



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Ins and Outs of a Big Family – Part 2

Guest(s): Randy and Marcia Hekman

Air Date: March 24, 2020

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Dr. Clinton: Hi everyone, this is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the James Dobson Family Institute and President of the American Association of Christian Counselors. Wanting to take just a brief moment to let you know that we love, appreciate, and are praying for you. Our entire team here at Family Talk is doing that very thing. We also wanted to encourage you, if you're struggling or you could use some encouragement, to feel free to call us and pray with us. Our toll free number is 877-732-6825. That number again is 877-732-6825. Or you could also connect with us online at drjamesdobson.org. Thanks for letting us be a part of your life every day. We are going to get through this. Dr. Dobson said we are going to get through this challenging time, and we're going to do it together. Let's go now to our regular programming.

Dr. 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: There comes a point in every family's life where the stress of everyday living boils to a surface. Maybe, it's not being able to pay the bills or a struggle to parent a rebellious child. Well, whatever that moment of crisis may be, parents are faced with two distinct choices in that moment, either they will put their heads down and allow the worry to completely overwhelm their families or they'll surrender everything to God and trust in His faithfulness. In just a moment, we're going to finish hearing from a couple who chose that second option and experienced God's blessings in the process.

Dr. Dobson's guests once again for this Family Talk broadcast are Randy and Marcia Hekman. Now on our last program, they explained their decision to parent 10 kids and their reliance on God's provision. It's truly an amazing story. And if you missed yesterday's broadcast, I encourage you to go back to drjamesdobson.org and listen to it on our broadcast page there.

Today, the Hekmans are going to share their choice to continue to grow their family. They'll also speak to the problem of parent burnout and what they did to

care for themselves. Well, there's a lot of this story to get to, so let's get started. Here once again is Dr. James Dobson to begin this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Dobson: Marcia, as we closed out the program last time, I ask you a pretty poignant question. You are now the mother of 10 children, and I ask you how big a challenge was that because that means diapers forever and forever and forever, and it means toddlerhood 10 times over. And it means some strong-willed children in there, and it means constant noise and children fighting with each other. It means toys everywhere. It's got a lot of implications. What kind of woman are you to not only do that, but to do it willingly and gratefully and be willing to even consider number 11?

Marcia Hekman: True. It's just my husband has said, "You need to write a book called Strength in Weakness." And it's really true that I didn't do it perfectly. I was really seeking God. I became a Christian just before we got married, so a lot of work to be done on this girl.

Dr. Dobson: Did you ever say, "Lord, why have you done this?"

Marcia Hekman: No, no. I mean, there were times where I'd say, "Come on, are we doing this just for having fun? I think I'll just buy a joke book." I have said that to Randy. But those were in moments of, "You know what? We did this out of obedience." And God, there's times... Every job, there's hard things. You can't do it yourself. Being married, you can't... You need God to give you his love for your mate. But his word, he says he's going to help us. Yes, we trip. We get up again. In fact, that's what one of the kids said to me.

On our birthdays, we always tell each other what we like about each other. And one year, there was a long pause when they were thinking of what to say about me on my birthday. But the first comment was by Renee, the second born, and she said, "You know what? Mom doesn't give up." And that's really true, and that's Christianity. That's what my daughter-in-law just told me, I don't give up. I see my friend's marriage is blowing apart, but I don't give up. I'm not going to give up because I'm going to keep going to God. And that's what we've done in our marriage, and that's what you got to do with kids. You got to get up, and you got to forgive each other. And you got to cry out. There are times I go in my room.

Dr. Dobson: Randy, the Lord blessed you with a very strong, unusual woman. She is a very impressive person, isn't she?

Randy Hekman: Yeah, she definitely is. She is my best friend, and she's loyal to a fault and so courageous. And it's just I've been so blessed by finding this woman to be my wife and to be my best friend. But just consistent with what Marcia just was saying, why do we think as American Christians that I'm entitled to comfort, I'm entitled to my pleasure, I'm entitled to my stuff? That's what our culture says.

It's all about me, me, me, me. Jesus came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. This life is short.

And what a privilege to lay up treasures in heaven as we give ourselves to him. I'm thinking of Romans 12:1, "Beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as a living sacrifice." I wonder how many Christians think about the reproductive parts of their bodies to give to God, say, "God, you use this for your glory"? And we're talking lordship of Christ, not trying to set some new world record of how many kids you can have. But is he really Lord of every area, and why not this important area?

