



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Importance of the Family – Part 2

Guest(s): Howard Hendricks

Air Date: January 8, 2021

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

Dr. Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Howard Hendricks: See the doctrine of the family in the scriptures is not peripheral it's central, it's structural. The basic unit of society is not the state, it's not the school. In fact, it's not the church. The basic unit in God's society is the family. The home is the cornerstone of civilization and when the home goes, the rest goes.

Dr. Tim Clinton: This is Dr. Tim Clinton, and that was the voice of our guest speaker again today, the late Howard Hendrix. He was a popular author, speaker and noted Bible professor at Dallas Theological Seminary. Professor Hendricks passed away in 2013 and is survived by his wife, children, and grandchildren. Yesterday on Family Talk, he laid out some pretty compelling evidence as to why the family is paramount to the success of our society. In a moment, you'll hear the rest of professor Hendrick's thoughts on this important subject.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's remarkable to me how accurate these words are, despite being recorded many years ago. This is why Dr. Dobson selected this particular speech from our archives to present to you today. It's that important. We're living in a lost world and a culture in decline has chipped away at the family unit, sadly, destroying it. Traditional gender roles are being discarded. We, as followers of Christ need to stand up for the institution of the family. With all that said, let's listen to the remainder of this presentation. I think you'll enjoy it.

Howard Hendricks: There's a third reason I'd like to suggest for your thinking. And this is freighted with implications. We ought to be concerned about the family, because of the climate of contemporary society. You see, we've got a reproduction of what we had in the early church. And that is, instead of the church of Corinth making an impact on the city of Corinth, the city of Corinth was making an impact on the church of Corinth.

Howard Hendricks: And this is exactly where we are today. There are four major characteristics of contemporary society I'd like to share with you briefly. And if we had more time, you could think through the implications of these for the home.

Howard Hendricks: The first major characteristic of our society is the characteristic of secularism. You see, if you compare what happened in the first century in terms of what happened in the 20th century, you got an altogether different group of people staying up at night. In the first century, the pagans stayed up at night trying to figure out, "How in the world are we going to contain this sad thing?" Today it's the Christians who stay up at night figuring, "How in the world are we going to contain this kind of a secular society?"

Howard Hendricks: Secular society is one in which there is only one dimension. And you knew it would happen. When our theologian friends contributed to the process by pushing God over the cliff with a "God is dead" idea. It's the fact that God is totally expendable. It isn't the fact that he is a live option among many options, it's the fact that he is never brought into the scene. And of course, if you watch television, it's perfectly obvious to you that we are being brainwashed to be increasingly more secular with every program.

Howard Hendricks: So we have an ad which in effect says, "You only go around once in life. So you better grab all the gusto you can get." And then Jesus Christ comes along and says, "You really want to live a significant life?" The guy says, "Man, sure." "Good, throw it away." You know, a fascinating thing is that the average person who wouldn't drink a drop of Schlitz is shot through with that kind of a philosophy. A one dimensional lifestyle.

Howard Hendricks: The second one, and you would expect it to grow out of it if there is only one dimension to life, then it's obvious that you are going to live in a materialistic society. I was reading the other day, again, that great story of the parable of the soils. And right out of that page, I was grabbed by that interesting statement, "the deceitfulness of riches." I suppose if we had more time today most of you could give me a running commentary on that, because many of you have been deeply involved in a society and particularly in this community with very, very well-to-do people, many of whom are shot through with the sorrows, with the problems, with the casualties that are the product of a materialistic society.

Howard Hendricks: Not that there's anything wrong with things, and blessings. And I hope you don't feel guilty because God has given you some money. I think that's a bad trick that many preachers are trying to put on well-to-do with people. God never scorns a person for having money. What he scorns us for is being irresponsible with anything that he has given us by way of blessing and say, "You never knew you were in debt. You never knew that I gave it to you because I wanted you to use it and make an impact with it."

