



## Working with Gratitude and Grief

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**Guest:** Lisa Valentine Clark

**Shelley Hunter:** You're listening to the *Faithful Career Moves* podcast. I'm your host, Shelley Hunter, and this is where we talk to people who have seen the hand of God in their lives and particularly in their careers.

Thank you for joining me today. I am thrilled to share this interview with Lisa Valentine Clark. I have long wanted to talk to her because as many of you may know, she has a wonderfully successful career and she's been through-- or I should say, is still going through a pretty heavy trial. She's done it publicly with grace and humor, but I know it's still hard.

Now, before we get to the interview though, I want to share a new resource with you.

I've coached many people on their career journeys, but the most tender to me are the stay-at-home moms who either want or need to return to work. In the face of this pivot, many have said, "I need to go back to work, but I have no skills." I know that's not true, but having gone without a paycheck for so long, these talented women don't see how their at-home work relates to the workforce.

I created a workbook available on my website at [faithfulcareermoves.com](http://faithfulcareermoves.com), or you can find it on Amazon as a Kindle eBook or a paperback. *PS, did you know that there's an iOS app for Kindle? You don't need a Kindle to read a Kindle-formatted book. That's just a side note.*

Anyway, the book is called *Return To Work With Confidence: A Faith-Based Guide To Help Stay-At-Home Moms Re-enter the Workforce*.

I'll put a link in the show notes, and I ask that you share this book with the stay-at-home moms you know who might need it. Honestly, the career guidance follows the same recipe anyone would need to up-level their career. But this book is written for women who've been home raising kids and need help identifying their transferable skills.

As I've said before, I'm not here to convince moms to return to work. Being a stay-at-home mom is a career choice. In fact, I think it's one of the most faithful moves a

woman can make. I have no idea what's best for you and for your family, but if you do feel inspired to return to work, I'm here to help.

Okay, let's get back to Lisa now.

Many of you know Lisa as the host of *The Lisa Show* on BYUradio, but have you ever wondered how she got there? I know I have. Let's let Lisa tell the story. Lisa, can you start us off by just telling me what you do now for a career?

**Lisa Valentine Clark:** Yes, you bet. My name is Lisa Valentine Clark and I host the podcast *The Lisa Show*. I also do some freelance voiceover work and acting and some writing sometimes. [chuckles] Just a little bit of everything.

**Shelley:** I love that. I think you have enough of a public profile now that a lot of people will know who you are and what you do today. How did you get here?

**Lisa:** That is a long [chuckles] answer. The short answer to that is God's grace and I don't know. A combination of that.

No, but I started off, I think, being interested in lots of things. I had a hard time choosing a major in college and I eventually, after considering many things, landed on an English degree because I loved to read and just hear people's stories. I just thought the most interesting people were in the English department. That's where I landed.

I taught junior high and high school English for a little bit, and I wanted to have a large family, my husband and I did, and I wanted to be able to stay home with them primarily, not knowing how long it was going to take me to have children or if that was going to happen; it did, spoiler. While I was staying home primarily with my kids, I taught an online English course, a couple of courses.

Back in the day, I always tell my kids that I was the grandma of the internet, where before it was known as online schools and things like that, I created some curriculum, did that when my kids were little. Also, did some voiceover work when my kids were little, just for extra money.

I supported my husband through a master's degree and a doctorate degree. During that time, we had five children and I was primarily a stay-at-home mom just doing these freelance things for about 12, 13 years. Then the voiceover work caught onto some acting work and then that snowballed.

I did some commercial work, that snowballed into doing some projects that I did with my improvisational troupe. I did some commercials and a couple of movies and I wrote a book, it's called *Real Moms: Making It Up as We Go*, that spring-boarded into a web series called *Pretty Darn Funny*. That tripped into a Chatbooks video that did really well and got me a lot of additional jobs. I did a TV show called *Random Acts*.