Dr. Dobson: Well, you had 10 kids. Where did number 11 come from?

Randy Hekman: Well, about the same thing.

Marcia Hekman: Jesus, really.

Randy Hekman: Yup. I mean, in fact, it was 1990, later that year. In fact, it was Christmas Eve that-

Dr. Dobson: After you had been to be on my program.

Randy Hekman: That's right. After your program, it was later that same year, Christmas Eve, that Angela. We had to name her Angela because she was born on Christmas Eve. She was born. She's now married, living in Sacramento, following the Lord, for which we are grateful. And then three years later in June, Nathan Timothy.

Dr. Dobson: Number 12.

Marcia Hekman: Yeah, we took a while there.

Randy Hekman: Number 12.

Dr. Dobson: All right, I want you to tell me about Nathan. You did it when we were having lunch a while back. And this is an incredible story because if any one of them was at risk, it was the last one.

Randy Hekman: Yeah. Marcia was in her 40s. Could I just say that nicely?

Dr. Dobson: May I say it more specifically? You were 46.

Marcia Hekman: 46, yes.

Dr. Dobson: And you start worrying about the physiology.

Marcia Hekman: I wasn't that worried. I mean, God already... He's God. If he's leading you and you're sensing it, you just got to trust him.

Randy Hekman: And I will say too that Marcia would always pray that she would get pregnant between these pregnancies. I would always say, "God, if it's your will." But honestly, ending on 11 just sounded like a bad way to end. I mean, if you're going to have 11, why not 12? In fact, sometimes I ask groups when I'm speaking to them, "What's it like to raise a dozen kids?" It's really not a lot different from 11 to be honest with you. And so, I pray that she'd get pregnant with number 12, and she did.

And Nathan was born, wonderful young man, and he's an actor. He's a voiceover actor. He's played different roles through high school, just an amazing young man. Straight As, in fact, he was valedictorian of his large class in high school, went on to engineering school, computer engineering, University of Michigan. Now, he's working for IBM in Austin, Texas there.

Marcia Hekman: And he's looking to Jesus.

Randy Hekman: He is.

Marcia Hekman: He really wants the Lord. He's engaged.

Dr. Dobson: This is number 12.

Randy Hekman: This is number 12. Humanly speaking, he's responsible when he was in fourth grade for his fourth grade teacher to come to Christ.

Dr. Dobson: Really.

Randy Hekman: Now, God could have used another means, but isn't that again what we're saying, that children are missionaries? They're not just mouths to feed. These are people created in the image of God belonging to God.

Marcia Hekman: That's right.

Randy Hekman: And we take this so cavalierly as Americans, Christians. And we really need to rethink that and say, "God, this is important." We need more people in this country. We can look at the demographics side. I know you've looked at that as well.

Dr. Dobson: Randy, you kind of made reference to the fact that the Lord provided for you all the way along.

Randy Hekman: Yeah. Yes.

Dr. Dobson: But that's not the whole story. There had to have been financial stresses. There had to have been moments where you wondered, "How are we going to do this?"

Randy Hekman: I love that question.

Dr. Dobson: I thought it was unique.

Randy Hekman: I love that question.

Dr. Dobson: Am I the only one who ever asked that question?

Randy Hekman: Oh, I love that question because you're absolutely right. There were times where the end of the month is showing up and we've got bills to pay and so on. And I would pray. I'd say, "God, you promised, 'Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you.'" I say, "You've promised that. And I know you love me, God, but I know you especially love children." And I would point as I'm praying. I'd say, "Look at those kids, God. Look at those kids that belong to you. Are you going to meet their needs?"

And he always came through. I'm talking even college tuition. We have not had to borrow for college. And they've all graduated from college, and they've all gone to different colleges too, by the way, which is kind of unique. But they graduated without debt. Some of them got married before they graduated, and they may have some debt. But those that were under our keeping, that was a total miracle. And I could describe how that happened, but that happened. God's provided houses for us.

Dr. Dobson: One of them had 11 bedrooms and nine bathrooms, and you only paid \$175,000 for it, and it was on 10 acres.

Randy Hekman: That's right, with pines.

Dr. Dobson: Where'd you get the money to do that?

Randy Hekman: Well, God provided that. I mean, he-

Dr. Dobson: Well, tell me more. What does that really mean?

