



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Joys of Raising a Large Family – Part 1

Guest(s): Randy and Marcia Hekman

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk, it's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and today we have a special interview to share with you. We're going into the archives for a conversation that originally aired several decades ago and yet the biblical principles discussed on this program remain both relevant and practical for families even today. Our guests are Randy and Marcia Hekman who at the time of this recording, were the parents to, are you ready for this, 10 wonderful children. Since then, their family has grown to include 12 children and drumroll please, 37 grandchildren.

Randy, by the way serves as executive director of The Grand Awakening, a ministry dedicated to inspiring revival in churches throughout western Michigan. He's also a licensed attorney, former prosecutor, former juvenile court judge and the founding executive director of the Michigan Family Forum. Randy was actually the youngest judge ever elected in Michigan all the way back in 1974 and he's the author of three books, including *Truth That Sets America Free* and *Sweeter by the Dozen*.

Now Marcia Hekman works alongside her husband as chief assistant at The Grand Awakening. She's a devoted prayer warrior, development director, and Randy's closest friend and partner in ministry. Together the Hekmans share their remarkable journey of faith and family in this classic conversation with our own Dr. James Dobson. So sit back and relax and enjoy learning about the joys of raising a large family right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: I am delighted to introduce Judge Randy and Marcia Hekman, a superstar family today. I mean to tell you, this one goes down in the Family Hall of Fame. There are 10 kids sitting out in the gallery. Marcia, you have given birth to all of them, none of them are adopted, right?

Marcia Hekman: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: 10 kids and you want three more I understand.

Marcia Hekman: I'd really love that.

Dr. James Dobson: Looking at you, one would never guess that you have given birth to 10 kids and they are the most delightful kids. They've been in my office and they are polite and they're just a wonderful family. Did I describe that right Randall in saying that in all the things you've done and your accomplishments and being juvenile court judge and having that kind of respect and dignity and so on, that being a dad is the thing you're most proud of?

Randy Hekman: There's no question and that's what gives me the greatest joy as well is to look at those children. We had a birthday the other day of one of our children and as I looked at her, I just welled up with tears thinking if she wasn't in our life. And I looked at all of them and just thought, each one of those children is of infinite value.

Dr. James Dobson: In fact, I met you all several months ago in Phoenix and we had breakfast together. We were sitting around the table and you were talking about your children and when you talked about the possibility of not knowing the last six, because you almost stopped at four, you got tears in your eyes and you've got them now.

Randy Hekman: I do and it's incredible to me to think about going through eternity without knowing these children. Yet we take that ability to cooperate with God, for God to make children because He's the one that creates children. We somehow think biologically that we're involved in making children and certainly God uses principles that He has created, but ultimately as David spoke to God in Psalm 139, he said that God had formed him in the womb.

Dr. James Dobson: He made that clear. Yeah.

Randy Hekman: I had wanted to think in terms of this being under my control and I thought four kids is really enough to have. We had four darling daughters, and for some reason we just did not feel that it was right for us to take control of this area. As we read in Scripture, we saw how God was involved in opening the womb and closing the womb, particularly in the Old Testament. We decided to through much prayer and soul searching that this area ought to be in God's hands. So we gave it to God's hands and I really was praying myself that God would somehow close my wife's womb because I felt-

Dr. James Dobson: It's God's hands, but you're going to tell Him what to do with it.

Randy Hekman: That's right. I tell you, I can't handle more than four kids. But meanwhile Marcia was praying at the same time.

Marcia Hekman: Well, it's amazing how prayer had such a part in this thing. Because I was standing and I remember where I was in our house or smaller house than we have now, but we had those four little girls and I was just talking to God and saying, "God, isn't this about enough? We have four and we're busy. We love them, but isn't this about enough humanly speaking?" Randy wanted an

airplane, I knew that. You can only get about a six passenger even within our vision of what we might eventually afford and it was there. I knew that God, if He did, I prayed, I said, "Isn't this enough?" And then, but God, I caught myself not wanting to end talking to him there, "But if you want us to have more, change Randy's heart." It was no major prayer to me at that time, but look at how God did hear that. I didn't even tell Randy, I prayed that and He just began to change his heart and he wanted another child. That was amazing.

Dr. James Dobson: You are really serious Marcia, about wanting three more.

Marcia Hekman: Oh, I would love to have more, if the Lord would let us.

Dr. James Dobson: Would you be embarrassed to tell us your age?

Marcia Hekman: 42.

Dr. James Dobson: 42, and you still want three more kids.

Marcia Hekman: Well, they're His kids.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah.

Marcia Hekman: And it's a high calling.