About that time, my husband was diagnosed with a terminal disease and he was getting ready to go on permanent disability as he lost the ability to move and speak. He was a tenured professor of theater at Utah Valley University and the chair of that department. I knew that I needed to get full-time insurance for my five kids and that we would have employment loss. Freelance was a little bit risky for all of that, plus my new caregiving duties.

I was offered a position at BYUradio to host my podcast, and that was a dream come true. I was doing that as I was trying to care for my husband, but the hours just were perfect and perfectly lined up. I feel really grateful about that. That also led to a TV show. See. I told you this is a long answer.

**Shelley:** That's okay.

**Lisa:** *Show Offs*, which is an improvisational TV show that I did with my improv friends. We were able to swing being able to do both of that. Then I took a little step back from anything other than the podcast as my husband's health decreased, which was also during a global pandemic. Just to have the one job during all that crisis seemed a little bit more realistic. Then, unfortunately, he passed away in June of 2020.

After that, my career has been a little bit more of the freelance acting and writing, but just really grateful to be at BYUradio and have *The Lisa Show* and really grow that podcast. It's really been a really beautiful culmination of the things that I like to do, which is just bring people together and have interesting conversations and hopefully make the world a little bit better of a place. That's where I have landed now.

**Shelley:** You've been through a lot.

**Lisa:** Yes, I think so. I've lived a lot of life for a little wide-eyed, optimistic girl from Lincoln, Nebraska, that's for sure.

**Shelley:** Yes. I'm sorry about your loss. I know that was a big loss for you and your family, and I didn't know your husband, but you can't look at anything without seeing somebody making a tribute to him.

**Lisa:** Oh, yes. He was incredible. Just a force of nature for sure.

**Shelley:** Can you take me back to the time where you said, just very casually, "I supported my husband while he got his master's and his doctorate"? What was that like? How did you go into that? That's not small.

**Lisa:** No, it wasn't small at all. It's funny because when my husband was trying to figure out what he wanted to do, he was an English major too, so two English majors being-- because we thought we were so practical. He was on a theater scholarship and he was trying to figure out what he wanted to do, and I knew what I wanted to do and he took a-- what are those? Personality test of like, "Hey, this is what you're good at. This is what you should be when you grow up." He took this 10-hour test at BYU student services.

This was back before you took all those quizzes on the computer. He went back and then [chuckles] the career counselor was so upset. He was like, "What did it say?" The woman said it said that the number one career-- and mind you, sometimes they're wrong. He was like, "What is it?" She said, "The number one career for you is circus performer." [laughter]

**Shelley:** Who even made that test?

**Lisa:** I don't know. She's like, "We've never gotten one that said this." When Christopher came home and told me, at first I didn't laugh because I was like, "There's no way. One of your friends went in there and is messing with you." He is like, "No, Lisa, she was serious." I just sat there for a second and I thought, "Okay, she's not wrong. This doesn't-- [laughs] but like, "We can't join the circus." He ended up being a theater director.

I'll tell you what. Christopher and I had a really great marriage because he set me up for success and then I set him up for success. It was very balanced and I really did want a lot of kids and I wanted to be able to stay at home with them when they were little. That was important to both of us. Luckily we had the same idea. We realized that there's certain sacrifices that you need to make for that, but on the same end of it, he had a lot of unique talents as well.

He was on a theater scholarship, he was an actor and I wanted him to be able to have the life that he wanted too. I remember he was, at the time, working in retail. He managed a huge Barnes & Noble. We had two little boys, age three and one. He was miserable. He just was like, "I feel like any monkey could do my job." Got those Sunday night blues. We were making the most money we'd ever made. We were like, "Yes, but so what?"

We found out about this theater program called Staging Shakespeare at the University of Exeter in England to study with one of the top Shakespearean experts in the world. We found out about this program, and I don't have these very often, maybe just a couple in my whole life, but I just felt like, "Oh, yes, you're going to apply to this. You're going to get in, and we're going to move to England, and you're going to get a master's degree." It's exactly what happened.