Randy Hekman: All right, well, the reality was we built, when I was still a judge, we built a 12-bedroom house in the Grand Rapids area that we were going to live in the rest of our lives. And we were able to buy that because God opened a door for us to develop 120 acres. We were able to sell other parcels off and earn basically our property, and we were able to build a house on that.

Randy Hekman: But then we started with Michigan Family Forum, and after three years of living in the 12-bedroom house, we figured we should move to Lansing, which is where my office was. And that's when we bought... It was actually 11-bedroom house with nine and a half baths and an indoor swimming pool, a 20' x 40' indoor swimming pool. It was an 11,000 square foot house on 10 acres for

\$175,000. We got a bridge loan from some friends to be able to buy the second loan.

Dr. Dobson: Well, you inherited \$2 million. You going to tell them that?

Randy Hekman: Well, yeah, I did. I did.

Marcia Hekman: No.

Randy Hekman: But now. We had to sell the first house. And there's not a big market for 12-bedroom houses, surprise. And we had the bridge loan, was due on March 31. And we were praying and praying and praying, and we almost gave up. Then our fourth born daughter, Marianne, says, "Dad, Mom, don't give up praying. God might be about ready to answer your prayer." And sure enough, somebody came back in. They said, "If we knock down a few walls, we'll have a seven-bedroom house." And they bought it, and we closed on March 30th so that we could pay off the bridge loan on March 31.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, my.

Randy Hekman: I mean, God has just done that, Jim, repeatedly.

Dr. Dobson: And when the Lord moves on your family life like that, the kids see it. They're aware that you're depending on him and that you're on your knees, and then here, he shows up.

Marcia Hekman: And that verse was, "The one who trusts in him will not be put to shame," in Romans. And he kept saying that verse to me. And then when I was like, "I can't trust anymore." And then Mary's like, "Mom, he's probably about ready to do something." And he was.

Dr. Dobson: Were there Christmases when you had trouble buying gifts for the whole family?

Marcia Hekman: We would do that. But then, we saw how crazy it was, so we prayed, "God, we give you our Christmases. What do you want us to do?" And we started doing this thing of doing secret gifts to Jesus. And they'd have to create or they'd think up all these creative ways to give something to God. And it was so much fun.

Randy Hekman: It really was fun. I mean, it's his birthday. So, they would each do a secret gift to Jesus, and we'd go around, and they would do that. And then Marcia would invariably have bought presents also for the kids. So, the whole focus was more, at least, on what the real meaning of the season was. And then Marcia would come through, and sometimes, she'd surprise-

Marcia Hekman: With surprises.

Randy Hekman: ... in different ways.

Marcia Hekman: It was [crosstalk 00:12:34]

Dr. Dobson: Marcia, are you just naturally blessed with unending energy?

Marcia Hekman: No, I totally, I'm telling you, I would just be like, "Oh, why am I getting angry, God? What's wrong? Where's the problem? What am I doing?" And I'd go in my room, "Help me, God, show me, search me, oh, God," and I would stay in the Bible too the best I could even if you're nursing and reading while you're doing that. You need to keep seeking God. You can't just say, "Oh, give me all the kids you can, and whatever, I'm not going to trust you." You've got to trust him, and you've got to pray.

Dr. Dobson: So, you did get exhausted.

Marcia Hekman: Oh, I need Jesus. Hello. I can't do this. Ask my kids, they'll tell you, "She was not a perfect mom, but she went to God." And I still do.

Dr. Dobson: Well, how about the matter of organization. Did you have those 12 kids systematized and organized? Were they each carrying different responsibilities?

Marcia Hekman: They were. It's kind of funny. We were listening to the old tapes from years ago, and it's well in our minds how we did it. And it wasn't perfect, but it was a way. You try lots of things. But I could tell you I wanted our house cleaned up. Yes. So, I started hiring high school girls, but it would never work because I would try to clean up before they got there. And I would try to share Christ with them. I probably have a gift of evangelism. It was just not working.

Marcia Hekman: So, I realized I need to start training my kids. Even Renee when she was like four would be standing on a stool and learning how to clean a sink in their bathroom. I can still see her, and she would do a good job, just training them to do work around the house and for what they were capable of doing. And once a year, we would have this time where we go downstairs. We have this big white board, and we put all the jobs down. And we call the "bigs" were the things you do once a week, like scrubbing certain floors, and then the "dailies" were things you do like twice a week or hopefully, if they need it, every day. And it doesn't all work perfectly, but it is a system. And it was a memory, and it did work pretty well.

