



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Protecting Your Child in a Dark Culture - Part 2

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: There are so many negative influences that can have a damaging impact on the lives of our children and grandchildren, but there are also positive influences that can serve as a counterweight of sorts to this negativity. Joining us once again here on the Family Talk broadcast is a woman who has plenty of that kind of encouragement to spare. Welcome to Family Talk with your host, psychologist and best-selling author, Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh, and we're about to hear part two of Dr. Dobson's informative and inspiring conversation with author Rebecca Hagelin. They're discussing principles she outlines in her book called, *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*. If you're a parent, or a grandparent, this resource is a must for your home. We'll have complete details on how you can obtain a copy at the close of today's program. Here now are Dr. James Dobson and author Rebecca Hagelin with the conclusion of their conversation about protecting your child in a dark culture on this edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: There's so many things that are vying for our children's attention, and in some cases, it's an attack on their very souls. And that might sound a little alarmist, but it's true. And parents do need to be informed. Rebecca, I'm so glad you came to be with us again. And as a place to start our conversation, I would like to talk to you about what you wrote about in chapter four in your book. You may not even remember the numbering, but that's the chapter where you talked about how marketers directly target children. And you start with this challenge, "Today's kids are the most marketed to generation in history. They spend an estimated 200 billion a year of their own money. So they're very profitable targets for exploitation and manipulation." As it says here, "you can see why marketers compete like never before for the attention of these sophomore spenders." And then you go on from there and you talk about MTV and what it's doing. Just talk a little bit with us today about what you're trying to say here, because I think every parent ought to understand it.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, the message I'm trying to drive home for parents and then for teenagers, because after parents read this chapter, they really need to read it with their

teenagers, is that this is not harmless entertainment that our kids are consuming. By the way, our kids are consuming in some cases eight and a half hours of media a day, because they're multitasking, and it's not just harmless entertainment. It is media created worth a worldview to use your children's adrenaline rush that they get when they're fed highly sexualized material to keep them coming back for more. It teaches a worldview to them and keeps them really in an immature state. We've all been around 12 and 13 year old boys, right? And they tend to be a little crude. Well, what the programming does for our teenage boys, it keeps them in this perpetual state of crudeness, because that's what they feed back to them. MTV had its poo cam, for instance, this is going to...

Dr. James Dobson: Listen to this, this is unbelievable.

Rebecca Hagelin: It's going to alarm a lot of parents that MTV has had this whole series where they had the poo cam, which was actually in the bathroom with a camera rolling of kids going to the bathroom, or their show, the Jackass show, where boys are acting like really immature teenage boys doing very dangerous and crude things. And so the kids watching this, they think it's funny, they keep watching it instead of molding them into something different. And so when parents realize, oh my goodness, my kids are actually being used, they're being kept in this highly sexualized craze all the time by the media they're watching so they will spend more of their money.

Well, I find that parents don't like it. And there's one thing a teenager really doesn't like, and that's being manipulated. And when they understand they're being manipulated, they will fight back. And I've found that parents and kids actually then realized, "Hey, we're fighting the culture." And mom and dads realize "I'm not fighting my child, I'm fighting the culture, those with a different worldview." We have to realize, adults are the ones that are spamming our kids' inbox with pornography. Adults are designing the thongs for eight year olds. It's adults that decide that Paris Hilton's going to be the big star and that are creating the violent rap music. Kids aren't creating that material, adult marketers are. So it's adults with a different worldview than most parents that are talking to your kids the majority of the day.

Dr. James Dobson: It's so ubiquitous. So how do you fight it? It is everywhere. Do you recommend throwing the television out?

Rebecca Hagelin: I do not. As a matter of fact, it's very important that parents realize technology itself is not the enemy, the enemy is not the wires and the hardware and the glass, it's the misuse of that, but the way to start fighting it, and I have a lot of tools in the book on how to fight it, but the first step is relational. It's sitting down and talking with your children and saying, "I have a vision for you."

Dr. James Dobson: Do you put a television in your daughter's room.

Rebecca Hagelin: I never ever, ever, ever.

Dr. James Dobson: Or a computer?

Rebecca Hagelin: Or a computer, no. As a matter of fact, 68% of teenagers when polled say they now have televisions in their bedrooms, but again, parents haven't stopped to really consider the messages that their kids are getting. And, of course, it's not just the messages, it's oftentimes the time wasted spent on technology. Have technology, harness the good, filter out the bad, put limits on the time. If you have internet access in your home, you must have a filter.