We went, and it was really, really hard, especially for me because then he was living his dream, sitting at a pub, just talking about Shakespeare all day. That was his dream and putting on these experimental performances. I was dealing with two little rambunctious kids, and I didn't have any friends. I didn't know anybody. It rained all the time, and it got dark at 3:30 when they got up from their naps. I'm an extrovert, and I just didn't fit in.

That year and a little bit that he was there, getting that master's degree just changed the entire trajectory of our lives and was 100% absolutely worth it. We both learned a lot and made some beautiful connections and friendships and memories. Man, I'm so grateful we did that. When he came back and he has this terminal degree and then it was-- we both felt like he needed another one just for job security. That took a long time.

There were a lot of things that happened in that space of a long time of him working full time and going to school full time, basically getting a PhD in two different departments; in theater and also in education and leadership. Then he was in a bishopric and serving in our church, and we had five little kids. It was insane, and he was directing plays at night because that was his field, so there wasn't a lot of time, but he was doing what he loved. He was happy. I was happy.

It worked because, again, it wasn't so much about the money, but it was about feeling like you're supporting your family, but using your creative gifts and really making a difference in your little corner of the world and making it count. I feel a lot of satisfaction that we earned that together, even though when he died, those credentials died with him.

**Shelley:** Wow. When you say it that way, that's hard.

**Lisa:** It's the truth because you're buying into a certain-- opening doors and creativity, and you feel like you're doing it together because you're both making sacrifices. The truth and the reality of it, we made a gamble, and we bet on his career, and that's what we did. I don't actually regret it.

**Shelley:** I think it's beautiful that you don't regret it. Using that circus analogy here, it sounds you were balancing all these plates, twirling plates, I guess, right?

**Lisa:** All the time. It's funny that you use that analogy because Christopher did too. He's like, "She wasn't wrong. I do feel, especially as the chair of a theater department, that I am a circus performer, keeping all of these balls in the air."

**Shelley:** Yes, but when you were making all of these choices, you didn't know he was going to have a shortened life.

**Lisa:** No, of course not. Yes. Had no inkling.

**Shelley:** The two of you possibly had to juggle more than everybody else during that time to fulfill these dreams and accomplish what you could during that time.

**Lisa:** The month before he was diagnosed with ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, we went to Hawaii because he was honored with a Kennedy Center Award for his service in the theater department, this amazing award they gave him.

I said to him, very prophetically, and I wish it wasn't, I said, "You've really accomplished more by middle age than most people accomplish their entire lives." We felt that. It's funny because that gave him a lot of comfort as he was realizing what his terminal disease meant for him professionally, privately, and everything, by saying, "At least I don't have regrets. I went for it and I did as much as I could, and I did the best that I could." I think about that a lot because I think, boy, isn't that a great way to live?

**Shelley:** Yes.

**Lisa:** It gave him a lot of peace at the end, and we should all be so lucky.

**Shelley:** No kidding. Back to you. While he's juggling all the plates, and he's living all this out, and you're supporting him entirely, did you have feelings of, "My turn will come, I don't need a turn," or, "I am getting my turn," how did it feel to you?

**Lisa:** I think, honestly, it was a little mixture of both. The days are long, but the years are short. Some days I just thought, "So I got my college degree, and now I'm just cleaning all day, making food." You realize how quickly it goes by though. I remember just checking in because even though he was living his "dream", some days he didn't want to go to work and some days he didn't want to do it. I didn't ever take it as, "Oh, this isn't what I want."

I liked that we had to hold each other accountable because I think there's a strength and a power in that, of like, "You know what? No, I chose this. I chose this. I'm going to make this how I want to be it, and if it's not what I want, then I'm going to change it so that it fits how I want to live my life."

