



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Ins and Outs of a Big Family – Part 1

Guest(s): Randy and Marcia Hekman

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Dr. Dobson: Greetings everyone, and welcome to Family Talk. I'm your host, James Dobson, and today, we're revisiting a family that I have known since I guess the late 1980s. But we really got acquainted in 1990, when Randy and Marsha Hekman came to do a radio program with us and we have been friends ever since. They're parents of many children, that's part of the story, and God has blessed them for bearing and raising children. I heard about this special couple some years ago, and I asked them to come and be my guests, and we did two programs together that had an impact on I think millions of people across the country, and you're going to understand that more as we get into it.

Dr. Dobson: Now, that recording still exists, but it has deteriorated. It has a hum in it. So we're going to go back to 1990, and I want them to tell their story again, and then bring it up to date.

Randy Hekman: Time flies, whether or not you're having fun.

Dr. Dobson: Randy was a probate juvenile court judge for 15 years before resigning to serve as Executive Director for the Michigan Family Forum. Why don't you start by telling us what that is?

Randy Hekman: Well, Michigan Family Forum is what you call a family policy council, and they exist in different states and exist to help communicate the values of family, to culture, to the church, but in large part to government as well. So that's where, we were located in Lansing, Michigan, which is of course the capital city of Michigan.

Dr. Dobson: Yes.

Randy Hekman: So, we would advocate for things like divorce reform and for charter schools and more parent-centered education and other things like that.

Dr. Dobson: Well, you've had quite a career. You're sort of like Forrest Gump, you show up everywhere. But again, I'm so glad that you're here, today-

Randy Hekman: Well, thank you.

Dr. Dobson: ... because your story is amazing. Now, let's go back to the point where you were married and began your life together and started having babies, as a matter of fact. Marcia, tell us about that.

Marcia Hekman: I really wanted to have a child right away, but Randy's like, "Well, we should wait and I want you to teach school." I had a teaching degree, so I busily got active in finding a job because we got married in June, we both graduated from college. He went to MIT and I went to Northern Illinois, and went, moved to DC where he worked in the Pentagon and I began to look for a job and was hired in Thomas Jefferson High School in Alexandria, Virginia, and taught school.

Dr. Dobson: As a teacher?

Marcia Hekman: Yeah, for two years, taught school. And I always wished I could have a baby but he said, "Just give that desire to God," which was good counsel. So I just gave it up to God and then I could function and do what God wanted me to do right then. But after a couple years, then he said, "Okay, I think it's good timing to have our first child, God willing." So I got pregnant right away with our first child, Michelle. And very sweet little girl, and then I really wanted another child, God just put this in my heart. I always loved dolls as a little girl too, it's kind of interesting.

Dr. Dobson: It turns out you're kind of a baby machine, as a matter of fact.

Marcia Hekman: It's such a privilege though, that God, I don't know. He changes hearts to make us want what he wants. So we had Renee soon after, 17 months later. And then my mom saying, "No, don't have any more kids." But then still God had that desire in our hearts so I got pregnant with Alicia, our third born who is a very strong-willed little darling, but then we thought, "I guess we will wait for a while now," but amazingly, I got pregnant with Mary Anne, the fourth little treasured girl. And so we have four little girls, and I was really busy, and they were year and a half, two years apart, but I was telling God one day, "Okay, this is enough children, God." And I still remember where I was in our house when I prayed that. Some of these prayers, it's something what a prayer can do, really things that happen with prayer.

So, I'm telling God, "Okay, God. This is enough." But something in me, I think it was the Holy Spirit, I just thought, "I'm telling God not to make another person. What if God wants me to have another child? What if he has that in the plan?"

Dr. Dobson: Yeah, and are we telling him what we're going to do with our lives?

Marcia Hekman: Right, and so I thought, "Well, God," I still kind of looked up at the ceiling. "God, if you want us to have another child, you got to change Randy's heart. Show us, what do you want?"

Dr. Dobson: And Randy, you weren't really excited about that possibility.

Randy Hekman: That is an understatement. I mean, I thought, "Wow, four kids." I mean, I had three sisters, no brothers. Marcia had two sisters, no brothers. I mean, I didn't have a category for more than four kids, and I just said, "It's clear to me that we can't afford any more, our house can't fit any more, our car can't fit any more." And I wanted an airplane, flying a private plane was kind of my hobby and I dreamed of owning a six-passenger airplane. So, it was to me, it was a good time to think about stopping.

