



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Protecting Your Child in a Dark Culture - Part 1

Guest(s): Rebecca Hagelin

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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 : Nothing gets a mother's blood pumping faster than just seeing all of the negative cultural influences that are attacking the innocence of her children. Once those influences are identified, any mom will spring into action to defend your kids and with good reason. That is how God designed parents to react when they sense their child is in danger. And it's true. Whether we realize it or not, modern society can pose a serious threat to the purity and morality of our children and teens. But there's good news. With some discipline and knowledge, parents can not only protect their kids, but also equip them with the tools they need to recognize and avoid the more negative aspects of this culture.

Welcome to Family Talk with your host, psychologist and best-selling author, Dr. James Dobson. Joining Dr. Dobson in studio today is Rebecca Hagelin, a woman who really has her finger on the pulse of what is happening in the culture regarding children and teens. Her research led her to write the book *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*. Rebecca is the former vice president of marketing and communications for the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC. Here now is Dr. James Dobson to introduce today's guest here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Rebecca, the last time you were here, I said, and I repeat, "you don't look tired enough or old enough to do that job," but you're obviously giving priority to your family, and writing, and, speaking and all the other things you're doing.

Rebecca Hagelin: I could not have written this book, had it not been for you. I just thank you for what you've done. And there are so many people like me who've been inspired by your work to carry that torch.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you. And on behalf of many people here who are doing things for parents, I appreciate that comment. You realize that when it comes to family life, there's not a lot that's new, but we put it in a new package and you're doing the same thing. And along comes a new generation that has not been over that road. And so we're trying to communicate with them just like you are.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right. The timeless principles still work. We don't have to remake the principles. It's just applying them to the new challenges that...

Dr. James Dobson: New package.

Rebecca Hagelin: Parents face. That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Rebecca, I've been told that you almost didn't write this book.

Rebecca Hagelin: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: After writing the first one, and it was a very successful book. Why did you almost bail? Why did you consider not taking the challenge of writing this book?

Rebecca Hagelin: Fear, basically. Because I still have three children and somebody that I respect very much, saw my first book in the window at a bookstore in Washington. And of course it was about family and the culture. And she said, "Rebecca, you must be very brave or very foolish to write a book on parenting when you still have kids that can embarrass you." And I really let that seed take root in my heart and started thinking, "wow, I am an imperfect parent and I do mess up and I have to apologize to my kids. And sometimes I wimp out in the battles. Who am I to say anything to other parents?" And then, really through counseling with my pastor at my church and people in my small group, we have a small group that meets on Tuesday nights. Really went over with them, my thought process, because I felt in my heart after the first book, that there were some real practical tools and tips I could pass on to other parents to make their job easier.

Dr. James Dobson: And you don't have to be perfect to do that.

Rebecca Hagelin: And that was the realization. You don't have to be perfect. Basically, it was kind of pride saying that you have to be perfect in order to help other parents.

Dr. James Dobson: What I said about that when my kids were young, and I think you'll agree with this, that the principles that we write about and talk about didn't come from us as we said. Most of them can be found one way or another in scripture.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: But certainly, in the experience of parenting for 2,000 years or more, and they are right. Those principles, especially those that come from God's word, they are right whether or not I'm able to implement them or not.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: If my kids didn't follow the teaching at all, and thankfully they love the Lord and they're working in His kingdom. But even if I failed, the principles are right and ought to be studied.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right. And I came to the conclusion because I felt God was leading me to write this book. It would really be immoral not to pass on what I've learned, what I've heard from other parents and again, those timeless values that we've both referenced, to a new generation of parents who really are struggling and who are looking for affirmation and some guidance.

Dr. James Dobson: And that is true. Millions of parents who are out there, where they are overwhelmed by the pressures of this culture, the pace of living, especially now with the economic difficulties and so on. Everybody's working longer and harder or not working at all. And that's a new set of problems. And they're looking for answers. I find that they're cut off frequently from their parents and they're kind of making it up as they go along. And many of them are just lost.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right. And there's no need to make it up. What I did was traveled around the country for four years after my first book. And I would speak to parent's groups, and church groups, and school groups. And at the end of every speech about the culture challenges, I always opened it up for questions from parents. And then I started seeing a pattern of desperation from parents and pretty much the same questions over and over.

So, I took those. I came up with the top parenting challenges and then went to work on researching what the solutions were. And that's what gave birth to *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*. And it's actually designed not to be read from cover to cover all at one time. It's designed for somebody to get it, go through the chapters, and then zero...