Howard Hendricks: The result is the things become more important than people. And we love things and we use people, and we get a distorted value system. I guess this is one reason Jeanne and I have enjoyed going to some of the third world countries. Every time I find somebody in our country who is a little ticked off at this society, I would like to write one of my Congressman and suggest that we put through a new bill that the United States government will now pay the one way

ticket of any citizen to any country in the world with no privilege of return. And I think we'd saw three quarters of the griping that goes on in this city.

Howard Hendricks: All you got to do is to go out. And I'm talking about some of the quote unquote "nice countries" around the world. And the greatest trip overseas is the trip home and the realization you are coming back to a truly free society. I met behind the iron curtain with a group of people, I don't think I'll ever recover from the experience. It was the last night I was there. We were all there surreptitiously. It took us three hours to get the group together because they had all come from a different direction in order to throw any police off. And we spent our time together and we were studying the word and they kept asking, "Give us some more, give us some more."

Howard Hendricks: And then the man who spoke the best English in the entire group said to me, "Would you do me a favor?" I said, "If I can." He said, "Would you tell the Christians in America to pray for us so that we will have courage to maintain our witness for Jesus Christ." And I just about went underneath the rug.

Howard Hendricks: You see, it's in a society like that, where you have no freedom whatever that you come to appreciate what it's like to meet in a delightful hotel like this on a Saturday afternoon, and talk about anything that we want to talk about and not fear that some police are going to come plowing through that door and say, "Okay, you guys are next."

Howard Hendricks: There's a third thing, and this is almost self-evident to any thinking, living individual. And that's the characteristic of sensualism. The fact that man, if there is only one dimension to life, and if everything in life revolves around things, then man eventually degenerate into a body, into a machine. And the only component in life is the physical. So we're living in a generation in which sex and love are coterminous. In which people don't know the difference between lust and love. They don't know the difference between sewer gas and Chanel N°5.

Howard Hendricks: The result is a degrading of humanity and self-respect. I don't know if you've been following the series this week on ABC on child molestation, but I kid you not I want to throw up almost at the end of every one of those sequences. I appreciate the candidness of the group presenting the program. But I think to myself, "Imagine living in a society where a dear little kid, two, three years of age, has to be exposed to this kind of material. And scarred for the rest of his life," and there is not just such a horrible public outcry that we are committed as a society to eliminate this kind of perversion. Never thinking that it's this type of thing that's the byproduct of the philosophy that we bought into it many years ago.

Howard Hendricks: The fourth characteristic of our society in addition to secularism, materialism, sensualism is humanism. And that is man is the measure of things. Most of us, as we grew up may have learned the shorter catechism of the Westminster confession, the chief end of man is to glorify God. But the philosophy of humanism is the chief end of man is to glorify man.

- Howard Hendricks: If you have never gotten a copy of the Humanist Manifesto, you ought to get one. 120 of the top leaders in this country met a few years ago. Among them were Andrei Sakharov, Soviet physicist; B.F. Skinner of Harvard; Sidney Hook, the professor emeritus of philosophy at New York University; Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Jewish reconstructionist movement; Crick, the British co-discoverer of the structure of the DNA molecule, et cetera, et cetera. It reads like an intellectual Who's Who?
- Howard Hendricks: What were their conclusions? No deity will save us. We must save ourselves. "We believe The traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. We affirm that model values derived their source from human experience." Finally, "We strive for the good life here and now."
- Howard Hendricks: Now ask yourself, "What are we doing to prepare parents who in turn are going to prepare children to live in that kind of a society?" And we can't hide our eyes or our head in the sand and say, "We're going back to another generation." We're living in this one. And if we cannot prepare our children to function in the realities of this kind of a society, we have lost our greatest opportunity.
- Howard Hendricks: There's a fourth and a final reason. And if I ever get off on this, we'll be here all day, so pray for me. Fourth reason why we ought to be concerned about the family is because the home is the greatest means of perpetuating viral Christianity.
- Howard Hendricks: See, we're developing a vicious cycle. We've got sick and weak people who are coming together in marriages and producing sick and weak marriages. And sick and weak marriages in turn produce sick and weak family. The interesting thing is, there are more secularists that are sensitive to this than most evangelical Christians. Jeanne and I spent some time at Harvard University taking a course in the family, and then later another followup course, it was related to the aging process. And we were absolutely bowled over it to find there was not one person who came to that platform who was not shook up over the fact that we are unaware of what we are producing in our society in the next generation.
- Howard Hendricks: So that if we are alarmed over what we see today, just imagine what it's going to be in the next generation, given this vicious cycle, this reproductiveness of degeneracy that's going on. See the greatest leadership is developed in a family and the crisis of leadership in America today is essentially a crisis of character. And where is character developed? It's developed in your home and in my home.
- Howard Hendricks: Fascinates me, having been this long involved in the process of teaching at the seminary, to see so many students with a high level of commitment. I must admit, that in my 33 years of teaching at Dallas Seminary I've never seen a

