

# TOMORROW'S WORLD

SPECIAL REPORT

## THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY



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## Don't Underestimate the Value of Family!

Some have said that as the family goes, so goes the nation. Why is this so? Can the disintegration of the family have geopolitical ramifications? Are we seeing the end of Western democracies as a result of our failing personal relationships? And what is the relationship between families and the health of a nation?

Family begins when a man and a woman decide they want to spend the remainder of their lives together. Legal documents are normally filed, and a ceremony of some kind takes place where friends and relatives celebrate in joyous occasion. More often than not, children show up on the scene shortly afterward.

Despite feminist propaganda, men and women are inherently different—physically, emotionally and in the very way we think. And this creates various challenges that must be overcome in marriage and family. So one might wonder, if there is a God, why did He create us this way? As the famous Professor Higgins asks in the musical “My Fair Lady,” “Why can’t a woman be more like a man?”

Emily Smith must agree with Professor Higgins, as she declared in her June 26, 2015 *Politico Magazine* article, “Same-sex couples, by definition, don’t face these obstacles, which is why recent research suggests that same-sex marriages aren’t just equal to straight marriages: in important regards they are superior.”

But this contradicts earlier research. In 1989, homosexual activists Marshall Kirk, a researcher in neuropsychiatry, and Hunter Madsen, a public relations consultant, wrote what has been described as “the gay manifesto,” *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the '90s*. Under the subhead: “Just the Facts, Ma’am: Physiopsychological Considerations” they explain: “Relationships between gay men don’t usually last very long... How to account for this paradox? Part of this is due to the characteristics of male physiology and psychology, which make the sexual and romantic pairing of man with man inherently less stable than the pairing of man with woman. (Sorry if the truth hurts.)” (p 318).

Marriage and family are important for many reasons. The differences between men and women complement the relationship. Each gender carries with it certain strengths that the other lacks. To suggest that, in general, two men can raise a child as well as a man and a woman discounts the role a woman plays in the life of the child, and to suggest that two women can raise a child equally well as a woman and a man discounts the role men play. Such ideas demean both men and women!

It is in the family relationship, beginning with the marriage itself, that we learn what it means to live a life of outgoing concern for others and how to subordinate our *own* desires for the sake of another. More simply, we learn not to be selfish. Compassion, forgiveness and compromise are learned in the God-ordained institutions of marriage and family. This is where children learn sharing, respect for authority, manners and cooperation. They can also learn proper self-discipline, hard work, persistence and much more!

As one who has worked with hundreds of teens at summer camps, I can attest to the fact that there are significant differences between those who are raised in stable families and those who are not. There will always be exceptions, but the evidence is there for anyone who has eyes to see. Sadly, too many *don't* see, because they are too busy concentrating on their own needs and desires.

This special report, *The Future of the Family*, is given to you free of charge, but its value is inestimable. Roderick Meredith’s lead article exposes the war on the family, why there *is* a war, and the ultimate source behind the conflict. Rod McNair then has two articles; one extolling the value of women and the other the value of men in the marriage relationship. The late John Ogwyn then shows us how families in conflict can be repaired in his article, and finally, Dexter Wakefield points to the ultimate family God Himself is creating.

Our families are in trouble today, and when families are in trouble, civilizations are in trouble. We hope you will read, think about, and *act* on the true values you will read in these pages.

—Gerald E. Weston



# SATAN'S WAR ON FAMILY VALUES

By Roderick C. Meredith

Over the last year, headline articles have come out in the mainstream magazines and newspapers regarding enormous wildfires breaking out across the western United States, about *millions* of immigrants from Africa and the Middle East trying to somehow get into Europe and Britain, about America's debate concerning the undocumented immigrants within its *own* borders, about the huge *financial crisis* sweeping across Asia, Europe and America. The mainstream media also tells us about the tremendous distortion of family values now going on across America and Western Europe, about the idea of "men marrying men," about the thoughts of many liberals now who even consider "sex" with robots! They also discuss the increasing *mental illness* and *depression* among our youth, about rising rates of *suicide* among homosexuals and others who have strayed from the traditional values of the past.

They can tell you about *what is happening*, but they *do not* understand the **meaning** of these events. They cannot—or are not willing—to actually **connect the dots**.

Can you genuinely "connect the dots"? Will you try—or are you *willing* to try—to genuinely understand **why** we are here on this earth, what is the genuine **way** of life intended by our Creator, and *how* to achieve genuine happiness and fulfillment? Are you,

personally, willing to admit to yourself that there is a genuine "spirit world"? That many of these incidents of violent and senseless crime—in which mentally disturbed or angry individuals murder or torture others—may in fact be inspired by *demonic spirits* guided by Satan the Devil? Are you willing to admit that there is a *real devil*—as Jesus Christ Himself described many times? Are you willing to acknowledge that the book we call the Bible is, in fact, the very *inspired Word of God* and that it will give you genuine **understanding** of all these events that are going on around you?

For the Bible itself makes clear the *reality* of Satan the Devil and his demons. It tells us about Satan deceiving people *all over the world* whom, "the god of this age has *blinded*, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan the Devil has indeed "*blinded*" *millions* of confused human beings! God's Word makes this very plain, as the Apostle John was inspired to write: "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, *who deceives the whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:9).

Within the next several years, a genuine "spirit war" will break out, after which Satan will finally be cast down into a bottomless pit. God's Word describes how one of His mighty angels "laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and

Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:2-3).

My friends, *only then* will the massive deception that has overtaken the world be lifted. Only then will people begin to grasp the fact that this world's society has actually been "cut off" from the Creator and His righteous and blessed *way of life*.

### What Is Satan "Up To"?

When you *understand* God's supreme purpose, and the fact that Satan the Devil is the ultimate *adversary*—the ultimate enemy both of God and mankind—you can begin to grasp what Satan **is up to!** For Almighty God has created humans "in His image"—ultimately to become members of His Spirit Family—having His *very* character. Therefore we human beings are a definite *threat* to Satan the Devil. For true Christians—those who truly *obey* God—are destined to become "*kings and priests* to our God; and we shall *reign on the earth*" (Revelation 5:10). Obviously, we would then *replace Satan* who is now the present "prince" over this world (John 14:30; 16:11). So, we become the ultimate **threat** to Satan's continued rule over this entire earth!