Dr. James Dobson: Wherever the need is.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes, exactly. Zero in on the chapter where you're having a problem. Maybe it's your son is disrespectful. Well, I have a whole chapter on how to dress your son in respect and to build in him a respectful attitude. Or maybe you're having trouble with the internet. I've researched the best internet filters. Or there's a chapter there, how to keep your child safe in online social networking.

Dr. James Dobson: You're answering all the questions I'm about to ask you.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well good.

Dr. James Dobson: You take dead aim in this book at the culture.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And you feel as I do that the culture is really designed to drag your children away from the values and principles that you've taught and twist and warp them. I don't know that that is a conspiracy, but that's the way it plays out. Your first chapter is entitled "Daily Battle." It really is a daily battle. If you're too busy

to notice and if you're thinking about other things, that culture will take your kids to hell. I really do believe that. And I think you do too.

Rebecca Hagelin: I do. Commit to the daily battle is the charge that I give parents. And quite simply, it boils down to this. As a mother who had three teenagers in our house at one time, I found that it made all the difference in the world if I woke up in the morning and I said, "dear Lord, please help me today on this one day to pass on your values to my child, to make sure that I speak to them, warm words of love and encouragement today. That I show them in some physical way that I love them, that I'm committed to them for the long haul, that I'm watching their back one day at a time. That I'm there helping show them the way." Because that's what we're supposed to do as parents.

Dr. James Dobson: For those of us that take our Christian beliefs very, very seriously, and who study the Bible and take our values from that word, there is an awesome responsibility that is greater than anything else in living, referring to the fact that the souls of your kids hang in the balance. Where they spend eternity is to some degree, your responsibility, especially when they're young and you lay that foundation. And so many good godly parents are thinking about something else. And there's nothing more important than that. Absolutely nothing.

Rebecca Hagelin: There's nothing. When we think about all the time we spend in our jobs, and our careers, and volunteering at good activities. And at the end of the day, we often find ourselves falling exhausted into bed and realizing we never had a meaningful discussion with our own child about their faith. That's when it's time to stop. To get off the train and reevaluate what your priorities should be. I like to call it deliberate parenting. And so I'm really trying to use this book as a springboard into helping parents change their paradigm of parenting. When God hands us a newborn warm baby, he also gives us an hour glass. And the hourglass is turned upside down and the sand of our child's lives flows. And you can't stop it. And the next time you turn around, they're walking down that graduation aisle and out your door.

Dr. James Dobson: You're right there right now.

Rebecca Hagelin: I am. Number three.

Dr. James Dobson: You've already sent two kids off to college. And that hourglass, that sand in the hourglass is running out. How do you feel about that?

Rebecca Hagelin: I'm very sad about it, I will say. Because I love children. I love teenagers. I love the banter in our home. Any given week we'll have between 15 and 30 teenagers in our home. It was designed by that call me crazy, but we just love it. And I love my children as unique individuals that God created them to be. Now, obviously that's the way God designed it, is that we would build in them this character and a joy for life and a joy for God so that when they walk out our door, they can fly off...

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, you've done the job.

Rebecca Hagelin: And you can do great things. So I'm a little sad they're leaving, but I want to make sure that I have as few regrets as possible. And want to encourage other parents to have as few regrets as possible, which is another reason for writing the book.

Dr. James Dobson: As we are talking about the culture and what it'll try to do to you and to your children, you told a story there that I've heard come from other parents, but you put it in some pretty stark terms, having to do with taking your 13-year-old daughter to see a physician.

Rebecca Hagelin: Ugh. Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell us about that day?

Rebecca Hagelin: I will never forget that day. My daughter, Kristin was going for a sports physical so she could run track. And we had a female pediatrician. And I had forgotten the sports form they have to fill out. So, I said to the pediatrician, "May I step out and get a form?" And she said, "Sure, while you're out of the room, that'll be a great time for me to have that private chat with Kristin I have to have anyway." And I said, "Excuse me, no, no, no private chats. I'm here. Everything's fine. You can say anything in front of me that you say to Kristin." Second time around. She said, "Oh no, it has to be with just Kristin, because it's private information and you can't be in the room." And I said, "No, I will be here for everything."

Rebecca Hagelin: And then the third time she said it, "You have to go because it's private information." She made it sound like it would be illegal for me to stay. And I looked at her and I said, "She's a minor. I'm her mother. And I'm staying."