Dr. Dobson: In other words, if you had another baby at that point, you would not have had enough money to buy that airplane.

Randy Hekman: No, I couldn't afford it.

Dr. Dobson: So it was really a choice between-

Randy Hekman: It was.

Dr. Dobson: ... a coveted hobby-

Randy Hekman: That's true.

Dr. Dobson: ... and yet another child.

Randy Hekman: Plus, people began to ask, "Do you know what causes this? And is that all?" And I mean, you get those sorts of comments. Jesus said we're sheep. We follow one another, and the culture was pretty much you have your two, your three kids, maybe four kids, but that's pretty much it. And so, I actually, maybe too much information here, but I had a urinary tract infection along the way and I went to the urologist, and I said, "Would it help if I had a vasectomy? Would it solve the problem?" And he dashed my hopes by saying, "No, actually it wouldn't.

In fact, the best thing would be to continue to relate appropriately with your wife on a regular basis." And so that particular way out of my dilemma stopped, but at the same time, after Marcia prayed, I started seeing in the Old Testament how God opens the womb. He closes the womb, and that children, Psalm 1:27, children are a blessing. Well, I'll take all the money blessing, all the health blessing, but children? That didn't feel like a blessing. That's work.

Dr. Dobson: Well, and you had four, so Lord, how much blessing-

Randy Hekman: Yeah, how, come on-

Dr. Dobson: ... do you want me to have?

Randy Hekman: Exactly. But I just felt before him that what we needed to do was to go cold turkey and let him make this decision, but in my heart, believe it or not, I said, "I know God, that you are very wise and you are very merciful and that you can see what I can see, and you really want me to have that airplane too, and so we're going to not practice any method of birth control, but you're going to close her womb. I know you will." Well, a couple months later, she with a smile pats her stomach and says she doesn't feel so good. And in my mind, I could see this green Cessna 206, in a graveyard spiral, and she said, "Aren't you happy, Randy?" And I lied. I said, "Oh, yeah." And honestly-

Marcia Hekman: I thought he was.

Randy Hekman: ... I was just thinking, "What have we done?"

Dr. Dobson: You were also feeling guilty, were you not? For putting an airplane above what might be God's will?

Randy Hekman: Well, I should have felt guilty Jim, but to be honest with you, probably didn't at the moment. But now, I feel guilty, for sure.

Dr. Dobson: Well, you have forgotten the guilt, because that's what you told me.

Randy Hekman: I guess it passed with time, but honestly, I should... Well, and I do. I mean, the reality is shame on me, that I do feel. That I really believe that my attitude which says that, "I'm going to control this." Just think about what we're talking about. We're going to control this area of our life where God, look at Psalm 139, verse 13. It says, "You," and the Hebrew's empathic, "You alone formed me in my mother's womb," says David to God. We're talking about telling God, "We're not going to let you form any more children in our lives. We're not going to cooperate with you anymore." And just to think what we're telling God. He says, "God, you can't make another child." Just like Marcia was praying, and that child has the potential of changing life in this world and living forever, and I'm going to make that decision? That is just incredible that we think that way.

Dr. Dobson: And Marcia, you were thinking the same thoughts? That God will make this decision?

Marcia Hekman: Oh, yes. I saw that, it was kind of like peeking out of a closet, like, "Is it okay, God, to think this? I think you're saying have more kids," but no one's telling you to have more kids, but you're like, "It seems like it's right, it seems like God's leading us. That we should be open to having another child." And so when I got pregnant, I thought, "Wow, this is great. God's giving us another child." Because he does change your heart, you know? He'll put His desires, delight yourself in the Lord and He'll give you the desires of your heart. That's so cool, so that He makes you want what He wants.

Dr. Dobson: Marcia, you shared with me one time an experience you had listening to the radio. You were listening to Dr. Chuck Swindoll?

Marcia Hekman: Right, every day.

Dr. Dobson: And he said something that got to you?

Marcia Hekman: Yeah, I remember putting my ear next to the radio, because I heard it once and then I went and... I replayed it in another time, or got the tape, but it was so powerful. He was saying, "Are you willing to let me use your body like Mary, to produce life?" And that was what God asked Mary, "I want to use you," in so many words, "to bring this child." And that's what he was asking me, and I was like, "Yes, God." And I just knew he was saying that to me, and he would say that to me in the Bible, different verses too. But the Lord will increase you more and more, you and your children. I saw that early on. I thought, "Okay, God, you're going to give me children."