It is obvious that in order to *destroy mankind's*

## SATAN IS "HELL-BENT" TO DESTROY OUR ABILITY TO BEAR CHILDREN WHO WOULD REPLACE HIM IN RULING THE WORLD

*future destiny*, Satan must *destroy mankind*. He must therefore destroy our families, our childbearing and our childrearing, all of which become a threat to Satan's continued existence and control over this earth. So Satan has a powerful motivation to *destroy the human family!* He has a powerful reason to *destroy* the loving relationship between a man and his wife and their normal desire and ability to *bear children*—future adult human beings who may end up *replacing* Satan and his demons!

Our ultimate adversary, Satan the Devil, is "hell-

bent"—so to speak—to *destroy* the true concept of marriage and the ability to bear children who would become *future kings* replacing Satan! Therefore, Satan has *every reason* to try to promote this whole "men marrying men" relationship and all that it involves! He has influenced many of our political and religious leaders—and confused judges as well—to begin to *destroy the family* by many of their rulings, their teachings and their whole emphasis of "sex for



the sake of sex" rather than using sex as a normal part of marriage to *build a family* based on godly principles! So

Satan—as the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), is *in charge* of this earth's atmosphere, its media, its entertainment and the many foul and perverted *attitudes* that are imparted by all of the above! He is constantly drumming it into the minds of young humans that the normal marriage relationship as part of a family is *no longer necessary* or even "good." He has put it into the minds of humans that sex is a big "play thing" to be tinkered with and enjoyed in *whatever way* humans—under Satan's influence—desire to use it.

So, more and more millions of little children will soon be growing up without benefit of a normal family, without a normal father and mother creating a real

family in the home. As Satan guides people to use "donor" sperm to create children *apart from marriage*, increasing millions of little children will grow up *without even knowing* who their real father is! This will cause them—less and less—to look upon their heavenly Father and understand

the relationship God wants to have with them—of which the human family is a pattern.

Millions of young men will not be able to have the example and teaching to become *real men*. They will grow up without developing the masculine leadership that God intended. Women will grow up without learning the lessons of the family and of submitting to one another in marriage and becoming mothers of children and helpers to their husbands. The whole human family will *deteriorate increasingly*, and therefore whole civilizations will be *destroyed* and turned

into utter confusion. The very word “Babylon” means: “*confusion*”! That is the word that God used to describe this entire system called the “Beast” throughout the book of Revelation.

At the end of this age, the final system called “Babylon” is mightily thrown down: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury” (Revelation 18:2–3). Describing this coming powerful and exciting-looking military, political and economic system, God tells His true people, “*Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues*” (v. 4).

This soon-coming foul and demonic system is called the “Beast.” Its leader—who is also called the “Beast”—is assisted by a *false prophet* who works “signs” whereby they are able to *deceive the whole world*. In the end, God reveals their awful fate: “Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20).

In this and so many other scriptures, God reveals that He will finally have “had enough” of this foul system and its two leaders—the “Beast” and the False Prophet. They will be **burned to eternal death** in a Lake of Fire! Meanwhile, Satan is influencing the *destruction* of the human family through an entirely wrong approach to sex and marriage and through the *direct murder* of increasing millions of babies in a practice called “abortion”! Satan is very clever in influencing human beings to play “word games” in the way they try to describe their foul deeds. So they often *describe abortion* as a “woman’s health decision” or similar terms.

What they *do not tell you* is that this “health decision” involves the **death** of a developing human being made in the image of God—a helpless little child who is blotted out by sucking out its brain while yet in the womb of its mother! Future generations will look

back on this practice as absolute *barbarism*! Society today likes to think of itself as “modern”—not like the ancient Romans who exposed newborns to the elements to die—but we will deliberately **murder** our own little children and do many other awful things (under the influence of Satan) that will ultimately *destroy human life*. Therefore, Satan’s ultimate *goal* of destroying humanity is assisted as we do our own part in helping him divert us from our destiny.

### Satan’s Cunning Deceits

One of the cleverest maneuvers Satan employs is to try to convince people that homosexuals do not “choose” to become that way. Rather, the idea is that they are “born” as homosexuals and therefore *cannot help themselves*. This idea appeals, naturally, to fair-minded people and makes them willing to go along with perverted practices they might otherwise *reject*!

Nevertheless, the top scientists and doctors involved have virtually **all** admitted that there is no “homosexual gene”! Yes, some articles and television and Internet reports *imply* or directly say the opposite! But they are **lying**! Undoubtedly the vast majority of people putting out that stuff *know better*. Yet, as Joseph Goebbels—Hitler’s propaganda man—famous-



Satan tries to deceive us into calling the murder of society’s most innocent a “choice.”





Mainstream media has played an important role in public acceptance of homosexuality.

ly said: “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it!”

“A leading pro-family group has put together a fact page about alternate lifestyles as a tool to educate people that they are not ‘born gay.’

“Randy Thomasson explains that *SaveCalifornia.com*’s ‘Not Born This Way’ webpage aims to educate individuals on the truth about alternate sexual orientations. The page provides facts about LGBT lifestyles, as well as scientific research disproving the popular claim that people are born homosexual.

“Without any reputable evidence, the entertainment culture, the uneducated media and homosexual activists have seduced today’s teenagers, in particular, to believe that people are born homosexual,” Thomasson recognizes. ‘However, science has found no biological basis for homosexuality, bisexuality or transsexuality.’

“On average, says the pro-family group, the homosexual lifestyle has higher rates of cancer, sexually transmitted diseases and early deaths than those found among heterosexuals. He also

notes that the American Psychological Association has reversed its statement that people are born gay, admitting that there is no ‘gay gene’” (*onenewsnow.com*, June 26, 2012).

A very important aspect of Satan’s deceptions and **lies** is that he has influenced the mainstream media to greatly play down or directly *misstate* the information about the **terrible harm** homosexuality produces! For the truth of the matter is—as most homosexual “experts” acknowledge themselves—that homosexuals on average **die very young**. A very eye-opening report from the Family Research Institute (February 2009) states this:

“In a pioneering study, 6,737 obituaries from 18 U.S. homosexual journals during and after the height of the AIDS epidemic (13 years total) were compared to a large sample of obituaries from regular newspapers. The obituaries from the regular newspapers were similar to U.S. averages for longevity: the median age of death of married, never-divorced men was 75 and 80% of them died old (age 65 or older). For unmarried or divorced men, the median age of death was 57 and 32% of them died old. Married, never-divorced women averaged 79 at death; 85% died old. Unmarried and divorced women averaged age 71 and 60% of them died old.