Dr. James Dobson: The choice was taken away from us, we couldn't have anymore. That was a time of considerable grief for us because I grew up as an only child in a family of only children. We have a very small family and I would love to have a family like you have with kids all over the place. There is such security in that and such love. Yet you are going cross grain against the whole culture in the Western world. Now, when you got off the plane to come here, so a family sent you out here.

Randy Hekman: True.

Dr. James Dobson: The cost of airfare would've been incredible and was incredible. When you got off the plane and you're walking through the airport and you're a mob of 12, what do people, how do they react to you?

Randy Hekman: Well, some people ignore us and some people look and then they look again and then they look again. And then many of people are really drawn to seeing this family of typically smiling children that look related to each other and we'll often get comments, "Are they all yours?" Now, sometimes when-

Marcia Hekman: We got one of those on the way here.

Randy Hekman: Yeah, that's right.

Marcia Hekman: She was just taken aback. She just kept commenting, "Oh, these children." It's like their testimony in their faces and they'll say, "Oh, and you're here." But it's only when it's 10 o'clock, it was nothing to get there by 10, we get to church earlier than that and here today earlier, but just kept commenting and it's such a wonderful opportunity to share Christ with this person. It's like the Lord might bring some up.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell me how, how do you use this for the Lord?

Marcia Hekman: Well, I just knew even as I talked to her, I didn't have much time, we're standing waiting to get the tickets. Whatever they do to them, stamped or whatever. I just said, "Well, they're really God's children and we love them, but we can't take credit for them being here." I had this little tract thing that's really neat, that each child wrote a little paragraph, just what they would like to say to somebody. It says, "what does this family have to say at the time?" It's got a black and white picture at the top.

Dr. James Dobson: It's your kids that have made these statements.

Marcia Hekman: Right. And then it just tells, how do we do? We're not perfect, we have our times for sure. But God is the one that helps us to forgive each other and get up and love each other.

Dr. James Dobson: That's the thing that has impressed me just in the period of time that I've known you all is how organized this big clan is. You'd almost have to do that or you'd go crazy, wouldn't you? You have the older kids with certain assignments, tell me how that works.

Marcia Hekman: With the household jobs, usually we go through once a year and just have a list of all the possible jobs. I try to think of every job in the house and I have my share too, but just that it's on this list and then we tell the children the possible jobs, one by one, and they can raise their hand and volunteer for a certain job for that. Usually it's for a year, and they have certain ones that they have for, we call them bigs that they do once a week, scrubbing floors, usually it's once a week and other ones are dailies. We call them dailies, but it's twice a week that they do that. They're in charge, one will straighten a bathroom every day. Everything is covered. Laundry too, each girl has a certain color thing, they do darks.

Dr. James Dobson: Randy, tell me as a father, how you feel about these kids. First of all, you gave up your dream of the airplane, that had to go.

Randy Hekman: Well, Marcia was too quick, when she described how I felt, when she told me she was pregnant with number five. Remember I said that she was praying that she would have more children. I was saying boy, before God, I really feel that this should be God's decision. I really think God loving me and understanding my situation, He will close my wife's womb because I can't handle more kids. So we

related to each other as husband and wife and along came the day when she came up to me and said, as only a wife can say to a husband, "Randy, I just don't feel so good." In my mind's eye, I could see this green six passenger airplane in a graveyard spiral and crash.

I felt depressed for two weeks, and I say that to my shame. I try on the outside, I tried to say, "Aren't you happy?" Marcia would say, sure, but inside I was just thinking, "This is awful. Five kids." Now again, I say that to my shame, because I didn't think I could handle five kids. I didn't think she could handle five kids. My picture of God was small in that sense. Well, the reason I had tears when we talked about this before, is that I just think about what would life would be without the next one that came along and the following, but David, his name means beloved and he is such a precious young man. I wish you could spend time getting to know him.

But he wouldn't be here, if I had run that part of my life, but my attitude of feeling upset with that next child coming along to me is a pro-abortion attitude. People do not have abortions because they want to kill babies, they have abortions because they have other things in life, more important than having a child and this pregnancy is inconvenient, this child is inconvenient. Yeah. They want to relate sexually, I understand.

Dr. James Dobson: This is the essence of the philosophy that the pro-life position, the pro-life movement, the pro-life understanding involves a lot more than just preventing the killing of babies.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: It involves how we feel about life, about God's precious gift of procreation.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Of bringing a youngster into the world. You and I talked before about how many parents approach the arrival of a baby or even the adoption of a baby, like you would buy a new car or a used car, kicking the wheels, looking it over, seeing if it's adequate, if it's going to serve you well. When in fact every one of those little children are worth more than the possessions of the entire world.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: So, it's a whole attitude toward children that you're talking about.

