this profession, you have lots of friends that are counselors. But I had friends that maybe that wasn't their background, but they definitely were more empathetic. And so protecting myself from who got to speak into my life and then realizing I maybe don't have to go to every friend's baby shower while we're going through this.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Because it triggers me.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Right. So practically taking care of yourself practically and spiritually.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Julia, in this piece, we know that suffering's a part of life. And some people hear people talk about finding purpose in our pain. That your mess will become your message. I'll tell you what. When you're in it, you don't want to hear that stuff. It's like get away from me. But help us understand that, because it is important that we press into it.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yeah. Well, so whenever I think about that, I think more about, we ended up getting pregnant with the triplets and we thought, "Okay, home run. This one for the home team. Everybody can rejoice. There was suffering. We can put a nice bow on it, pregnant with triplets. Isn't God good?" I mean, it was just, wow. We got to see, this is what God was doing the whole time. And I remember I was excited for a day and then I just got stricken with anxiety. That was the first night I never slept. And I was terrified. Just absolutely terrified. What if it happens again? What if-

Dr. Tim Clinton: Afraid of losing the babies again.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yeah. I mean, just terrified. And it was to the point I wouldn't let anyone say the word triplets. The first, I don't even remember if this was in the book or not, but it was so fresh when I wrote the book, but that first trimester, I couldn't even say it. My parents. I was like, "Nobody say it, nobody say it." I was just so worried that something was going to happen. And my husband and I, there's somewhere we go on vacation, and we went on vacation that year. And I mean, I really was just like, I can't.

I was just ridden with anxiety and so scared. And usually with pregnancies that are just with one baby, they said, well, at 12 weeks, you're in the clear. And I remember asking my doctor, "So when am I in the clear? When can I stop feeling this way?" He goes, "Never, because what happens is it's usually at about week 20 where most people lose triplets." And so it was ... week 20, I mean, that's like in your third trimester. So I was like, I can't take this. And so we were on vacation and I was too ... moms listening, you all know pregnancy brain.

It was like times three. So I couldn't put sentences together. And I was like, I'm just going to pray Scripture. I was like, I need to pray Scripture. I need to pray what's already in the Bible. So I started praying Psalms, and I just claimed it like never before I said, "God, I mean, you say, who is going to praise you if we go down into the pit, who is going to praise you?" And I said, "I need you to do this and I need you to tell me it's going to be okay." And it was a completely overcast day. And Ryan and I were praying and I was like, "Do you see this?" And we like peaked our eyes and the whole, I mean, we were outside, everything's dark and I'm not getting, there was a light just on us, on Ryan and me where the clouds were coming through.

And it was just things like that, timing a bit that God knew. God knew I couldn't take it. He knew how upset I was. And he did little things like that. And I didn't know what was going to happen, but he helped me that day and every day after. So then at 23 weeks, whenever I went into labor and the doctor came in and said, "I'm sorry, they're not going to make it." I heard God as loudly as I've ever heard anything, Him say, "No." And I felt that in my spirit, but then it was 49 days of laying in a bed saying, "Okay, where are you? Are you going to do this?" And there's not a Scripture that said everybody ... I felt that it was going to be okay, but it was terrifying. And the doctor comes in saying, "Everyone's probably not going to make it." I mean, that's really scary.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What do you say to that woman, that man right now listening and they're praying? They're crying out to God for some miracle for their kid to come home. Save them some drug problem or just the lostness of closeness and in a loving relationship or something, whatever's ripping or tearing their heart out about persevering here.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Well with it, I always think about the prodigal son of course. And just that really, it's not over until it's over. And that's just true. I mean, I've worked with so many families that have had children go away and they don't come back until they're much older and it's very hard. They never see that child come back, and it's very difficult. And I don't want to pretend everything of course is going to be okay. Anytime I write our story, it's very difficult because I know all kinds of people that didn't have this happen.