Dr. Dobson: And your answer was yes?

Marcia Hekman: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: As Mary's answer was?

Marcia Hekman: Yeah, I said, "Yes, Lord." Because I've had women say to me when I might share in a group, they'd say, "Is it wrong that I want another child?" I'm like, "No, God puts these in our hearts as women. Bring this to God and pray if your husband doesn't want children that God will change their heart," because it's a high calling. It's like, look around, I'm just picturing my kids even in this room who aren't here, each one is like a work of art. We don't own our children, he owns these children, and if they start going bad, sometimes some of our kids will go a wrong direction. It hurts a mom's heart, but he tells me, "No, I want you to give this child to me," it's a way of us growing, getting sanctification as moms. And I didn't always do it right. I would say, "No, God, don't let my child go in the wrong direction."

Marcia Hekman: It would hurt so much, and I would try to fix it. But he repeatedly says, "Give this child to me. Even when they're going wrong, trust them to my care." One of them was going a wrong direction, and I couldn't give him. I just kept carrying this burden and one day I just said, "Okay, God. I give you this son, and even if he never changes, he's in your hand." And I just remember that day, God got him and brought him back. He turned around in his life without me even talking to him. That was just showing me on that one, it doesn't happen every time like that, but they really are his workmanship. He owns our children if we're wise. Give your children to God.

Marcia Hekman: And just trust them to him, be available, but you can't grasp them and just try to make them what you want, because they have a free will and they're in his hands and he will win. He promises.

Dr. Dobson: So you had four-

Marcia Hekman: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: ... and this would be number five.

Marcia Hekman: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: And you got pregnant?

Marcia Hekman: Yes. I was excited, I thought, "This is cool."

Randy Hekman: She was excited. And I was-

Dr. Dobson: How'd you feel, Randy?

Randy Hekman: I was a basket case for probably two weeks, and then I began to think, "Wait a minute. God is sovereign. It's going to be okay, we're going to make this."

Dr. Dobson: Now, you're not a wealthy man. You weren't then, certainly.

Randy Hekman: No, we were not independently wealthy.

Dr. Dobson: And did you have enough money to be able to handle this?

Randy Hekman: All I can say is He has met our need incredibly all along. But at that moment, I had doubts whether we could do this. We're going to need to get a bigger car and our house, we're going to outgrow our house. And those are concerns, but we have just seen through our life that he continues to meet our needs just miraculously.

Marcia Hekman: He can make galaxies. I mean, he is a big God, if we were willing-

Dr. Dobson: Amen.

Marcia Hekman: ... to walk with him and try to keep listening.

Dr. Dobson: That's kind of a theme of your life, Marcia. And it inspires us all. All right, what about number six?

Randy Hekman: Well then, we began to pray again, right after she gave birth. And just so you understand, there's a number of things about Marcia, she hates pain.

Marcia Hekman: I do. I really do.

Randy Hekman: I'm convinced she feels air molecules hitting her skin.

Marcia Hekman: I need God.

Randy Hekman: And we've had big babies, okay? So you don't talk about this immediately after the birth or after the first six weeks-

Marcia Hekman: Nope, nope, nope.

Randy Hekman: ... but then we'd go along, I'd ask her. We'd go out for eat, we typically would date once a week. That's been an important thing. I think you've helped us frankly with your counsel over the years. And I said, "Well, Marcia, what's your dream?" And I can remember time and time again, what would you say?

Marcia Hekman: I'd say, "I want to have another baby, God put that desire in my heart."

Dr. Dobson: Early on now, you got five.

Marcia Hekman: Yeah.

Dr. Dobson: You got little kids running all over the place.

Randy Hekman: It's true.

Marcia Hekman: And I don't know how to do everything at all-

Dr. Dobson: And you want number six?

Marcia Hekman: ... I need Him so much, but He puts that desire.

Randy Hekman: And we didn't go back to preventing children from being born, and so we said, "Okay, we're open." And she would become pregnant.

Marcia Hekman: With precious Suzanne-

Randy Hekman: Suzie.

Marcia Hekman: Who is a treasure. I wish you could just see them all, how she's darling, little blonde. Loves Jesus and the gift of helping, she helps so many people.

Randy Hekman: She's one of those few kids that if the dishes need to be done, she's at the sink doing the dishes. You don't have to tell her. We have two of those in our family.

Marcia Hekman: Only two, but no, the others learn too.

Dr. Dobson: Okay, that was number six.