Randy Hekman: Who's in charge of making these children? We have such a biological viewpoint of life where we say, "Well, do you want to make a baby this year, wife? Well, I don't know do money in the bank? You'd feel like it. I don't know. I don't know." That is so ungodly. God is the one who says, "I want a young man or a young woman for a purpose." We can look to biblical days, we can think of God making

a Moses. When Moses' parents already had their millionaires family, their boy and their girl, Aaron and Mary.

Dr. James Dobson: And there was trouble in the land.

Randy Hekman: There was overpopulation and everything else. If you had a boy baby, he's dead meat. They said, "No, we are going to be open to God for a child." God said, "I want to raise the leader." Greatest leader the world's ever seen in the form of Moses. We see Jeremiah 1:5 where God says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you and I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations." God wants to make children to be leaders and followers and servants in our culture. We as Christians treat it, like you said, like picking out a car or what side of the town do you want to live on? Or what kind of car do you want? Or whatever. It's not that way, it should be in God's hands. If we really want Him to be Lord of our lives, why not this area?

We're talking about whether or not children are going to be created by God, who have the potential to impact eternity. We demean that, we raise up sexuality to the point where we actually worship it as a culture. Yet we so demean the creation of children, of the potential of living forever.

Dr. James Dobson: Marcia, let me play a game with you. Let me say some words that I'm sure you've heard before and then you answer them for me. Suppose I'm a neighbor friend of yours who comes over for coffee in the morning and this person says, "Marcia, I don't want to offend you or anything, but if you really want to know what I'm thinking, I don't think it's fair for you to have all these children. The world's natural resources are in short supply and there's only so much to go around. And if everybody did what you're doing, we would just totally overpopulate this world. And in fact that is happening now and you're not being responsible in bringing all these kids into the world." You've heard the argument.

Marcia Hekman: Right.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you say to people like that?

Marcia Hekman: Well, Randy would be a better one for the facts on this thing, but really the whole world can fit in the state of Texas, is it? He did a study on this because it really is a myth that we're overpopulated. There's plenty of room and a lot of these children that we don't want, think of the potential, think of the discoveries that they could even make, that God might have put in some of these that we're saying no to, for things they might invent or ways to use food or get food. But it's a myth, overpopulation thing is really a myth.

Dr. James Dobson: It's really unbiblical too, isn't it? He said be fruitful and multiply.

Randy Hekman: That's right. The thing which depletes our ability to really feed ourselves is not numbers of people, but it's disobedience. Actually, throughout Scripture, it's when God's people have not followed God that God sent famines and other problems typically. There's some excellent writings by Dr. Julian Simon, for example, *The Unlimited Resource*, who shows, actually he's an economist, who shows how in the history of the world, if you give people the freedom to respond to temporary shortages, that actually the more people there are, the higher the per capita standard of living can be because people respond with their minds and are able to be very productive, much more efficient. It used to require, everyone needed to have a copper pot, for example, to cook things in. We don't need all that copper anymore, just for example. The actual per capita or per unit cost of a unit of copper is actually declined in history because we've been able to be more efficient with resources.

Dr. James Dobson: You know what is really interesting to me and I haven't totally formulated this thought, but I'm working on it. In the Old Testament we're told the Lord says, "Behold, I've set before you life and death, therefore choose life." If you look at those that are in the anti-family frame of mind, those that come with the secular humanistic mindset, they favor death in all of its context, not only abortion, but infanticide, the killing of handicapped children, euthanasia. This attitude here that you're referring to and the Lord calls us to celebrate life. He's the giver of life. I saw the most extreme example of that in the first week of April 1990, *Newsweek* magazine, where in fact, the writer extended that death concept to its ultimate extreme. I can't believe that anybody would be stupid enough to write the article that this guy did much less *Newsweek* publishing it. But he proposed because of this "overpopulation problem that we have." In fact, we're approaching zero population.

Randy Hekman: We're below zero population.

Dr. James Dobson: If it were not for immigrants, right?

Randy Hekman: Even with immigrants, we will have a population decline. The U.S. Census Bureau is projecting that population decline in the United States within 45 years, including immigration. That is that deaths will outnumber births, plus immigration.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that makes this even more foolish because what he is suggesting and proposing is that when a girl turns 13 and is pubescent, that the government give her \$400 for not getting pregnant in one year. The second year, she gets 500, the third year, 600, the next year seven up to 52 years of age or a \$100,000 that she would be paid to remain barren. The cost of this is \$117 billion, which he has some convoluted way of computing that we're going to save money through the welfare system. Can you imagine what that really means? What if women believe that?

Randy Hekman: It is preposterous.

Dr. James Dobson: They're bouncing along with a wagon load of humanity out behind in about 15 or 18 years and it's you no longer have a choice, it's over. And so then you have this aging dying selfish population heading toward death with no newness and no freshness and no springtime and no regeneration and no procreation and no babies and no maternity wards and no pediatricians and no toys and no schools and no joy and the giggles of childhood.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: All of that would be gone. You got this wrinkled up dying population. That is the dumbest thing I have ever heard anybody say in the history of mankind.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Yet he would set it with a straight face apparently and *Newsweek* published it as though that was a good idea.