The median age of death for homosexuals, however, was virtually the same nationwide—and, overall, about 2% survived to old age. If AIDS was the listed cause of death, the median age was 39. For the 829 gays who were listed as dying of something other than AIDS, the median age of death was 42 and 9% died old. The 163 lesbians had a median age of death of 44 and 20% died old.

Even when AIDS was apparently not involved, homosexuals frequently met an early demise. Three percent of gays died violently. They were 116 times more apt to be murdered (compared to national murder rates), much more apt to commit suicide, and had high traffic-accident death-rates. Heart attacks, cancer, and liver failure were exceptionally common. 18% of lesbians died of murder, suicide, or accidents—a rate 456

times higher than that of white females aged 25-44" (*familyresearchinst.org*).

### The Results of Godless Behavior

We *absolutely must* consider the **results** of the perverted behavior of homosexuals and lesbians. For Jesus Christ Himself said: "By their **fruits** you will know them" (Matthew 7:20). So the "fruits" or the *results* of mankind's perverted behavior certainly indicate that homosexual behavior leads to terrible *diseases, human suffering* and premature **death**.

Since Satan is the ultimate liar and "father of lies" (John 8:44), he has no qualms about influencing his confused servants into repeating a **lie** over and over in order to mislead human beings in such a basic point—involving the *very existence* of humanity in the future! He does want to *destroy humanity*. So he will confuse humanity about *everything* involving sex, male-female relations, marriage, childrearing and other facets of living a happy and successful life.

Of course, many people have a "tendency" to become alcoholic, to become obese, or to have some defect or abnormality because of the genetic structure they inherited from their parents. They may learn

## AS MANKIND TURNS MORE AND MORE AWAY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD WE WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY VIOLENT

unhealthy behaviors at a very young age. But they are not "made" to do anything against God—**ever**. God's inspired Word makes this very plain: "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

My friends, *if* Almighty God allowed Satan to continue *bombarding our peoples* with all the propaganda and intellectual "rubbish" involving sex and marriage, Satan would achieve his ultimate **goal**—the **destruction** of the *entire human race*! It is *vital* that you all understand this.

For, as mankind turns more and more away from

Almighty God and His revealed *way of life*, we will become increasingly **violent**. More and more local wars, and finally **world war** will erupt. Under Satan's influence, mankind would simply *eliminate itself* in the horrible wars that would ensue. Almighty God describes this coming time of horror and how *He will intervene* before it is too late. For His inspired Word tells us: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21-22).

Thankfully, by sending Jesus Christ back to this earth as King of kings (Revelation 11:15), the great God of creation will *conquer* Satan and completely stop his intent to erase human life from this planet!

A wonderful and truly righteous *world government* will soon be set up after Christ returns in the "latter days." God's Word tells us, "He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. *For out of Zion the law shall go forth*, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their

swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Micah 4:2-3). Ezekiel also reveals details about what God says about this coming time: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to *walk in My statutes*, and you will *keep My judgments* and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27).

Among the "statutes" which the whole world will then learn to obey is the direct command: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you" (Leviticus 18:22-24). This is the teaching of our Creator—the great God who *created us* male and female. So Jesus said: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5).

Yet, in our formerly professing "Christian" nation,





"I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze..."

we now have confused judges and other appointed heads of various bureaus and departments across this country treating the teachings of their Creator as a **crime**! Almost daily, we read or hear on the news about sincere ministers, magistrates or business people being *forced* to acquiesce in some way to *support* absolutely **vile** practices *directly condemned in the Bible*! In several formerly "Christian" nations, preaching God's Truth is sometimes regarded as a **crime**.


Wow!

In just the last 15 to 20 years, the "god" of this age—Satan the Devil—has so *twisted men's minds* that they believe the *exact opposite* of what they did believe just a few years ago! To more fully grasp the extent of what is actually happening, call us or write us immediately and request your **free** copy of our very enlightening and shocking booklet entitled *Satan's Counterfeit Christianity*. It will *open your eyes*!

My friends, we *all* must learn to "connect the dots!" For, as these increasing incidences of wildfires, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, disease epidemics and various other **plagues** come upon us, we had *better be willing* to acknowledge that the Creator of heaven and earth will intervene just as He said He would do! For long before Al Gore or even President Obama ever talked about "global warming" or "climate change," our Creator predicted, over and over,

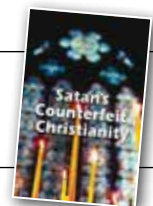
throughout *scores of prophecies* in His inspired Word, that various plagues would come upon His people **if** they turned away from obeying His commandments and statutes. Almighty God stated to our ancestors: "But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and *if you despise My statutes*, or if your soul abhors *My judgments*, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.... And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit" (Leviticus 26:14–16, 18–20).

Before too many more years, God will begin to **powerfully** "get the attention" of rebellious human beings. They will come to realize that "something is going on." Finally, God will **shake** the nations in the whole world in a way He has never done before! His inspired Word tells: "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then **shook** the earth; but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I **shake** not only the earth, but also heaven.' Now this, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:25–27).

The amused "smirks" will soon be wiped off the faces of rebellious humanity as they see their very Creator intervening to **shake** the carnal nations of this world to their senses! But you do not need to be one of the rebels. Act now, and do not let Satan destroy your family and its God-inspired values. Pray daily for Christ's return. *May God speed that day!* 

MAY WE  
SUGGEST?

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# Motherhood in Crisis?

By **Rod McNair**

**A**cross the United States, millions of families celebrate Mother’s Day every May. Nations around the world honor mothers at different times for their love and their nurturing nature, and for the sacrifices they make for their children and families.

Certainly we should thank our mothers—and the mothers of our children—for their lifelong love and support. We are living in a time of crisis when each mother’s role is vitally important. The Western nations are at a pivotal crossroads, leading the world in divorce and encouraging immorality. Drug abuse and crime are rampant. Sexual perversion and addictions are not only corroding national character, but are being exported at an alarming rate. Morality and religion have become increasingly irrelevant to millions.

Why does this matter? Bible prophecy shows that our nations will face total societal collapse unless we repent as a people. Jesus Christ foretold that the *worst time of warfare in human history* would come just before His return to the earth: “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). The prophet Jeremiah explained that this time would be so terrible that “none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7). To reverse our present course, there must be a *drastic change in our attitudes toward God and the true religion of the Bible*.