Randy Hekman: Six, then again, it's kind of the same process. And as we went along and people just kind of threw up their hands and said, "Well, you guys are going to do what you're going to do." Then John came along and Scott, and Lori, and then Daniel. So we had 10.

Dr. Dobson: And it was at that point that I heard about you.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. Dobson: About this family in Michigan that had 10 kids.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. Dobson: And did so because they felt the Lord leading in that direction.

Randy Hekman: And he was making them in the womb, and there's a temptation for us to think that biology makes children. And therefore, man plus woman makes child and therefore, we own this child. That's pernicious, because if I own this child and it turns out to be a strong-willed child, you rue the day that you "made that child." And God owns these children.

Marcia Hekman: That's right.

Randy Hekman: In fact, I remember at the time, if I could share this, just calling Marcia about our third born. Okay, I called Marcia from... I was snowed in at some airport somewhere, and I called home. I said, "Marcia, how's everything going?" Well, when there's a five-second pause after you ask that question-

Dr. Dobson: That's trouble.

Randy Hekman: ... you should just hang up right then and there.

Marcia Hekman: I was sitting on the floor.

Randy Hekman: She says, "Your daughter is driving me up the wall." It's my daughter, right? So, I said, "Put her on the phone." She wouldn't come to the phone. She was running around.

Dr. Dobson: How old was she?

Randy Hekman: She was what? Seven, eight?

Marcia Hekman: Maybe. It just was hard for those years, all the years.

Randy Hekman: So I remember going back to that plastic chair in the airport and just sitting down and I started praying and I had this brainstorm. This was genius. I said, "God, what are you going to do with your child?" And that was so good, and that girl now is married to a pastor, has five kids of her own, and is just going for Jesus.

Marcia Hekman: Wonderful girl.

Randy Hekman: 110%.

Dr. Dobson: Well, that's really what I want to ask you, because when you look back on that number of children that you guys raised, does it touch your heart to think of any one of them that wouldn't be there? You are making a decision about whether or not to add another one, but that person is now an individual, accountable to God, will live some place in eternity. Can you imagine not producing-

Randy Hekman: Cannot.

Dr. Dobson: ... those children!

Randy Hekman: And the impact they have then on others. Someone said, it wasn't original with me but I love it. "Children are messages that we send to a time that we ourselves will never see." It's like they're missionaries to the future. And our children have touched lives around the country.

Marcia Hekman: And still are, yeah.

Randy Hekman: It touches me to know, that but for the grace of God, I would have stopped at the four. But now, there's others that have come and they're touching lives around this country for eternity. Not one of us is perfect. We didn't raise them perfectly. But God in His mercy has just done incredible things, and I just think to Him be the glory for what He's done.

Dr. Dobson: Well, I know many of those kids and they are precious individuals. They're now grown and they're doing wonderful things. Some of them are physicians, some of them are married to physicians. Some of them are professors. I mean, all of them are very bright and have made their contribution. But when I heard about you, you had 10 and we asked you to bring them to be in the gallery while we talked about those 10 children, and it turned out there were only nine of them there. You had lost one on the way to the studio.

Randy Hekman: Well, I think it was your fault actually. Because you guys put us up generously in a hotel with four different hotel rooms, and Scotty who was six years old, was watching cartoons on TV. He wasn't supposed to do that, and everyone else left and he was so absorbed, and people just kind of left him. We got in this rented van of course, that we had. We were supposed to be there at 9:00 in the morning. I remember looking at my watch when we rolled into your

headquarters. It was 9:00, and I said, "Made it." But then we left Scott back at the hotel.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah, and how did that happen? Because I know you guys had a buddy system.

Randy Hekman: Yeah.

Dr. Dobson: I learned about the buddy system from you, because-

Randy Hekman: Well, it just broke down.

Dr. Dobson: ... the older child's responsible for the certain individual, the younger children. How did you miss one?

Randy Hekman: How did that happen, Marcia?

Marcia Hekman: I think it was just such a flurry of getting ready, that-

Randy Hekman: Yeah, we were getting ready, getting dressed, getting breakfast-

Marcia Hekman: ... person just, "Oh, we got to get in." And he did say, "Oh, guys, great job. We made it!" As we rolled in. And they were like, "Yay!" And then-

Randy Hekman: Where's Scotty?

Marcia Hekman: Where is that little guy that wasn't supposed to be watching cartoons?

Dr. Dobson: Was he terrified?