higher level of commitment than I see on the part of most of our students. It would absolutely blow your mind.

Howard Hendricks: Do you know what the greatest problem is? The greatest problem is the bulk of these young people do not come from Christian homes. Therefore, their habit patterns are in many cases, absolutely corrupt. Their value system is totally distorted. Their back down is such that they spend the bulk of their time trying to overcome emotional handicaps.

Howard Hendricks: If you were to sit in my office for one day, that's all. Just one set of interviews, that's what I'll give you. I will convert you for life to the importance of the family. Last interview I had yesterday before I left my office was one of the most delightful guys I think I have ever met. Committed wall-to-wall to Jesus Christ. He sat there weeping like a baby saying to me, "Prof, I don't know if I can get it together."

Howard Hendricks: This kid grew up in home in which his father has got a PhD, his mother has got two master's degrees. He had a Playboy magazine and a Penthouse magazine right on his coffee table since he can remember. He said, "I was reared with that type of thing. I was taken by my father to X-rated films. I went to college and I spent all of my time shacking up with the girls in campus. And then somebody came along and introduced me to Jesus Christ. And my life was revolutionized. Now I'm spending all of my time trying to reverse my field. I'm married to one girl and I love her and I'm committed to her, but I got all of this backwash constantly filling my mind, and grossing me out."

Howard Hendricks: So when it comes to the discipline he said, "Prof, I'd give my right arm if I had one quarter of the discipline that you got." And it's interesting to think back, where do you get this kind of thing? And some of us didn't even come from a Christian home and I discovered my unsaved father did more to prepare me for the ministry than many Christian parents. He contributed nothing spiritually for a very obvious reason, he had nothing to contribute. But he taught me discipline. He taught me what it meant to keep your word. He taught me what it was to respect the opposite sex. He taught me what it was to work hard and enjoy it. He taught me so many things, Jeanne and I have often sat down and just thanked God for what we picked up from our parents. Because we spend all of our time with kids, trying to make up for what they should have gotten in a good home experience.

Howard Hendricks: When I was a boy in Philadelphia, I went to a church and I guess the thing I looked forward to most, maybe like some of you, was the missionary talks. The reason I enjoyed the missionary talks was that they would always come with some relic, some dress, some drums they'd play for us. And well I'd sit right on the front row and watch him. Occasionally, they'd speak the language and the rest of it. And I thought, "Wow, that's fascinating."

Howard Hendricks: And I don't remember a whole lot of what they said. But I remember one thing, because it was repeated so frequently that it just sort of etched itself in my

mind. If I heard it once, I heard it 100 times in that little church in Philadelphia. The greatest impact on a Pagan society is the impact of a Christian marriage in a Christian family.

Howard Hendricks: Now think that through. Keep it as true, and I am convinced it is, that every hour that goes by you and I live in a more Pagan society than we lived in the hour before. Then it is also true that the most attractive thing about you is the quality of your marriage, the quality of your family. And by the way, if you've got a good marriage and a good family, you're fast becoming a phenomenon. You know that don't you? You know, you're sort of an odd one.