The role of fathers is crucial and cannot be emphasized enough. But neither can the role of mothers—who have a *unique and profound* effect on their children’s growth and spiritual development. Great leaders have attested to the importance of a wise and loving mother. United States President Andrew Jackson praised his mother as being “gentle as a dove and brave as a lioness” (*Mother o’ Mine: A Mother’s Treasury*, p. 106). Inventor Thomas Edison honored his mother, saying, “My mother was the making of me,” and U.S. President Abraham Lincoln said, “All that I am or hope to be I owe to my mother” (*ibid.*, pp. 107).

A mother’s role has always been important, but her role is even more vital when she is a child’s only parental influence. This is the sad fact for millions of children in the Western nations today. Author David Blankenhorn points out that because of rampant out-of-wedlock pregnancy and divorce in the U.S., “before they reach the age of eighteen, more than half of our nation’s children are likely to spend at least a significant portion of their childhoods living apart from their fathers” (*Fatherless America*, p. 1).

## **Disaster on the Horizon?**

One of the earliest calls for celebration of a Mother’s Day in the United States came from Julia Ward Howe. In 1870, Howe wrote a “Mother’s Day” proclamation, focusing on the plight of mothers who lost their husbands and sons in wars of the mid-nineteenth century.

Although men have historically borne the brunt of warfare, war also has a terrible effect on women and children. In World War II, whole families died in Nazi concentration camps. Human beings were herded into railcars to be humiliated, de-humanized and finally exterminated.

In war, the almost-unthinkable can become routine. Scripture describes the dehumanizing effect of war on desperate parents. Moses warned the Israelites: **“You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters** whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you...” (Deuteronomy 28:53). History also records that some parents killed and ate their children during the 70AD Roman siege of Jerusalem. Is this unthinkable in our modern day? Ask yourself: how many **millions of refined, “enlightened” people in Western society today condone the murder of unborn children for the mere convenience of the parents?**

Parents today should realize that without God, their children and families can suffer incredibly. Moses recorded this warning from God: “Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, **which shall rob you of your children**, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate” (Leviticus 26:21–22).

Mothers are naturally concerned about the direction of our nations. A godly mother wants only to see the best for her family. She cares about her community’s future, because it will directly affect her children’s future.

But what can a mother do to keep her children safe and prepare them for a happy and successful future?

### **Teach Children to Walk with God**

Without a wholesale, complete repentance and turning to God, our nations will not avoid a horrible end. But how can children know how to do this unless they are taught?

One of a mother’s primary responsibilities is to teach her children about the true worship of God. As

Dr. Jeffrey Fall writes in *Successful Parenting: God’s Way*: “For Christian parents, the ultimate goal is to lay a foundation in their children’s young impressionable years, so they will always desire to fully seek God as *their* Father” (p. 2). Moses told the Israelites that “you shall teach [the words of God] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

Sadly, many mothers—and fathers—have forgotten this God-given role. In their book *Passionate Housewives: Desperate for God*, authors Jennie Chancey and Stacy McDonald note that “many times, without a scriptural model, the ‘professional mom’ creates a child-centered home—a fantasy household that is best described as an ultimate playground” (pp. 24–25). Motherhood is not just about providing recreational and educational experiences for one’s offspring—it is about *instilling moral and spiritual principles in the next generation*.

The Bible shows that it is only through parents’ convicted and dedicated religious teaching that the next generation will prosper and thrive. David wrote: “Give ear, O my people, to my law.... **We will not hide them from their children**, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD.... That the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:1–2, 4–7).

If you want your children to escape the coming disasters ahead—and to prepare for God’s Kingdom as well—are you setting the example yourself? Are you living a genuine Christian life? Dr. James Dobson writes, “If the salvation of our children is really that vital to us, then our spiritual training should begin before children can even comprehend what it is all about. They should grow up seeing their parents on their knees before God, talking to Him. They will learn quickly at that age and will never forget what they’ve seen and heard” (*Parenting Isn’t for Cowards*, p. 104).

And yet, author Carla Barnhill notes that many women mistakenly believe that “their ultimate worth is found in motherhood, not in their relationship with God” (*The Myth of the Perfect Mother: Rethinking*



*the Spirituality of Women*, p. 14). That is a mistake. If a mother wants to bring up godly children, her first priority is to be a *godly mother*, practicing Christianity and walking with God in her personal life.

God promises blessings for those who obey Him with all their hearts. In Deuteronomy 6, Moses warned Israel to “fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged” (v. 2). If you want your children to prosper and grow, teach them to look to and follow God in their lives.

### Teach Children to Respect Their Father

In our increasingly father-neutral and fatherless society, many children today simply do not have a meaningful relationship with a father. And yet, a positive relationship with a child’s father is fundamental to healthy growth and development. It also forms the foundation for a child’s relationship with his eternal Father, God.

If you are a mother, are you teaching your children to respect their father? Mothers can have a role in helping to turn the hearts of their children to their Heavenly Father, as well as to their physical fathers. But what if you, as a wife, feel you cannot respect your husband? What if you do not feel he is worthy of admiration? Dobson notes: “You as a mother hold the keys to the relationship between your boys [or girls] and their father. If you show respect to him as a man, they will be more inclined to admire and emulate him. If you think he is a wimp or a dope or a loser, those attitudes will translate directly into their interaction” (*Bringing Up Boys*, p. 94). Do you set an example that helps your children respect their father, despite his human frailties?

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth’” (Ephesians 6:1–3). Today, many parents are embarrassed to require obedience and honor from their children. Many parenting techniques today encourage only tolerance and self-expression from young people, and the building of youthful self-esteem. Parents are often made to feel it is selfish and self-serving to require respect and obedience from their children. And yet, God wants children to learn self-control

and godliness, and to grow in His image. As Paul noted, to honor and submit to parents is one of the Ten Commandments. And it is a commandment with *promise of a long and bountiful life*.

What if yours is a troubled home? Seek to reconcile, if at all possible. Work on working it out. A less-than-perfect marriage consisting of a father and mother is generally better for all parties involved than separation and divorce. Researchers Paul Amato, Jennifer Kane, and Spencer James have noted that, even in so-called “good divorces,” outcomes for children are not necessarily better. They recommend that “focusing more strongly on rebuilding and improving the marital relationship makes a great deal of sense, especially when serious problems such as domestic violence are not present” (“Reconsidering the ‘Good Divorce,’” *Family Relations*, December 2011, vol. 60 no. 5).