They had really bad things happen. They didn't have some miracle story to write about. And so, I think I get concerned sometimes with *Pray Big Things* because I want people to remember just like we prayed for the triples, we prayed for those other babies to survive too, and they didn't. So I do understand it don't always work out how we want it to, but I believe that God's sovereign and I know that sometimes people roll their eyes at that, but that is the hope we have as Christians. It is the hope we have that one day we're going, we are going to understand.

Dr. Tim Clinton: In the midst even in our darkest hour, God's there, and that He is at work and that His plans are being fulfilled, and that He can give us the comfort that we

need in our soul. You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, your host. We're talking today with Julia Jeffress Sadler, amazing work called *Pray Big Things: The Surprising Life God Has for You When You're Bold Enough to Ask*. Sheila Walsh said this, "Julia shows us clearly how to pray big prayers to an even bigger God." Julia, I want to go a little bit deeper here because your book is prescriptive. You give strategic plans on how to battle through all this stuff, and I'm going to stay with the unanswered prayer piece just for a moment, because it's tough when you feel like God doesn't hear you or you feel like your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. And a lot of that has to do with us. I don't think we get that. You know that. You feel the same way?

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yes. But because we don't know the full story for sure.

Dr. Tim Clinton: There you go. Of course.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yes. But that is very difficult. Yeah. I mean, I was just talking with someone before this and they were saying, "What's going on with young people today? What do they think about the Bible?" And we know that a lot of people are leaving the church, this generation of young people. And they usually cite because they can't understand how God allows suffering. That's always one of the top three questions of why people are leaving the church for young people, is why does God allow suffering? And the person asks me, "Well, is that globally?" They don't understand why does God allow something in the Ukraine or in their personal lives?" And you know as a counselor, you just have a different view, of you get to see. It's a privilege to get to be invited into so many people's lives and really see what they're going through.

But I found it, it's more people wondering, "No, why did God let this happen to me?" And I remember this girl, she, everybody was really upset. She was at student ministry and they're saying, "This girl, she's decided that she's a Wiccan." And we're like, "Oh, okay." And so they're like, "Julia, you have to talk to her." And I was like, "Okay." And so I went and talked to her and she said, "Yes." And I said, "Well, have you accepted Christ as your savior?" She said, "Yes And I did that." And I said, "Instead of, you know you shouldn't be a Wiccan, right?" It was "So what's going on?" She said, "Well, I was a Christian and I prayed for God to heal my dad and my dad died. And God did not answer that prayer. And I met someone at school who does witchcraft and made something happen, who knows? And so I think I'm just going to go that way now."

And it was really this heavy moment, of course. And she expected me to say, "Well, you know none of that's real." And instead, I said, "You know all that's real. Right?" I said, "It's real. It's just really going to hurt you." And I think realizing that a lot of times we really are just concerned about, I mean, it's just human nature. We're concerned about ourselves. We want to know where God was in our suffering, but we don't need to go a direction into something that's going to hurt us. God doesn't hurt us even if we don't understand.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Julia, praying through unanswered prayers is important because it's not about us. It's really about God and see Him in His ways, in his will and believing that He's a good God. Right?

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And so when we have that mindset. You talked about mindset in here. You got to get that straight. If you're battling fear and anxiety, it really is about getting those thoughts right and getting rid of that stinking thinking that often creeps in. But getting the mindset going, and then you talk a lot about giving thanks in all things. Paul in Philippians Four said, "Be anxious for nothing but in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God." Talk to us about how you did that in the dark times.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yeah. So, I love how practical Scripture is and I mean exactly what you just said. There are so many just prescriptions in Scripture, so giving thanks, of course, it just changes everything. Being able to see what you still can be thankful for, what you still can give thanks to God for. And so for us, it was really important for us to look at our lives and notice, take notice of what's going on spiritually. Like I mentioned before, okay. We obviously are devastated that we're losing the pregnancies, but how amazing that we are having this evangelism, just complete rejuvenation in our ministry and how amazing that we were alive. I mean, it's just taking inventory of your life because we take so many things for granted, and that was just huge for us.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Because you can get lost again in the darkest. It's like a kid when you're growing up, you have a pimple on your face. All you, when you look in the mirror, the only thing you can see is that. You hear what I'm saying?