I think that was a really great part of it. Also, I was always doing things on the side, and he was so supportive in that. I felt like I was being so creative. I feel like creating a home and mothering is really creative and fun. It also has just stuff you have to do, but I would just try not to focus on that. When you have a newborn, everything sort of stops. [chuckles] Being able to write, being able to perform with my friends, still taking time to be creative and remember that, and to go out on date nights and things like that, that we did to take a larger perspective, was very valuable, and I'm glad that we did that.

It was really interesting because as my career picked up, right before he got diagnosed, he'd say, "Now that I have tenure, I'm ready to stay at home more and take on that big of a role so that it will give you the freedom to do bigger creative projects and things like that." Then, of course, it was such a blow when he was diagnosed.

**Shelley:** Yes.

**Lisa:** You have all these hopes and dreams, and we certainly did, and we certainly had-- "Okay, when the kids are this age, then we'll do this, and when they leave home, we'll do this." I was really, really looking forward to that. It's still something that I am actively grieving, this future that we both worked so hard for, that we both wanted. It doesn't negate what we went through, but we were so close to living the dream. We got to live it for a while, but yes, not living it now.

I do know that because he showed me in our marriage that he was willing to support me, I knew how bad he felt about, "Oh, now it's your turn, and I get sick, [laughs] and now you have to take care of me." Then he was so encouraging of, "You'll go on and do great things." He had a confidence in me and just an enthusiasm that was very contagious.

**Shelley:** It has to sting a little bit.

**Lisa:** Yes. I have to learn how to carry it.

**Shelley:** Yes.

**Lisa:** It's the future that I want that I don't get. That's part of the mourning process. I do feel like I'm not the only one that feels that way. For their careers, especially, you plan for certain outcomes, most of us don't get exactly what we want, so we just pivot, pivot. I've tried to keep an open mind to let that hope of maybe something that I've never imagined to crack through of what might be in store in the future.

**Shelley:** Yes because I would think that people looking at you from the outside, from the Instagram version of you and your life, they know you're grieving, but there's probably a lot of people that think you're living the dream yourself now because your career is taking off. Yet I can hear in you that hole in your heart that says, "It's great, but I wouldn't have traded what I had to give up for this."

**Lisa:** Yes. I have a love-hate relationship with social media because of that, because I try so hard to be real and authentic, but I also try really hard to control those intrusive thoughts that I have because of my grief. I don't want to be defined by them as well, even though I certainly have them. It is this weird mixture. I'm sure a lot of people can relate to this, of being so grateful and seeing 100% the Lord's hand in taking care of me and my family and a lot of hard work and focus on that.

I also want to be careful, too, as if I said, "I didn't get what I wanted. This isn't my Plan A," that I still express the gratitude that I really do feel. It gets so complicated with grief. When we plan out our careers, at least I was like this, I didn't fully understand how-- it's just another flow of your life. It's not a separate category to who you are. Everything's connected. Of course, your family and life and your spirituality and your emotional well-being, it's all tied to your career, to the decisions that you make. They're not separate.

**Shelley:** Yes. Let me go nuts and bolts a little bit for a second. Okay, we're a young mom. You have this English degree. You are doing some side gigs. What would you say was sort of the first big opportunity that you got that you felt like this isn't just something to do on the side?

**Lisa:** I think that it was to write the curriculum for an independent study group. It was like, "You write an entirely new curriculum for this high school course, for this science fiction course," and I was like, "Okay, this is great. I'm going to give it all I've got." Trying to learn how to do that while I was learning how to take care of kids because they're constantly changing, I was a lot more cocky back then, I was like, "Oh, this will be a piece of cake," and I was like, "Oh my gosh, this is so hard. I just keep getting interrupted every five minutes, and then it takes me ten minutes to figure out where I was, and then I'm interrupted again."

It taught me a lot but I think that was the first opportunity that I was like, I can really though-- if I get my schedule down a little bit better, I could really do some writing. This is a new idea for me and it was exciting.

**Shelley:** Yes. I don't mean to keep going back to your marriage, but it seems like that's so integral in all of this. Did you guys have a moment where you had to figure

out you were going to support each other? Because you were young, getting married. How did you have that maturity in your marriage?