What if you are a single mother? Do not try to turn your children against their father. Teach them to respect him as much as they are able. This does not mean tolerating his wrong behaviors; it means teaching them to respect him as a fellow human being. Even if their father is completely absent, or is an unfit role model in every way, you can teach your children to respect other male authority figures. This will help them gain a greater sense of security as they navigate their way through life, and it will pave the way for a relationship with their Heavenly Father. It will help them *turn to repentance* in their own relationship with God. This may save them from great suffering in the years ahead (Proverbs 30:17).



## Build Your Home

As a foundation for teaching children to honor God and respect their parents, a mother has a special responsibility to make her house a home. We read: “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands” (Proverbs 14:1). Are you building a home life of peace, tranquility and happiness, where children can grow in a secure and nurturing environment?

Proverbs 31 describes a mother striving to build a warm, peaceful and godly home. She is not an idealized “super-Mom” but rather is a woman exercising her God-given talents to the full. She fears God (v. 30), respects her husband so that he can trust her (vv. 11–12), provides clothing and food for her family (vv. 13–15, 21–22), guards her tongue and speaks with kindness (v. 26). Godly motherhood is not an unattainable ideal—it should be the goal of every mother seeking to follow God.

In modern America, “home” is often little more than a building where related individuals sleep—where there is little meaningful interaction between

family members. Increasingly our devices—whether television, computer, tablet or smartphone—dominate our waking hours. The Nielsen Company reported American adults devoted 10 hours and 39 minutes *per day* to “screen time” in the first quarter of 2016. (*Nielsen Total Audience Report, Q1 2016*). Children follow suit: a 2015 report by Common Sense Media found that teenagers spend 9 hours a day consuming media.

As a mother, you have a unique opportunity to encourage your family to interact together—to build your home through real family connections. How can you do this? Is there one simple key?

Eat together. This is a simple step, but has far-reaching results and will help prepare your children to face their future courageously. Dr. Blake Bowden of the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Center conducted a survey of 527 teenagers, to learn what family and lifestyle characteristics were related to mental health. “What they observed, once more, is that adolescents whose parents ate dinner with them

five times per week or more were the least likely to be on drugs, to be depressed, or to be in trouble with the law. They were also more likely to be doing well in school and to be surrounded by a supportive circle of friends.... Family mealtimes continue to be great settings in which to impart the truths of our faith. As the blessings of the day are recounted, children see evidence of God’s loving, faithful care and the importance of honoring Him with a time of thanks” (*Bringing Up Boys*, pp. 92–93).

A mother can also facilitate communication within the family. Dr. Dobson gives this advice: “Let me urge you mothers to talk regularly to your sons (and, of course, to every other member of the family). It is a skill that can be taught. Work hard at keeping the lines of communication open and clear. Explore what your children and spouse are thinking and feeling.... When you sense a closed spirit developing, don’t let another

day go by without bringing hidden feelings out in the open. It’s the first principle of healthy family life” (*ibid.*, p. 96). Do not let your house be just a junction where related family members

## GOD WANTS CHILDREN TO LEARN SELF-CONTROL AND GODLINESS, AND TO GROW IN HIS IMAGE

come and go—*be the catalyst for real communication* and you will be helping them grow into strong young men and women.

In modern society, motherhood is both “undervalued and overly romanticized” (Barnhill, p. 14). It should be neither—it is simply the role God gave to ensure that truth and right values would be passed to the next generation, and that children would be nurtured in an environment where they could develop godly character (Malachi 2:15). Sadly, modern society often gives little encouragement and support to mothers who want to be “keepers at home” (Titus 2:5, *KJV*). Dorothy Patterson, a homemaker and an adjunct faculty member at Criswell College, explains this double-standard: “Of course, much of the world would agree that being a housekeeper is acceptable as long as you are not caring for your own home; treating men with attentive devotion would also be right as long as the man is the boss in the office and not your husband; caring for children would even be deemed heroic service for which presidential awards



could be given as long as the children are someone else's and not your own." Fewer and fewer mothers train their young daughters at all in how to manage a home. After all, "who has time for learning to run a home—especially when you don't plan to spend much time there anyway?" (Chancey and McDonald, pp. 24–25).

In a crisis-filled world, mothers have the unique privilege of creating a place of peace for stressed-out family members by making their home inviting, warm and welcoming. Mothers can foster an environment where family members learn to communicate at regular intervals, and with respect and courtesy. They can help their children learn godly morality, talk about God's ways and learn how to approach life.

The Apostle Paul warned that at the end of this present age, Christian parents would be bucking the prevailing trend in society, as many around them

become "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boast-ers, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:2–4). Mothers today can do much to keep their children from falling into this pattern.

Can mothers make a difference? Your parenting may not be able to save the world. But you can nurture and encourage your children, teach them to obey God and respect their parents. Not only will you be helping them along the right path toward a happy and godly adulthood; you may even save them from being destroyed with a disoriented and sinful generation (Proverbs 23:13–14). Yes, mothers, in this time of crisis, you can make a difference! <sup>TM</sup>

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SUGGEST?**

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# FATHERLESS FAMILIES

By Rod McNair

Millions of families in the United States observe Father's Day every year on the third Sunday of June. Other countries set different dates for Father's Day: India observes it on the first Sunday of June, and several European countries (including Italy, Portugal and Spain) observe it on March 19. In Australia and New Zealand, Father's Day falls on the first Sunday of September.

While our societies seem to believe it is important, we should ask: What is the state of "fatherhood"? Does it have real significance in society today?

True fatherhood is not just the biological capacity to father children. In-vitro fertilization can accomplish that with no father present. True fatherhood involves a father being *in the home, training and loving his children in the context of a committed marriage relationship*. By that definition, fatherhood in the United States is at an all-time low. The Centers for Disease Control reports that more than 40 percent of births in the U.S. involve single mothers. In some countries, the figure is even higher—almost 48 percent in the U.K., and almost 57 percent in France (OECD Family Database, December 19, 2016).

Compounding the problem, the U.S. has the second-highest divorce rate in the world. Recently, married couples for the first time became a *minority*, accounting for less than half of households with children.