Dr. James Dobson: Good for you.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, really a devastating part of that was the reaction on that doctors face, was one of disbelief that I would actually disobey her. So obviously-

Dr. James Dobson: Listen. You have the responsibility.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: To raise this kid. She's not grown.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: The culture is loaded with minds that are set to go off when you least expect it. And you got a daughter that is going to be listening to this person with all these

credentials and all of this influence. And you're going to turn your back and let her tell your daughter what to believe?

Rebecca Hagelin: Apparently a lot of parents leave. And so what happen next was really astounding. because the doctor said to Kristin, "Okay, I'll have the discussion I would have when your mother was out of the room with you anyway." And she said, "You're getting to be an older teenager now. And we have to talk about drugs, and alcohol, and sex." And she said, "Drugs and alcohol are easy because you can't do them right now. You're too young. Drugs are illegal and you can't do alcohol till your 21. So those are easy." And she also mentioned tobacco, but then she said, "Now you're at the age where girls and boys are going to start experimenting and doing different things with each other and you have to do what's comfortable for you." And that's where I piped in. And I said-

Dr. James Dobson: I bet you did.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes, I did. You know what? I don't think she knew who the mama was because I stepped in and said, "Kristin knows that sex is only for marriage." And again, I got this look of disbelief on the doctor's face. And she looked at me and then she looked back at my daughter and she said, "Well, that's what some people believe, but you have to do what's right for you."

Dr. James Dobson: Said it to your daughter?

Rebecca Hagelin: To my daughter in my presence.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you leave?

Rebecca Hagelin: Oh, well we did leave and we haven't been back. But what's interesting about that entire conversation, notice it wasn't at all about health issues. It was the doctor passing her worldview onto my daughter. It wasn't about sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy. It was her worldview about morality. You have to do what's comfortable for you. And that's what's happening in physician's offices all across the country. And one of the messages of *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family* is this. God gave children to you, mom and dad. Do not give away your power and authority. Practice that power every day and don't let the professionals tell you otherwise.

Dr. James Dobson: Rebecca, I can't tell you how strongly I agree with what you just said. But I have a lot of a strong Christian physician, friends who would argue with both of us and this is a matter of privacy and the teenager should be able to express his or her views and so on, but it's wrong.

Rebecca Hagelin: It's wrong.

Dr. James Dobson: It's wrong because you're trying to protect that child from just that advice frequently.

Rebecca Hagelin: And we worked so hard to do that at our home. To have it undermined when you think you're in a safe place, like a doctor's office. Of course, on the way home that day, the conversation with my daughter...

Dr. James Dobson: I bet.

Rebecca Hagelin: Was very interesting. I was about flying out the window as I was driving down the road. And Kristin said, "Mom, calm down. I understand." And I said, "No. Do you really understand that the culture today is intentionally trying to drive a wedge between you and me. They are intentionally trying to do that in this culture. And I will not let that happen because I'm going to be watching your back every day of your life as long as there's breath in me. Even when you're grown, I'm still going to be your mom. And if anything bad should happen to you, it's not going to be that doctor that comes over at three o'clock in the morning to help you. It's going to be me or your father. And I just want you to understand that God gave you to your father and to me, and it's our God-given right and responsibility. And we love you enough to do that every day." And we ended up having a special bonding moment.

Dr. James Dobson: Now Rebecca, you can control that situation with the physician you're paying and that you took your daughter to see, but it is not unlike what happens in school, where you turn your kids over to a sex ed teacher who may have vastly different values, and attitudes, and recommendations than you would want said. What do you do there? It's the same thing.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right. Funny you should ask. I actually have a chapter called "Direct Your Child's Education." And this chapter goes into what I call parent directed education. And that is whether or not your kids are private schooled, public schools, or homeschooled, is that you as the parent are the one that's ultimately responsible for what they're learning. And children are not from cookie cutters. My three children are so different from each other and they have different needs in their lives at different times in their lives. They have different strengths.

And so, I really encourage parents to march to the beat of your own drummer in your family's life. Don't let some professionals say, "we're going to take your kids for the next 12 years and we'll educate them and you can go do your job at work, or you can have fun." Be involved in your child's education. Be the one that helps them develop their worldview. We are today like never before, in a clash of worldviews. And the prize is our children. That's the prize. And we, as parents have to realize that. This not about fun entertainment or an educator expanding your child's mind to understand different things. It is a direct battle for the hearts and souls of your children.