Howard Hendricks: Do you ever get into a meeting anymore and they go around and find out how long you've been married, type of thing? Because that's embarrassing, we don't do that too much. But every now and then somebody gets caught and you get up and say I've been married for 37... "37 years? You mean to all of them? How many women?" You'd be amazed at how many times I am asked, "Jeanne isn't your first wife, is she?" Obviously she's so young, she couldn't be. "37 years to the same woman and you're still enjoying it?" because you and I are in the minority, let's face it.

Howard Hendricks: And it's the common thing to try out two, three, four marriages. And if you've got kids... I'm not talking about kids who haven't made mistakes. Who of us could qualify on that score? But I know many of your children, I know some of them very, very well. And there's nothing more thrilling than to see what God has done in the life of kids of men and women just like you. And I'd say, "Man, may their tribe increase." And I would that we had 14,000 more just like them.

Howard Hendricks: And if you want to know why we continue to be interested in The Art of Family Living, these are the reasons. And what we're praying for God to do is to raise up a new crop. I must tell you, I know we hear a lot of people dumping on the younger generation, but I am not one of them. I must confess that I am most encouraged, more encouraged than I have ever been in my life by the younger couples. Many of whom have come out of hell itself but were saying, "There's got to be a better way. And my wife and I are committed that we're going to put this marriage together by God's grace and for His glory. And we're going to have a family that honors Him, even in the midst of this kind of a society."

Howard Hendricks: I don't know about you, but I say, "Man, that encourages me to no end." And if I got to go home to heaven, I'd like to go home knowing that at least we had a program on the air that was continuing to build into the life of kids like that. And John can tell you, Bill can tell you, and Holly can tell you who reads all of the letters, and anyone else who's close-in can tell you about some of the exciting letters that come in.

Howard Hendricks: Oh, we get some depressing ones. We get people... if you think that what I'm talking about is not true, you need to read the letters that come to The Art of Family Living. By the time you get through with that, you'll know, it's really worse than I've been talking about. But you also see in the midst of those are

the people writing in who say, "Hey, thanks for encouraging us. Thanks for making it possible." And to me, the most exciting thing about traveling around the country is having people who come up after meeting and say, "Hey, thanks very much for what you're doing for our family."

Howard Hendricks: Jeanne and I were just ministering in Philadelphia. It was an evangelistic banquet and the person who was in charge of it said, "You need to know, there are at least half of the people who are here tonight are here as a result of the ministry of The Art of Family Living." And at the end of that time Jeanne and I stood while the people filed by us, a steady stream of people, to tell us what the broadcast had meant to them. Encouraged them, affirmed them in what they're doing, instructing them, in some cases. Stretching their thinking. And all the time, giving them a new model, a Biblical model of the importance of the family.

Dr. Tim Clinton: This is Dr. Tim Clinton and you've been listening to the rest of the special two-part message from the late Howard Hendricks here on Family Talk. Visit our broadcast page to request a CD of his entire speech. Find the link and more by going to drjamesdobson.org. drjamesdobson.org.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Thank you for joining us today and for standing with this ministry. The James Dobson Family Institute is listener supported. Your generosity allows us to continue impacting lives and lifting up families everywhere. Learn how you can help us by going to drjamesdobson.org, or you can call toll free (877) 732-6825. That number again, (877) 732-6825. That's drjamesdobson.org or call (877) 732-6825. Thanks for listening. Join us again for more of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Dr. Dobson: Hello, everyone. This is James Dobson inviting you to join us for our next edition of Family Talk. Every day, we come to these microphones with someone in mind, whether it's a busy mom looking for tips on discipline or a husband who wants to learn more about connecting with his wife. We want to put an arm around your family in any way that we can. So join us next time for Family Talk, won't you?