## Choosing Fatherlessness

Increasingly, older single mothers are *choosing* to become pregnant without a husband. One 31-year old single mother noted that when she became pregnant "it didn't matter if I had a man, because I knew I could do it alone." A single mother said that her 9-year old daughter "does cry sometimes about not having her dad around, but we talk about it... I do feel guilt sometimes, but we don't let it overwhelm us" (*Monterey Herald*, December 25, 2006).

What about the effect on children? Kay Hymowitz, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, said, "Children raised by single moms have a greater risk of poverty, emotional problems, school failure... Cohabiting parents don't show quite the same strength; neither do stepparents. Marriage carries with it a whole set of messages about how to live, which are consistent with middle-class life in this country" (*ibid.*).

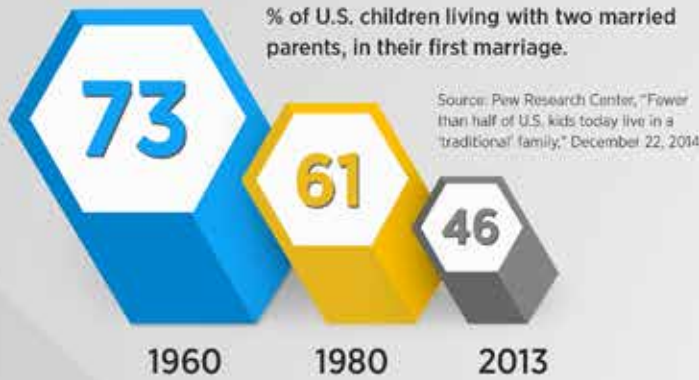
Out-of-wedlock pregnancy and divorce are so widespread, according to author David Blankenhorn, that "before they reach the age of eighteen, more than half of our nation's children are likely to spend at least a significant portion of their childhoods living apart from their fathers" (*Fatherless America*, p. 1).

In *Bringing Up Boys*, psychologist James Dobson points out that in spite of such evidence, some believe not only that fathers are unnecessary, but that the institution of fatherhood is harmful to families (p. 65). He cites Carl Auerbach and Louise Silverstein, authors of *Deconstructing the Essential Father*, as well as Karla

**FATHERLESS FAMILIES** CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

# Family in Focus

## How the American Family Has Changed



Three-quarters of children born to cohabiting parents will see their parents split up before they reach age 16.

Source: National Marriage Project, Rutgers University, 2002

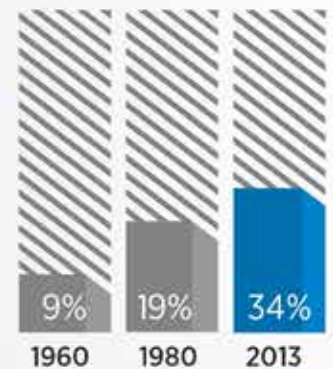
## Large Shifts in Family Structure

% of children today living with an unmarried parent



**WOW!**

"...children cohabiting with a parent and an unrelated partner (usually a boyfriend) are about 10 times more likely to be physically, sexually, or emotionally abused, compared to children living with their own married parents."—Brad Wilcox, Director of the National Marriage Project



Sources: Pew Research Center, "Fewer than half of U.S. kids today live in a 'traditional' family," December 22, 2014; "Why cohabitation is worse than divorce for kids," Washington Post (website), September 9, 2011

## Attitudes about the Statement

### It is OK...

"...to have and raise children when the parents are living together but not married."

### MEN



- Strongly agree or agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree or strongly disagree

### WOMEN



- Strongly agree or agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree or strongly disagree

Source: National Center for Health Statistics: National Health Statistics Report, No. 92, March 17, 2016

2014

% of Bi Unmarried

# 40%

Sources: National Center for Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 2015; Pew Research Center and Rise of New Families,"



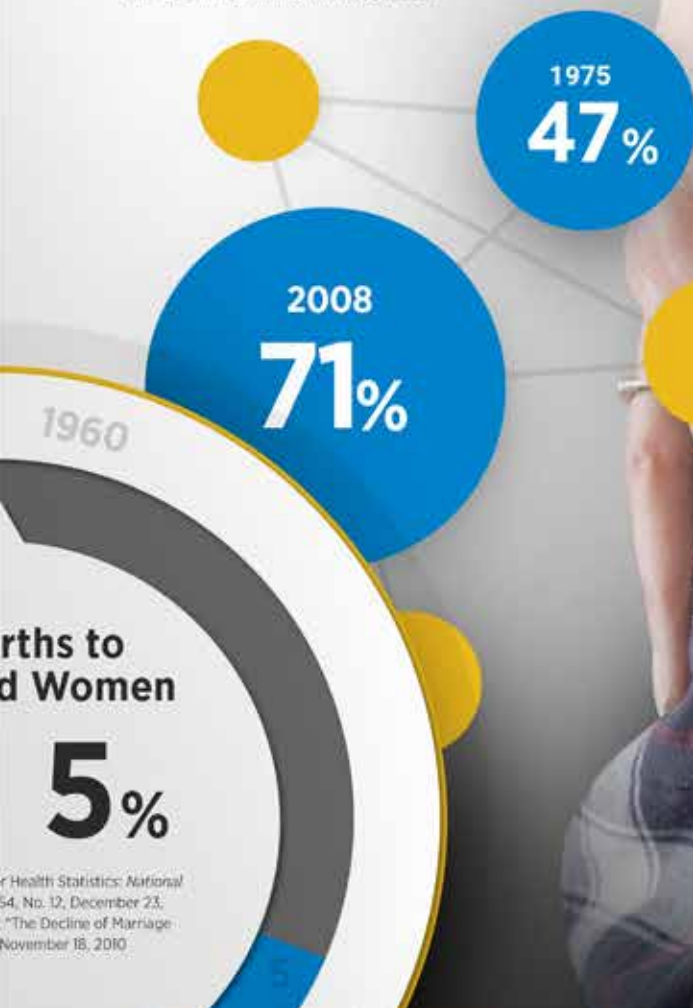
## The Dangers of Cohabitation to Children...

- 2x** Teenagers in cohabiting stepfamilies are more than *2 times* as likely to use illegal drugs as teenagers in intact married families.
- 5x** Children born to cohabiting parents are *5 times* more likely to experience their parents' separation than those born to married parents
- 9x** Children in cohabiting households are *8 times* more likely to be abused or mistreated than children living with married biological parents.
- 50x** Children in households with unrelated adults are nearly *50 times* as likely to die of inflicted injuries than children living with two biological parents.