Dr. James Dobson: And pay attention to what's going on.

Rebecca Hagelin: And pay attention to what's going on. I also highly encourage parents to embrace the technology. Don't be afraid of it. Don't fight it, because technology, my goodness, that's what's allowing you to speak truth to millions and millions of people around the world. So embrace the new technologies, but be very smart about it.

Dr. James Dobson: And now I heard you interviewed by Sean Hannity on his radio program, and you talked about sexting that's going on. I'm telling you, this can be a terrible problem.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes. And it is basically young people sending or receiving semi-nude, or nude pictures of themselves, over their cell phones, or posting them on sites like Facebook. And when a lot of parents hear this, they're shocked. Oh my goodness, how could that be happening? I say, why are you shocked? Garbage in, garbage out. Our teenagers are only emulating the media that they've been seeing every day.

Dr. James Dobson: Have you heard about the teenager who sent a picture to her boyfriend where she was nude, and then that got passed around and she was harassed so much that she committed suicide.

Rebecca Hagelin: Oh, it's devastating. The devastating results that can come of this, not just the act itself, which is bad enough, but the results. And again, our children need to be taught that they're creatures of value. I have a whole chapter in here that teaches parents how to stop fighting with their daughters about how they dress and teaching modesty, and it really is pretty simple. I'll just give the little simple tip that I use with my daughter. She wants to be trendy. She wants to be fashionable, but the message is you can be trendy and fashionable and still be modest. And so, we developed one simple tip in our house and every time Kristen and I get in the car before we go shopping, I say, "Kristen, what's the rule? Repeat it to me." And she says, "we both have to like it." End of argument. We both have to like it. And she knows that...

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. So I'm a 17 year old. Okay.

Rebecca Hagelin: Okay.

Dr. James Dobson: You are mom. Right?

Rebecca Hagelin: All right.

Dr. James Dobson: Hey, you had your day, you chose your clothes. And when you were young, you went down and told your parents what you wanted. How come you won't give me my opportunity now to have my day?

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, Kristen, or Jimmy.

Dr. James Dobson: It's been a long time since I've been called that.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, you're 17, so it's okay, because I'm much older than you right now. "You're a person that God created of value and I want you to be trendy, and I want you to feel comfortable around your friends and stylish, but it's possible to be that way and not give up your integrity too. So I promise you before we go home today, and if we don't find it today, we'll go out tomorrow. We'll find something that you like that I also feel reflects and protects your dignity."

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. Let's be specific. It's prom time and you take your daughter down to get a gown, or a dress, or whatever you call it. And there's not a lot out there that's modest.

Rebecca Hagelin: There's not.

Dr. James Dobson: You can hardly find something that has clothing on its shoulders.

Rebecca Hagelin: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you do?

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, you keep looking, and that's the message that I give in the book, is "I will not get too tired, or too frustrated to, at the end of the day, throw in the towel and throw my values aside." Sometimes you come home empty handed, but I'm not going to let the other side win. My daughter's that important. So we'll go out again tomorrow until we find something that we both like. See, it's not always easy for us to do our job as parents in this culture, but it's always right to do our job.

Dr. James Dobson: One thing is sure. If you pour every resource into a career, you will not have time to do what you're talking about now.

Rebecca Hagelin: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: You have got the leave something of your time and energy for your youngster. Now you played this out in your own life. You're stepping down from your position at Heritage Foundation. That was a vice-presidential position, and one that had a lot of prestige associated with it. How hard was it for you to do what we're talking about?

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, it was difficult for one reason, because the Heritage Foundation is a wonderful place to work, and I really believe that we, as citizens, are supposed to give back to our country. And I felt called to go there. My husband and I felt called, but I also am a mom and I didn't want to be flippant about walking out the doors of vice-president of Heritage. So my husband and I spent a lot of prayer and time on it, and how can we contribute to society? But it's very busy in Washington and there's always a big battle, and it's easy to say, "I'll do one more project. I'll stay for one more meeting."

And I was writing the chapter for this book, "Create Family Time," and it really dawned on me, wait, there are a lot of people that can do my job at Heritage probably better than I can, but I'm the only mom that Kristen has. And I don't want to miss out on these great last couple of teen years, because I had been going home early in the day, but I, again, I found myself staying for one more project, because I was out to save the world. But it really came to focus for me when I was writing the chapter and I stopped writing and I hopped up out of the chair and I ran downstairs and I said, Andy, I know what I'm supposed to do. I'm supposed to resign as vice-president. And he said, okay, go do it tomorrow. So, I still...