**Lisa:** We had that right from the get-go because I just remember thinking, I know what kind of marriage I want. I want it to be like a partnership where we really bring out the best in each other. Right from the get-go, we were finishing up school when we got married. I was doing my student teaching, and he was finishing his degree and thinking about different careers and acting and things like that, and we just said yes to each other.

We made a pact that, okay, if you ask something of the other person, then make sure it's something that you really, really want, not just, "Oh, maybe," or whatever, and the other person will just do whatever they can to get you to get what you want. I don't know.

**Shelley:** That's really amazing though.

**Lisa:** We said that and we did it and Christopher would always say, "Well, you know, I'm pretty simple in a lot of ways." I think people thought he had a big ego. He's an actor and director and stuff like that, but it was kind of a joke, but he really didn't. He was just very simple about that. We both wanted the same kind of life. We wanted a bunch of kids. We wanted just to be comfortable. We didn't care if we had a ton of money or not, which is great because we never did.

We wanted to have an interesting life, and we wanted to create art and be surrounded by interesting people and have interesting, funny friends. Since we both had the same focus for what kind of life we wanted together, it totally aligned. Our jobs or what we decided to do or how we decided to support each other, yes, what he did and what I did was different, but it was for that same common goal. We supported each other in it.

That's, I think, the best way that I can sort of explain it. When it came time to do something dramatic like move to England, it was like, "Of course, this is going to get us to that interesting, creative, fun life, this sacrifice." Or when it was time to take care of him because he couldn't talk or move, it was like, "Of course, I'm going to take care of you and make you comfortable," because we're having this interesting, fun life, and that's what's going to have us keep it as long as we can. He was a very kind, generous husband that way.

**Shelley:** It sounds like you were equally that as a wife. What about your kids? How did they deal with mom and dad with all these disparate goals and dreams and twirling the plates? Are they part of the circus? How does it work?

**Lisa:** Yes, it's funny because I think once they really realize that their parents have this really weird career path, then they'll think, "Oh, we're so weird." We were hoping for them to go a more traditional route. We always joked, like, one of you has got to be a mathematician or a scientist or something. Please don't go into the arts. I remember when our oldest son was like, after a lot of consideration and it's changed his major several times, he's like, "I've finally landed on an English major."



We were like, "No, not our son." He's like, "But this is who I am. You have to accept me." We were like, "Oh, but you're good at science. Do that." No. We joke about it, but our kids, for better or for worse, I don't know now because parenting adult children is the worst. It's so hard because you just want things to be better for them than it is for you. They all want to do weird creative things, which is great, but also when you're at the end of that, you just think you're going to have to work, but they're in illustration and English and acting and filmmaking, so yes, just all over the place.

**Shelley:** That takes me to a question I want to ask because really, maybe this is more for them, right? Because kids won't listen. If you were to sit them down and tell them, they wouldn't listen, but maybe somebody else's kids will listen to this. Somebody listening to this that says, "I want to be where you are right now," what they can see right now, not the craziness that led there, what advice would you give for somebody who wants to head the direction you're going?

**Lisa:** I would say that it's really important to understand what it is you really, really want, and I mean fundamentally, more than you want to do for a living. How do you want to live? What kind of lifestyle do you want to live? I think that that's an important thing to consider. Do you want to be married? Do you want to have children? Do you want to be more of a hermit? Are you extroverted? Are you introverted?

Those basic questions, I think, are fundamentally more important. How do you really want to live? If you wake up and-- what are you doing all day? How does it make you feel? I think sometimes we have this idea of certain careers or jobs and then the actuality of what it really is. For a while, I wanted to be a lawyer, but what I really realized is I didn't want to be a lawyer, is I wanted to wear power suits and argue with people, you know what I mean? Which isn't really what a lawyer does.