Source: "12 Ways Kids Are Harmed When Their Parent Cohabitates," Aleteia.org, November 13, 2014

## Mothers of Children Under 18 in the Labor Force...

Source: Pew Research Center, "The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families," November 18, 2010



Births to Unmarried Women

5%

U.S. Health Statistics: National  
54, No. 12, December 23,  
"The Decline of Marriage  
November 18, 2010



Mantilla, a radical feminist author, who said, “I am highly suspicious of the... necessity of kids to have a male role model... The propaganda that children, especially boys, need fathers I think, has contributed incalculably to the misery of children all over the world” (*ibid.*).

### Roots of Paternal Conflict

Some mistakenly believe that Jesus Christ came to earth to counterbalance a harsh “Father-figure” God. They fail to see how Jesus showed only deep respect, honor and love for His Father. He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do... For the Father loves the Son... I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5:19–20, 30). In John 14:28, Jesus said His Father was greater than He, in

mates. Prisoners received a free card, postage paid, to send to their mothers for Mother’s Day. The response was overwhelming! The lines were so long, representatives had to return to the factory to get more cards. The program was so successful, the company decided to come back on Fathers’ Day. What happened on Father’s Day? *Nothing*. There were no lines at all. *Not a single inmate wanted to send a card to his father.* Truly, a loving relationship with a father has a profound effect on one’s life. And the *lack* of an engaged, active father is a strong determining factor in behavior gone awry (Dobson, p. 60).

Where did antagonism against fatherhood originate? In the distant past, before mankind was created, the archangel Lucifer rebelled against God, our Father in heaven. We read: “How you are fallen from heaven, O

## WHERE DID THIS ANTI-FATHERHOOD ATTITUDE BEGIN? WITH THE DEVIL’S REBELLION AGAINST THE FATHER

Lucifer, son of the morning!... For you have said in your heart... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, *I will be like the Most High*” (Isaiah 14:12–14). Lucifer became Satan, and as Satan he transmitted his attitude of rebellion to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:5).

That same spirit of rebellion against authority—even the authority of our heavenly Father—has

position and authority. He said He came to earth to reveal and declare the Father (John 1:18).

Christ taught that we are to pray to, worship, and love “our Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). He said, “O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You, and these [His disciples] have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, *that the love with which You loved Me may be in them.*” (John 17:25–26). Jesus, as our personal Savior and Elder Brother, is teaching us to love His—and our—heavenly Father as well!

Yet many still recoil from fatherhood, in the family or in *religion*. “Consider this dilemma of the father’s power. It is a fundamental human problem, shaping psyches and cultures. The anthropologist Weston La Barre, for example, probing for the origins of religion in human societies, finally views the ‘anguish’ produced by paternal authority as ‘the root of religion’ and ‘the secret of who we are...’ *In short, antagonism toward paternal power seems to go with the territory of fatherhood*” (Blankenhorn, p. 93).

Some years ago, a greeting-card company started a special Mother’s Day program for federal prison in-

been passed on to all mankind, and the result is sin (Romans 3:23).

Human nature naturally resists authority—whether the father of a family, or the Father-figure God (Romans 8:7). “More than the mother-child bond, the father-child bond is frequently charged with distance, tension, and even hostility, all stemming, at least in part, from the typically distinctive content of paternal authority... the father’s power, as a general anthropological proposition, is more conflictual than the mother’s: more rule-oriented, more emotionally distant, more aggressive... Much of this tension is rooted in the fact that the child *both craves and resents authority. So does a culture*” (Blankenhorn, p. 93).

Is fatherhood a valid excuse for abusive behavior? Of course not! Violence against wives and children is a horrible and tragic crime. Women and children need to take steps to protect themselves against criminal behavior when it occurs. However, it is wrong to believe, as some do, that the *fatherhood role itself* increases violence against women. In fact, evidence from the National Crime Victimization Survey showed that boyfriends and ex-husbands—

unmarried men—are six times more likely than husbands to commit violence against women (*ibid.*, p. 35). Clearly, when men are married, the risk of abuse is dramatically decreased. God mandates that the father is to be the head of the home (Ephesians 5:23), but his role of leadership must be exercised in love and kindness (v. 25).

The Bible reveals four distinct roles that fathers are meant to fulfill. We can also see these roles fulfilled by our spiritual Father in heaven. What are these roles?

### Fathers Provide

When God thrust Adam and Eve out of the garden, Adam's role was to provide for the sustenance of the family (Genesis 3:17–19). The Apostle Paul taught that wives' and mothers' primary responsibility was to be managers of the home (Titus 2:5; 1 Timothy 5:14). These passages shock and embarrass some people today, but they outline basic biblical roles.

Indeed, when men shirk their responsibility to provide, they cause untold suffering. Author Aubrey Andelin describes the reaction of a woman whose husband quit a higher-paying job for another which made him happier, but at which he only worked four hours a day. “[My husband] does not seem to care whether or not he provides for us... we are desperate for money. We have been living with his parents for the past seven

months and it doesn't even look hopeful that we might possibly have our own place to live. I am losing all respect for my husband and without respect there is not real love” (*Man of Steel and Velvet*, p. 78). Yes, a man's desire and earnest attempt to provide for family members is vital if he is to retain their respect.

Sometimes, of course, a man may be unable to provide for his family. Sometimes a wife may *need* to step into the “primary breadwinner” role. But the general biblical principle is that a husband should provide for his own (1 Timothy 5:8).

Does God, as our Father, provide for His children? Of course! He sends the sunshine and the rain to all (Matthew 5:45). God takes special care to put bread on the table of those who honor and love Him, so that “in the days of famine they shall be satisfied” (Psalm 37:19). David wrote, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants [children] begging bread” (Psalm 37:25). Jesus taught His disciples to ask their Father in heaven to “give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11), and that it is God's pleasure to “give good things to those who ask Him” (Matthew 7:11). Let us look to our spiritual Father for our sustenance and needs. And let us uphold the biblical role of physical fathers to do the same in families here on earth.

### Fathers Protect

God designed fathers to protect their wives and children. Men are generally bigger and stronger than women—ideally suited for the role of protector and provider. Their larger frames and stronger muscles were designed to help care for—not abuse and terrorize—a wife and children.