Randy Hekman: And if they did their jobs, they got paid. If they didn't do their jobs, they didn't. And that taught them how to work. Every one of our kids knows how to work.

Marcia Hekman: They do work hard. That is the truth.

Dr. Dobson: Did some of the older kids change the diapers, give them their baths, and get them to bed?

Marcia Hekman: I usually did baths. They would if they had to.

Randy Hekman: And I'd read stories to-

Marcia Hekman: He always told made up stories at night, but I did stories. You do pretty much a lot of work. But they did do a lot to care for each other. They loved each other pretty much.

Randy Hekman: And they love to get together today.

Marcia Hekman: And there were fights, but we made it through by the grace of God. He is the one. And they do still love each other. It's pretty cool by God's grace.

Randy Hekman: But you ask the question whether she has inexhaustible energy, and in herself, she does not. But she loves that picture in scripture of the woman who touches the garment of Jesus who has the issue of blood and gets healed. That's one of the best pictures Marcia has.

Marcia Hekman: Giving his [crosstalk 00:15:24]

Randy Hekman: And she touches Jesus for power, and she gets love for me that I don't deserve, but is supernatural. And God gives her strength. Well, apart from the Lord, how do you stay married? Apart from the Lord, why would you want to have one child in some ways? Maybe, just for my sake but certainly, not a dozen kids.

Dr. Dobson: Two days before you came, I read one of my monthly letters, and the one that I just read before you got here had to do with the declining population around the world. And many people don't know that. They think that the world is getting more and more crowded, and there's not going to be enough food to take care of them. And a foolish man by the name of Dr. Paul Ehrlich wrote a book called The Population Bomb. It was written I think in 1968, and he told everybody that there would not be enough food to go around and that the world was going to be overrun like rats in a cellar and made everybody believe that. And even today, some motivation for the abortion movement is to prevent the world from being overpopulated.

The truth of the matter is, the opposite is true. And Western civilization is declining throughout Europe. It's not only Western civilization. It's Japan. It's Russia. It's Latin America. It is amazing how young people look at children and say, "This is going to cost a lot of money, and this is going to invade what I want to do with my life." And as a result, they decline to have children. But it makes absolutely no sense to me. But comment on that from your perspective.

Randy Hekman: Oh, it's absolutely true. It takes 2.1 children per female to just break even, what they call zero population growth. And in America, that number has been as high as five, 100 plus years ago. Since 1970, the number's been below 2.1 in America. So apart from immigration, our population ultimately is going to have deaths

outnumbering births. In fact, during the last two years in the white population in America, deaths have outnumbered births, and that's going to only get more significant in the coming years.

Dr. Dobson: You just took us back to 1970. Remember, Ehrlich made this prediction in 1968. He was wrong from the beginning, and he's tragically wrong today.

Randy Hekman: Yep, and so what we're having is that we have the aging of population. The average age in America now is about 38. Back in 1850, the average age in America or the median age more specifically, that means the middle age where there's 50% higher and 50% less than that was 18. So, it's basically doubled since then. Japan is... 48 is their median age. I mean, we're talking about an average age of these elderly people that require much more in the way of medical care.

Dr. Dobson: Japan is dying.

Randy Hekman: It is. It is, and we're moving in that direction. There's a scripture that says, Proverbs 14:12, "There's a way that seems right to a man. But the end thereof are the ways of death." Man apart from God and his word and following God is going to shoot himself in the foot. Inevitably, it'll happen, and that is what we see happening is that culture is dying.

And I don't blame the non-Christian world for going that way. But for us Christians who know the value of life, that children are not just biological entities, they are created in the image of God, have the potential of changing time, and living forever, why don't we give ourselves to God to say, "Lord, do you want," just like Marcia prayed, "Lord, if you want us to have another child, if you want to create another child through us, we are willing. We know it's going to cost in terms of time and money. But if you call us, we know you will provide for us"? That's called faith.

Dr. Dobson: And he told Adam and Eve to go and repopulate the Earth.