Mostly a lawyer sits in their office all day long by themselves and writes. [chuckles] Really knowing who you are and then I would really break down to know the priorities because, at the end of the day, Christopher and I would have given up anything just to make sure that our kids were fed and had insurance. That would have meant us giving up maybe an opportunity or something for some more stability because we valued that family life more. Does that make sense?

**Shelley:** Yes.

**Lisa:** You can't have more than one focus and I see a lot of people like, some people say, "Oh, I want to be an actor," but what they really mean is they want to be famous and make a lot of money because if you really want to be an actor, there's lots of different ways that you can act. I'm not even shaming anybody who's like, "No, yes, I want to live with a lot of money, I want things, or I want to live this certain way." I don't think that there's anything necessarily wrong with that, but that's going to determine a lot of your decisions, right?

**Shelley:** The steps.

**Lisa:** The steps. For Christopher and I, it was about, like, the lifestyle that we wanted and we knew that we could get and we were so close. I just had to say that one more

time. Just because all five of our kids were at home when Christopher passed away, and now most of them are gone and I'm like, "Oh, you're so close."

I think knowing your intent and then I think the second piece of advice that I would give for somebody who is like, "Okay, how do I get to this point?" is to make your own opportunities and not to wait around. I looked for different voiceover jobs that I could do. I applied for different writing opportunities that I did. I wrote stuff not knowing if it would ever see the light of day. I tried things and I created an improvisational troupe so that it would fit to my schedule and to the kind of improv that I wanted to do with my friends, and we created a TV show together, and we created the movies together.

Making your own opportunities instead of waiting around for somebody to discover you or give them to you, it's more work, but it's also, I don't know, more satisfying, more creative to be able to do what you want to do. Creating as many opportunities for yourself and not waiting. Christopher auditioned for a lot of and acted on a lot of things and directed things for not a lot of money, just to be able to get the experience and then one could see how the experience was able to demand a higher fee. Things like that.

Applied for a lot of different scholarships and training, the Old Globe and Second City, and all over the country to be able to create opportunities and connections for himself. I think that those kinds of things and just being able to try are the two biggest pieces of advice that I would give.

**Shelley:** Yes, well, they go hand in hand because the first is to know what your priorities are and then the second is sometimes you have to create opportunities to align with those priorities because you guys could have just decided to be actors and whatnot, but wanting to have kids is what turned it into the circus a little bit.

**Lisa:** Oh, 100% it did.

**Shelley:** Right?

**Lisa:** Yes. There is a cost for that, and there were some opportunities that we weren't able to take because of that. I have lots of friends who chose not to have children or chose to have children late in order to flip that. That has worked for them. It's just that we both got to decide what we wanted our lives to look like.

**Shelley:** It's beautiful. Can you tell me about a leap of faith you had to take to get where you are now?

**Lisa:** Every job I get is a leap of faith. I can't think of one job that I thought, "Yes, I'm totally qualified for this. They made the right choice." [laughter] I feel like I have imposter syndrome, and I feel it's this funny combination of feeling like I should do it and being scared to death of doing it, especially when you're in front of the camera. I feel like that's a certain kind of apprehension. It really plays with your head.

The leap of faith is to say, "This is an opportunity, this is a gift. Just do it." Stop thinking about it. I felt that way doing the podcast. I thought there's other people that are more qualified, this seems really difficult, I don't know if I can do it, and yet it was so clear to me that this was a blessing and an opportunity and a gift in a way to bless my family. I couldn't not do it because I felt my family would suffer if I didn't, and I just had to go. I had this crippling self-doubt, and I just pretended like I didn't until I felt like it was going to be okay. [chuckles]

**Shelley:** That's amazing. I want to add, from what I understand, that didn't mean that it was easy.

**Lisa:** Oh, heavens, no. Nothing's been easy. It's a lot easier doing something that you're qualified for and that you find interesting and that you've trained for, than something that you feel you're stuck in. I think that's the difference in knowing what you want, creating opportunities, and working hard at it. There's this sense of satisfaction in working that not everyone gets, if they just fall into something.