Randy Hekman: I know, it's preposterous.

Dr. James Dobson: It just shows how far this death mentality has gone.

Randy Hekman: There's a proverb, Proverbs 14:12, it's repeated in Proverbs 16:25. "There's a way that seems right unto a man. There's a lot of things that seem reasonable, logical. Yeah, that makes sense. But the end thereof are the ways of death." And that's what we've done to our culture. Man, apart from God and His wisdom, inevitably heads toward death. And that's the way our culture's going. Apart from Christians taking a stand. I can't blame the non-Christian world for not understanding God's principles, but I can blame Christians for not practicing God's principles. That's what needs to happen. Christians need to lead lovingly by our radical, if you will, biblical centered lives. And by God helping us, that's what Marcia and I have been trying to do.

Dr. James Dobson: I do feel a need for an expression of some balance because I'm concerned about the exceptions that are out there. There are infertile couples out there.

Randy Hekman: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: Who have perhaps wept through this discussion. "It isn't fair, you guys have 10, want three more, I can't have one." There are also people out there who are not well, who are physically ill, who are not able to keep up with the children they have. I know the Lord can do a miracle in their lives, but they still have to deal with an additional issue that we haven't talked about here. There are other people who are in real poverty. There are other circumstances, but I felt our listeners need to hear how you all feel about this. I wish that they could be here to see that family of 10 out there. You wouldn't take a million dollars for one of them, would you?

Randy Hekman: Not a billion, not two billion.

Dr. James Dobson: I can see why. Marcia, are you going to have some more?

Marcia Hekman: It's really up to God, even as you're talking about these people, I just love these people too. You're talking about, they can't have children. Because I've seen, I've had miscarriages too and it's hard. Because Jesus, we don't always understand what He's doing, but we can take our hurts to Him and just pray and trust Him.

Randy Hekman: That's basically our point is that we're not saying to have a million children.

Marcia Hekman: Right.

Randy Hekman: We're saying give this area to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And be open to Him for what He has, and He is sovereign. Whether you have children or don't have children, He must be sovereign in this area. We need foster parents and we need adoptive parents for those who cannot have children. There's lots of children looking for homes. God loves us all and will meet us where we're at.

Dr. James Dobson: You know what's exciting to me? I don't know who it is, I have no idea where this person is, but there's somebody out there listening to us today who has been struggling with this very issue.

Randy Hekman: You're right.

Dr. James Dobson: Almost accidentally turned on the radio today and heard this discussion and a Lord is speaking through it. And there will be a little child in their arms because of what we've had to say today.

Marcia Hekman: Amen.

Dr. James Dobson: Doesn't that excites you?

Randy Hekman: That does. In fact, I've been able to see that. I've gone out to speak on this issue in a year later, I'll come back to that same area and they'll bring either a picture or a little baby in their arms. They'll say, "You caused this child by what you said, and this just does nothing but give me great joy, credit to God."

Dr. James Dobson: Let's talk some more. Randy, I'd like to hear more about your experiences as a juvenile court judge and bring that into this discussion. So let's carry on.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a remarkable conversation about God's design for family with Randy and Marcia Hekman. Now their journey from wanting just four children to embracing God's bigger plan reminds us that life's greatest blessings come when we surrender to God's perfect wisdom. Now if you missed any portion of today's program or if you'd

like to share it with a friend, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. There you'll find the complete program along with information about Randy's book called *Sweeter by the Dozen*. Again, drjamesdobson.org is where you'll find that information.

Well Mother's Day is coming up this Sunday, and we want to celebrate the incredible women who shape our lives and also shape future generations as well. That's why we've created a free resource called "Empowering Moms." It's an email series that features a daily dose of encouragement, designed to specifically for mothers. Each five minute reading delivers practical parenting wisdom rooted in Scripture. Plus an uplifting prayer to carry you through your day. While motherhood is truly an amazing privilege, we understand it can also be the toughest job on earth. Let us come alongside you with this simple but powerful resource. To get yours, go online to drjamesdobson.org and enter your name and email address there on our landing page. You'll start receiving daily inspiration for your role as a mother today. Again for the free "Empowering Moms" email series go to drjamesdobson.org.

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Well I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of Dr. Dobson and all of us here at the JDFI, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time for part two of the inspiring conversation with Randy and Marcia Hekman discussing the joys of raising a large family. That's coming up right here 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: Well thank you everyone for tuning into our program today. You may know that Family Talk is a listener-supported program and we remain on the air by your generosity, literally. If you could help us financially, we would certainly appreciate it. God's blessings to you all.