Dr. James Dobson: Did you ever look back?

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, I haven't looked back actually. It's been validated that very night after I told my bosses, I came home and I told our daughter and she jumped off the bed and threw her arms around my neck. And that was all the validation I needed. And, again, it's just for a season, there are seasons in women's lives, probably even more so than in men. And I figure I've got another good, I don't know, 40 or so years in me that I can work like a dog to save the country if I want to, but it's more important that I enjoy the twinkle in my daughter's eyes and be there as she's making college decisions.

Dr. James Dobson: When your daughter is grown and probably married, maybe has a family of her own, and life has gone on and you're into other things, you'll look back on this era and be grateful that you had the courage and the conviction to do the right thing.

Rebecca Hagelin: I know I will.

Dr. James Dobson: I can sure tell you that has been true for us. That's one of the reasons, the main reason I left USC School of Medicine and it was the wisest thing I ever did. And I'm sure you'll feel that way too.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we're talking to Rebecca Hagelin, and we're discussing her book, *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*. And it is a book that I do hope our listeners will get a copy of, because there's so much practical information herein. One of the things that you have written into this book are pledges.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Explain what that's all about.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, at the end of every chapter, I actually have a section called "Act Now," where the parent writes in the book a pledge they make to themselves to take that particular action, and they date it. So they're holding themselves accountable for taking the action step to solve the problem. So it's not just good information that they reflect on and put on the shelf, but they actually take action on that day. And if I may, I might read a sample one for you.

Dr. James Dobson: Please.

Rebecca Hagelin: This is the one that goes to commit to the daily battle. There's a place for a date and it says, "Today I pledge that every day from now on I will fight for my children and their futures. I will not back down. I will not grow so weary that I give up. And I will remember that above all else, my goal is to show my children that I love them enough to dare to challenge the status quo." And the parent signs their name.

Dr. James Dobson: That's really good. Rebecca, I've said several times that there's a lot of practical stuff in this book. And the one that jumps out at me is an area where I'm sure you are an expert having to do with what teenagers like, they love to eat.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: If you want them at your house, provide food and you will have them there. And you'll have your friends' friends.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes, you will.

Dr. James Dobson: ... and everybody from the neighborhood. You do actually do that.

Rebecca Hagelin: Right. I have a chapter called "Make Your Home Inviting, Warm and Fun." And it should be the goal of every parent listening to make their home the place that the kids want to hang out. My husband and I decided many years ago that a substantial part of our monthly income would go toward feeding the masses. And that's what we do. When they were little, we had popsicles, we called our house, the popsicle house. And in the hot summer days, every little kid in the neighborhood knew they could go to the Hagelin's house and get a cold icy pop.

And so they came and they stayed and they played. And as they got older, we do pizza and my goodness, we make cookies and it's not rocket science. And how else would I rather spend my money than having kids come to my house, and making our home a safe place for them.

Dr. James Dobson: We always loved it on Sunday night after church we'd have kids over and we'd provide pizza and we'd play volleyball and ping pong and other things. And we always had a house full of kids.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yep. It's nothing more joyful to me than to be in the other room and hear the teenage banter and hear them laughing, or have one of the kids bound up the stairs and tell me about their soccer game, or sometimes now they just stop by in the middle of the day and they'll tell me something exciting going on in their lives. And the message here for everybody listening is you can be that kind of adult for all the kids in your life too. And maybe you're the grandparent, or maybe you're an aunt, an uncle, or a single adult, we all have children that cross our path at some time in our lives.

Dr. James Dobson: And they need us.

Rebecca Hagelin: They need us. They're desperate for affirmation and for love, and for somebody to look them in the eye and tell them that they're a person of value who shows interest in them. And then just knowing your kids' friends, and knowing that they know that you're somebody that's interested in them as human beings is very valuable.

Dr. James Dobson: You talk in the book about the social networking sites.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Explain what that's all about.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, that for parents in short term language here for parents, would be Facebook, or other social networking sites like that. And they're very much a part of our children's lives, there's nothing wrong with them per se, but again, it's how they might be used, or abused. Over 50% of the kids who go in chat rooms, for instance, say they've given out personal information like their address, or where they go to school, or their schedule. We need to teach our children that the internet is often a place where people are lurking and preying on children's vulnerabilities. So there's safety concerns there. They're also morality concerns. Again, my daughter has a Facebook, but guess who's got the password? That would be me. And I don't sneak around behind her back and check it out, every so often I say, hey, Kristen, let's look at your Facebook, because her character and integrity is up for grabs too if other people are posting bad language on her site. So we'll go through every so often, and we'll talk about what might've been put on there by somebody else.