**Shelley:** That's going to be the Pinterest quote. I like that one.

**Lisa:** [laughs] Thanks.

**Shelley:** Okay. Tell me an unexpected blessing then, something you couldn't see for yourself in going down this path.

**Lisa:** Oh my gosh, so many things. I don't even know where to start. I didn't see so many things. I didn't realize how many wonderful opportunities I would get acting when I started down the improvisational path. Starting doing this TV show, *The Show Offs*, and doing improvisational acting, and these shows with Will Forte and other famous comedians that I'd grown up loving, and doing a rock opera improvisational musical with Joey Fatone.

Just so fun. Being able to create podcasts that people all over the world can listen to and write these sincere messages, that it helped them in a difficult time. The meaning that that means to me, it's so hard to put into words, and honestly, setting out, I just didn't want to be bad. [laughs] So, to see good come of it, and to see it bring together families and relationships and stuff has just been so meaningful to me.

**Shelley:** I love that. How have you seen the hand of God in your career?

**Lisa:** God has never left me. I've talked a lot about my husband, he's the biggest force in my life and influence. I have a loving relationship, that I consider very sacred with God. Looking back, and hindsight is 20/20, I can see His hand in helping me to be able to get the righteous desires of my heart, and to be able to use my talents to be able to create the life that I want, and to create it for my family, in a way that is meaningful to me, that is individualized.

I could not have planned out this career. It's great, I love it, but I'm not smart enough to have been able to plan it [chuckles] or predict where I should go, how it should go, but I do know that the Lord knew. For as many hard hits as I've had to take in this

life, I think that He knew and He wanted to make sure that there was beauty, creativity, and love all along the way to guide me through. I mean that very literally. It's one of the greatest blessings of my life.

**Shelley:** My heart aches for you, I can feel for you, everything you've gone through. I think it's amazing what you've accomplished. I just can't shake the feeling that Heavenly Father is guiding you, and your husband is still checking in with you, just from a different place.

**Lisa:** Thanks for saying that.

**Shelley:** That's hard stuff.

Listen, if you've been following along these past couple of years, you know that a driving force behind this podcast and website is to address the statement some young women made a few years ago. Specifically, one said to me, "I feel like the church is always telling us, girls, to get an education or a career as a plan B, in case something bad happens to our husbands."

At that moment, I offered understanding and the counter belief that it's up to each of us to partner with God in making those life choices. Some women will feel inspired to work, some won't, some will return to work, and others will choose not to have kids or not be able to, but there's no one way to craft a life and piece together a family. Staying close to divine guidance is all you can do.

As I talked to Lisa, I felt something else. Our stories are similar but drastically different, but regardless of how we got here, we're both in similar places now, recognizing that God prepared us career-wise to be single parents, able to provide income and benefits to be self-reliant and care for our kids. That preparation made it possible to adapt financially in the face of some pretty sucky situations, I'll just say.

I want to answer that question from those girls a little differently now. We are all commanded to get our education and develop our talents to find joy, serve others, and magnify God's influence in our lives. Some of us will also need to make money. Lisa didn't know what was up ahead, but she followed the promptings, counseled with her husband, and let God be her guide. This story could have turned out differently with her getting to lead the life she planned for, but instead, she's living the life she was prepared for.

It is hard, but it would've been so much harder, had she not been pursuing her passions and interests, leading up to that life-changing moment. My heart goes out to her as she goes through and grows through this chapter in her life. I know many of us are experiencing similar trials as well. I want to say thank you to Lisa for sharing her story and thank you for listening.

Thank you for spending time with me on the *Faithful Career Moves* podcast. I hope you will discover one story at a time that God cares deeply about the details of our lives, especially something as important as using our talents and abilities to support our families, serve others, and build up His kingdom on this earth. If you are a stay-

at-home mom, who feels inspired to stretch yourself professionally, visit [faithfulcareermoves.com](http://faithfulcareermoves.com) to learn more.