Randy Hekman: Well, from his story, he all the sudden woke up, no one's around him. He walked out of the hotel room, and of course, when a hotel room door closes, it locks. So, he couldn't get back in, and then he said, "First I cried, then I prayed." Then he saw a guy coming down the corridor of the hotel, he said, "Do you know Dr. Dobson?" He said, "I lost my parents," and apparently, he knew you and they called and we were able to go rescue dear Scotty.

Marcia Hekman: Thank you, God. It was kind of terrifying. Where is this child?

Randy Hekman: And he's now a pastor down in Austin, Texas, so [crosstalk 00:20:35]-

Dr. Dobson: Does he remember that day?

Marcia Hekman: Oh, he kind of liked it.

Randy Hekman: Oh, he gets this twitch in his face. No, not really. He thinks he was kind of a very special boy.

Dr. Dobson: Was he mad at you?

Randy Hekman: Oh, I don't think he was.

Marcia Hekman: No, he thinks he got so much attention through that.

Randy Hekman: Yeah, he loved the attention.

Marcia Hekman: "Oh, you're the one that got lost," "Oh, yeah. Look at me!"

Dr. Dobson: So, we did two programs together-

Randy Hekman: True.

Dr. Dobson: ... that day. And that was very, very special and I've heard from so many people who were about to hang it up, they weren't going to have any more children. They heard you talk about the relationship between procreation and God himself, and they chose to have more children, and today they're grateful to you and to me for making them think about that idea. And you know what? Somebody else is thinking right now about the same thing, because this is a God ordained moment. I'm not at all sure that we can, in fact, we can't, speak for everybody out there. We can't say every one of you should choose to have as many children as will come along, but it is worth praying about and it is worth thinking about. And you guys were open to what the Lord had to say. Marcia, it's not easy raising kids. You've already made reference to that today. You've got discipline problems, you've got continual, forever diapers. You have toddlerhood over and over and over again. How in the world? Well, you know what? We're out of time. We're going to start with that question next time, and I'm going to give the audience a hint. You weren't done.

Marcia Hekman: It's true.

Dr. Dobson: With that, thank you for being with us today, and I want you to sit right where you are, because we're going to do another program to talk about the rest of the story.

Marcia Hekman: Thank you. It was so much fun.

Dr. Dobson: Blessings to you. Thank you for your love for the Lord, your love for children, and your desire to be in His will. That's the takeaway value from these programs. God be with you guys.

Marcia Hekman: Thank you.

Dr. Dobson: You didn't leave anybody at home today, did you?

Randy Hekman: I don't think we did.

Marcia Hekman: Sadly, they're not there.

Dr. Dobson: Okay.

Roger Marsh: A truly touching story from Randy and Marcia Hekman, our guests today on this edition of Family Talk. They've been sharing their wonderful testimony of trusting in God in His goodness with their growing family. I hope that their faith has inspired you to adapt that same mentality in your walk with the Lord. I'm Roger Marsh, encouraging you to visit our broadcast page at DrJamesDobson.org. For more information about the Hekmans, you can learn more about their lives and their ministry work. Go to DrJamesDobson.org and then click onto the broadcast page. Lastly, are you desiring more one-on-one time with your spouse? Well, we have a great resource for you.

It's Dr. Dobson's book called *Nightlight for Couples*. It's a book he actually co-wrote with his wife, Shirley. Now throughout the book, they address many tough marital subjects like finances, communication, intimacy, and more. This is an insightful tool that couples can use and discuss every night before going to bed, so rekindle and rediscover the emotional closeness in your marriage by requesting your copy of the Dobson's' book called *Nightlight for Couples*. Simply go online to DrJamesDobson.org.

That's DrJamesDobson.org, or call us at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Be sure to join us again tomorrow, for the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Randy and Marcia Hekman. They'll continue talking about the growth of their family and how they learned to rely on God through that whole process. I'm Roger Marsh, that's coming up next time on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Have a great day.

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

Dr. Tim Clinton: This is Dr. Tim Clinton, executive director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks for listening today. We hope you found this program helpful and encouraging. Please remember that our ministry is here to serve you and your family. For more information about our programs and resources, or to learn how you can support us, go to DrJamesDobson.org. That's DrJamesDobson.org, or call us toll free, 877-732-6825. I pray that God will bless you in 2020. We're so grateful for your partnership. We ask you to stand with us and to continue to defend the Christian values in an ever-changing culture. Thanks again for joining us. We hope you'll join us again on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.