Dr. James Dobson: Have you seen that *MSNBC* program, cable television, that was done where they had a woman who sounded like she was about 14 and they make her available to possible predators who would then come over to the house, and, of course, *NBC* would be there with the cameras and would capture that. That's very disturbing programming, because it revealed just how easy it is to have a youngster fall into a trap with one of these predators.

Rebecca Hagelin: That's right. And we have to teach our children how to be safe online. That is very important for parents to understand.

Dr. James Dobson: I remember a percentage that you gave of youngsters who stumble into pornographic sites.

Rebecca Hagelin: Oh my goodness. 90%.

Dr. James Dobson: 90%.

Rebecca Hagelin: 90% of kids who go online will view pornography. Many of them while just doing their homework. That's nine out of 10. That's why you have to have a filter on your internet. Parents today need to download a filter. And the pornography is blocked from coming into your home.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you talk in the book about how they can find that information?

Rebecca Hagelin: Absolutely. I give resources teaching how you can keep your kids recognizing when they might get a shady email from someone. This is not a one-time shot to read a book and put it on the shelf. It's changing the paradigm, deliberately parenting every single day. Have you parented today? Have you practiced deliberate parenting? And it also alerts them to new trends when parents may not be aware of what their kids are already aware of, to let them know, hey, this is something that you need to perk up and listen to, and how to fight back.

Dr. James Dobson: Rebecca, you're really onto something here. This is a book of resources, ideas, solutions, sometimes the problems, and then what parents can do about it.

Rebecca Hagelin: It's right. It's the practical how to, because one of the things I found when I talk about the culture is parents were raising their hands, I need help. I want help. And so I said, well, why not spend a few years coming up with a great resource tool to help them.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, you and your husband are deeply committed Christians.

Rebecca Hagelin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: And everything you do is from that perspective, but you're hearing from young moms who are not into the Christian faith, and are asking the same questions.

Rebecca Hagelin: I actually wrote *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*, and I had the mental picture of my former next-door neighbor in mind. She wasn't a Christian and she wasn't a conservative, but she had a baby, and then she started knocking on my door. "I don't feel right about going back to work right away, but my friends tell me I need to, all of a sudden I saw this TV show for the first time. I don't want my child watching that. What do I do about X?" In other words, God had put inside of her the desire to protect her child, but the culture was chipping away at it. And so she came looking for help and validation.

And my heart really is, and I can get really emotional when I talk about this, because I feel like my entire life God has brought me to this point. I want to help moms and dads lead their kids to Christ. And I think God put inside of moms and dads this need to nurture our children, because it is God-given and it leads us to Him for help. So, I've written the book with that in mind, and that's the prayer of mine.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that's a divine mission, because there's so many people out there that need this information, and have no idea where to go, where to turn, because many of the resource books for parents have a lot of values that we would certainly disagree with, and that I think are harmful, but this is one you can trust. And thank you for writing it Rebecca Hagelin. And this book is entitled *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*. Rebecca, thanks for flying all across country to be with us.

Rebecca Hagelin: Well, it's a real honor to come out here and be with you. Thank you so much for your heart and your leadership all these years.

Dr. James Dobson: Keep writing.

Rebecca Hagelin: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay.

Roger Marsh: And our thanks to Rebecca Hagelin for joining Dr. James Dobson today here on Family Talk. It's our hope that you have benefited from this thoughtful and helpful discussion. Rebecca Hagelin's book, *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*, is a must read. We have a link for the book on our broadcast page, at DrJamesDobson.org. It truly does take a concentrated effort by parents and grandparents to help our children continue on in the legacy of faith in which they were raised. Dr. Dobson's *Building a Family Legacy* video series can help. Learn more about this timeless teaching presented from the 1970s right up through present day when you visit our broadcast page at DrJamesDobson.org. Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk is completely listener supported. We rely on God through your tax deductible financial contributions to help us continue in the work to which he has called us, equipping families to stand for righteousness in today's culture, by modeling healthy marriages and modeling healthy parent-child relationships.

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