Randy Hekman: He told that to Noah as well, to be fruitful and multiply. Is the Earth full? Do you know you could give every man and woman and child in the world 1,100 square feet to live in, the size of a moderate home? Do you know where they would all fit in this globe? They would all fit in the state of Texas. Every man, woman, and child on the globe, give 1,100 square feet, would fit in the state of Texas. I mean, we are not overpopulated.

You talked about Paul Ehrlich. On the other side of the screen, read some of the books by a guy named Julian Simon who wrote The Ultimate Resource. He says, "People create. People are creators, that necessity is the mother of invention." We were running out of ivory because we were killing off all these elephants, taking the ivory from their tusks. Then, they invented something we call plastics. We have the transatlantic cable.

Dr. Dobson: You can't tell the difference.

Randy Hekman: Yeah, that's right. The transatlantic cable had all this copper, "Oh, how can we have... How about a satellite?" Do you see what I'm saying, is that we come up with... Through creativity, some of the children that we have are going to come up with some of these ideas. And yet, we think, "Oh, no, another mouth to feed."

Ask a CEO of a company, "Why would you ever hire another person to come work for your company? It's just another salary." "Well, if this guy comes, I will pay him a salary, but he will give me more productivity." The average male gives back to our culture 14 times what they consume in their lifetime. The average female, like about 11 or 12. So, we're not just consumers. We produce.

Dr. Dobson: Remember during Jimmy Carter's era that we were all going to run out of oil?

Randy Hekman: Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Dobson: And there's more oil now than ever.

Randy Hekman: There's a glut of oil. The prices have gone down and so on. I mean, and we'll create other energy sources. Trust me, God is so able to do that. Well, I've got a friend who's a mayor of the town we live in. He's a neat Christian guy. He says, "How do you spell faith?" Well, and he says, "I know. I know." He says, "This is how you really spell faith, R-I-S-K." He says, "When God calls you to get out of the boat, you get out of the boat." And that's what we need to be as Christians.

We need to have guts. When God calls us, we need to take that step of faith and move in that direction of obedience, knowing that he is there to help us walk on the water and meet our needs rather than just cower and get in our little holy huddles and pray for the second coming of Christ. I hope Jesus comes today, but he may not come for 50 more years. And we got to play offense. Jesus said to those 11 disciples, "Go. All authority in heaven and Earth's been given unto me. Go therefore and make disciples."

Marcia Hekman: Amen. [crosstalk 00:22:48]

Randy Hekman: We need to be on offense.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, my goodness, I've loved these two days and these conversations. Marcia, I know you're self-effacing, and whenever anybody says anything to laud you, you point to Jesus. I understand that, but you do remind me as best I know her as the Proverbs 31 woman that-

Randy Hekman: Amen. Amen.

Marcia Hekman: I love that chapter. [crosstalk 00:23:14]

Dr. Dobson: ... that Solomon talked about and how he admired her and respect her. I admire you in that way.

Marcia Hekman: Wow, praise him.

Dr. Dobson: Thank you, Randy Hekman and Marcia Hekman. You are icons to me. Shirley and I love you both. You're going to be in heaven with many, many progeny, and I would like to be in the group somewhere.

Marcia Hekman: Come and visit, we're-

Randy Hekman: You are. You're there, Jim. We're proud of you too and so thankful for you.

Marcia Hekman: Yeah, we so love you.

Dr. Dobson: Blessings to you, guys.

Randy Hekman: Thank you. Thank you, Jim. You too.

Dr. Dobson: We love you, and Shirley sends her love.

Randy Hekman: Coming back at you.

Marcia Hekman: God bless.

Randy Hekman: Thank you.

Marcia Hekman: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: A challenging end to this two-day program here on Family Talk featuring Dr. Dobson's conversation with Randy and Marcia Hekman. I'm Roger Marsh, and the intrinsic value of life that was discussed on this program over the past couple of days is an important concept to all of us here at Family Talk. We live in a society that often views life as a burden, not as special or worth protecting. Our prayer is that you would be bold in preserving the sanctity of every human life and in every relationship that you hold dear.

Visit today's broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org, and you can learn more about the ministry of Randy and Marcia Hekman, their story, and what they're doing today. Once you're there, you'll also find a link for ordering a copy of this two-day conversation, so be sure to go to drjamesdobson.org. You'll find all that information and more when you hit the broadcast tab. Thanks so much for joining us again today. Be sure to tune in again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Hope you have a blessed day.

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