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It just changes your lens, but when you can see the beauty for a moment. Boy, I'll tell you what. It just redials us in. In it you also talk about persistence, never quitting. I know you quote Churchill and a lot of people in the chapter.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Love Churchill.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And I just think about it's the hardest thing in the world, but the most important thing is just keep on going.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Just one step in front of another. It's okay to get knocked down. It's okay to cry out. It's okay to feel confused and lost, but it's not okay to stay there. Right?

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You got to keep going.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Absolutely.

Dr. Tim Clinton: How do we keep going?

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yeah. So, I think you keep going by staying grounded and it's a counseling term of course, that it's in Scripture. We have to stay rooted to God's word and grounded in it and decide it doesn't matter what I feel. It doesn't matter what's going on. It doesn't matter what diagnosis I just got. I know God is good, and I know that He loves me. And then everything else definitely stems from that. But then I think also what we talked about earlier. I mean, there's only so much you can take. What were we supposed to do, have 20 miscarriages? I mean, there's only so much you can take, so practically what needs to happen so that you can keep going. If you're supposed to persist, if the Bible says you can with this power, okay, so practically, what do I need to do to make sure this actually happens?

And there were people ... I keep going back to this just because I do see this conversation a lot in Christian circles. It's not cutting off people, but sometimes you have to be very careful with who is going to have the main voice in your life. And that was very important for us. I think it's very important not to get hung up on, but know your personality, know your spiritual gift, know your love language. And I mean, when you're in crisis or in trauma, you are going to have to not selfishly take care of yourself, but you got to protect yourself because there's really a spiritual battle going on.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. Julia, I think the thing I love most in our conversation is I know that He is good. That His heart toward me. I can hold onto that. And I can persevere because of it. And so, as I press into that piece of who He is, that's what helps me, gives me that fight to keep on going. Julia, I'd love for you to just speak again in closing to our listeners out there about daring to pray big and bold things, because you never know who, when, how, what God's up to, but He is up to something.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Absolutely. I think praying big things just allows you to be a part of the bigger plan. There's a reason we like superhero movies. There's a reason we like these alternate universes. But the thing as we are a part of one. We are a part of something supernatural and prayer helps us to partner with God and be a part of this other world. And it can be hard, but in the end it's a different kind of existence. It's a different kind of understanding and experience on earth. This isn't our home. And I think that prayer helps just bridge that gap, and it's going to change your life. I believe it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I love what the Hebrew writer said. He said, "Those who come to God must first believe that He is and that He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." "And you shall seek me and you'll find me when you search for me with all of



your heart.” That's what this is all about. And do we dare put an expectation on God to do exceedingly abundantly above and beyond that which we're able to ask or even think? That's a great story. Julia, you have any resources that go along with the book, *Pray Big Things*?

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Yes. At [ptv.org/julia](http://ptv.org/julia) is the website. And I have a Bible study called “Sparrow.” It's four videos, and it's teaching about infertility and miscarriage, but it's more for couples. I have questions at the end that you can go through with your spouse.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Our special guest again today is Julia Jeffress Sadler. Her book is *Pray Big Things The Surprising Life God Has for You When You're Bold Enough to Ask*. I know Dr. Dobson would want me to say on behalf of he and Shirley and the team at Family Talk, we really appreciate the good work God's doing in and through you. I know we're expecting some great things as your program continues to accelerate and explode all over the country and around the world. Julia, stay in the fight and keep challenging us all to pray boldly for such a time as this. Thanks for joining us.

Julia Jeffress Sadler: Thank you for having me.

Roger Marsh: An absolutely inspiring and essential conversation for Christians in every walk of life on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. You just heard the second half of Dr. Tim Clinton's recent discussion with Julia Jeffress Sadler. You can learn more about Julia and her ministry by visiting [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute exists to bring you encouragement and inspiration for your Christian walk. Please join us again tomorrow for another addition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. James Dobson: This is James Dobson again. As we close today's program, I just want to thank so many of you out there who make this broadcast possible with your contributions, and I want to tell you how much your generosity is appreciated.