Dr. James Dobson: My dad had the same beliefs and attitudes toward parenting that we're describing here as it related to the church. And my dad was a pastor, but he said, when my child, in that case me, chooses to make a move toward God, I want to be there. I don't want him out in a youth group someplace. I mean,

there's a place for a youth group, but there is also a place for your son or daughter participating in adult service, because then you can talk about what is said, what the pastor had to say and you're part of it. I think the theme is the same in all cases. It is being involved in your child's life.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right. A lot of times when people like us in this room right now, talk about our values and the culture, a lot of times the world says, "Oh, your house is a negative house. It's all about a list of do's and don'ts." And one of the messages of *30 Ways in 30 Days* is that when you parent God's way, and when you're involved in the intimate details of your child's life and they know that you care, your whole family discovers a real joy in family life. There is joy in family and joyfulness in parenting when you take the time to do it.

Dr. James Dobson: Rebecca, you have a chapter on heroes. I think that's really good. Explain what you were trying to do there.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, in today's culture, our children are taught that heroes are people who are great athletes or rock stars, and they get very confused about somebody who might be well accomplished in their field with who a true hero is. And it's very important that we set in front of our children, true role models and heroes. And a hero is somebody who's willing to sacrifice their life, or their livelihood, or their family, or their worldly goods on behalf of someone else.

Dr. James Dobson: They're hard to find these days.

Rebecca Hagelin: They are hard to find these days because our culture doesn't tell us to look for them. But heroes are all around us. They're in our armed services. They're in the pastors in our churches who give up a lot of worldly goods to pastor people. There may be the older man down the street who fought in World War II, who really sacrificed a lot of years of his life. And I really encourage parents to look for heroes, so your children understand that sometimes principles are worth dying for and making great sacrifices. Because if we don't teach our children about heroes, I'm afraid that in 20 or 30 years, we may not have children anymore who understand the principle of living for freedom and dying for freedom, if necessary. And our kids need to have again, something that they can follow. That's a shining light that teaches them how to live their lives.

Roger Marsh : Some solid Advice from author, Rebecca Hagelin on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, discussing how to help our children find heroes and other positive role models to look up to. Protecting your child in a dark culture has been our theme today. We have reached the midpoint of this conversation. So be sure you are with us again next time for the conclusion of this informative discussion. Remember that if you would like to share this program with a friend, perhaps a fellow parent who could use some encouragement right now, visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. You'll find our program archives available to you without cost. It's easy to share this material using social media. Start that process at drjamesdobson.org.

Speaking of social media, you'll find several thousand other parents and grandparents discussing today's program on our Facebook page. Get in on the conversation when you go to facebook.com/drjamesdobson. Our guest today, Rebecca Hagelin is the author of the book, *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*. You'll find complete details on how to obtain a copy when you visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. Finally, this word of thanks for your prayers and ongoing financial support of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. This program is completely listener supported. We rely on God through your tax-deductible financial contributions to help us continue in the work He has called us to. Equipping families to stand for righteousness in today's culture, by modeling healthy marriages and by modeling healthy parent child relationships. You can make your donation securely online when you go to drjamesdobson.org. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time for the conclusion of our conversation with author, Rebecca Hagelin, discussing tips for protecting your child in a dark culture. That's on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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

Roger Marsh : Here's Dr. James Dobson with Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Have you noticed that laughter is the key to surviving the special stresses of the child rearing years. It's true. Almost every day I hear from mothers who share the most wonderful stories with me about their kids. One of my favorites came from the mother of two small children, and this is what she wrote. "Dear Dr. Dobson, a few months ago, I was making several phone calls in my family room where my three-year-old daughter, Adrian, and my five-month-old son, Nathan were playing quietly. Now Nathan loves Adrian who's been learning how to mother him gently since the time of his birth. I suddenly realized that the children were no longer in view. Down the hall and around the corner, I found the children playing cheerfully in Adrian's bedroom.

Relieved and upset, I shouted Adrian, 'You know you're not allowed to carry Nathan. He's too little and you could hurt him if he fell.' Startled, she answered, "I didn't mommy.' Well, knowing that he couldn't crawl, I suspiciously demanded, 'Well then how did he get all the way into your room?' Confident of my approval for her obedience, she said with a smile, 'I rolled him.'" The kid's a little dizzy, but he's okay. Parents like this mother of Adrian and Nathan who can see that delightful side of children also tend to cope better with the difficulties. I hope you'll never, never get too busy to smile.

Roger Marsh : Here more at drjamesdobson.org.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi everyone, Dr. Tim Clinton here. When you think about your family and where they'll be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? You're hopeful? What kind of a legacy are you leaving for your children and their children right now? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving your family. Join us today at

drjamesdobson.org. You're going to find helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.