Not that long ago, society took for granted that a father's role was to protect his daughters from boys' unhealthy advances. Meg Meeker describes her father this way: “My dad protected me fiercely, to the point where I was almost too embarrassed to date anyone... But he protected me, not from predatory boys or monsters, but from myself. I was young and too trusting of people and he knew that long before I did” (*Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters*, p. 3).

Today, we see rampant gang violence in communities where fathers are largely absent from their children's lives. “Neighborhoods without fathers are



neighborhoods without men able and willing to confront errant youth, chase threatening gangs, and reproach delinquent fathers... the absence of fathers... deprives the community of those little platoons that informally but often effectively control boys on the street” (Blankenhorn, p. 31).

Does our Father in heaven take care of us? The Bible is full of examples of the protection our Father affords us—especially in the Psalms. Even salvation itself—rescuing us from the final destruction of death—is God protecting His children (1 Corinthians 15:57). God loves us, even to the point of giving up His Son for our lives (John 3:16).

If you value God’s protection in your life, be appreciative of Him. And be thankful for the similar role He established for fathers on earth.

### Fathers Teach

God has also given fathers a unique role in the education of their children. The word “discipline” did not originally mean punishment; it meant *teaching*.

Just a few hundred years ago, in colonial America, fathers “bore the ultimate responsibility for the care and well-being of their children... fathers assumed primary responsibility for what was seen as the most essential parental task: the religious and moral education of the young.” As the industrial revolution removed men from the household economy, women became the primary influence in the home. This shift has been one of the “defining features of American domestic life since the 1840s” (Blankenhorn, p. 237).

In general, mothers are better equipped to pay special attention to their children’s immediate physical and emotional needs. Fathers, on the other hand, are typically more concerned about character growth than fulfilling immediate emotional needs. Scripture reminds us: “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Proverbs 19:18, *KJV*). Both mothers *and* fathers are necessary for bringing up healthy children, because they complement and balance one another. Author Tim Russert recalled, “Although Dad’s disciplinary tactics were

rarely appreciated by his kids at the time, I could have filled this whole book with grateful testimonies from sons and daughters who were at the receiving end years ago” (*Wisdom of our Fathers*, p. 223).

Discipline, however, **does not** mean lashing out in anger. Paul wrote, “Do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). Along with teaching, measured, consistent and firm discipline—“exhorting” and “charging”—is what it takes for fathers to “bring [children] up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:11).

God our Father has established a program of character development for us. Sometimes that includes trials and tests (Jeremiah 17:10), for our eventual good. We are told, “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord *loves* He chastens... Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect... For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness”

(Hebrews 12:5–7, 9–10).

If we are to be in His Kingdom, we need to grow and change. God our Father is committed to helping us do that, so we can enjoy “the peaceable fruit of righteous-

ness to those who have been trained by it” (v. 11).

Fatherhood is not a curse. It is a necessary complement to motherhood for the training of the next generation. If you had a father who trained you, give thanks for the guidance he passed on to you, however imperfectly. And let us all be grateful that God, as our Father, is willing to train us for life with Him in His Kingdom.

### Fathers Nurture

Though fathers may not have the same deep “emotional well” that mothers have, their comfort and encouragement is also essential for their children’s growth. While gentleness, tenderness and affection may not come as naturally to some men, those qualities must be present in fathers who hope to nurture balanced, healthy children. “Gentleness is to the steel qualities what mercy is to justice. When justice is

## GOD HAS GIVEN FATHERS A UNIQUE ROLE IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN.






meted out alone, it is cold, undeviating, and unsympathetic.... Although justice is in reality given for the benefit of the individual, without mercy it appears intent on the suffering or even the destruction of the person..." (Andelin, p. 213).

A father who is not attentive to his children's emotional needs will seem cold and distant. When warmth, communication, and encouragement are absent in a father, family roles can devolve into "master-slave" relationships. Sadly, as authors Ernest Havemann and Marlene Lehtinen note, this is how many today see traditional marriage roles (*Marriage and Families*, p. 206). But God never intended fathers to be cold and aloof. Notice how He describes Himself as our Father: "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you..." (Isaiah 66:13). Paul explained that in his dealings with the church, he tried to be like a caring, compassionate father who comforts (1 Thessalonians 2:11).

As society becomes more decadent and self-obsessed, children need more than ever the strength *and* love of devoted fathers who will stand by them, support them and be a hero for them. British psychiatrist Dr.

Joshua Bierer once observed "[America is] still the fatherless society. The husbands are not husbands. All the women are crying out for a strong man and he's just not there" (Andelin, p. xi). Children need fathers—and women need husbands—who will not bend to peer pressure of "what other parents do." Children need committed fathers who look out for their future character—not just bowing to their every whim and wish.

In a speech for the National Father's Day Committee, General Douglas MacArthur said: "By profession, I am a soldier... But I am prouder, infinitely prouder, to be a father... It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battle, but in the home" (Dobson, pp. 68–69). True fatherhood is a noble and honorable role for a man, and is worth striving for.

Will "good family men" become extinct? Not as long as there are men—and women—who appreciate fathers' importance in society, today and in the future. God has given us the father's role as a mirror-image of His protection, providence, discipline and love for all humanity. We should thank God—our Father—for the gift of fatherhood. 

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# ***Rebuilding*** **Happy Families**

*A family's health and happiness can be broken by alcoholism, physical abuse, sexual abuse—and even by wrong ideas about child-rearing. But broken families can be rebuilt, and Scripture provides a blueprint to show how this can be done!*



**R**ob and Barbara seemed to have an ideal family. Their friends at church knew them as a handsome young couple with four attractive children. Bob was a skilled tradesman, and Barbara was a full-time homemaker. They lived in a nice home in a nice subdivision. All in all, they seemed to personify the “American dream” to most who knew them.

There was a darker side, however. Much of what their friends thought they knew about Bob and Barbara was an illusion. Though the couple kept up a good front for years, eventually cracks began to appear in their façade. You see, Bob had a drinking problem—and it was growing steadily worse. It was the family secret.

As Bob’s drinking increased, Barbara became more resentful, and the fights between them grew more frequent and intense. By the time Bob finally acknowledged that he had a problem, and sought help, Barbara was so overcome with bitterness, resentment and hurt that she no longer cared. Over the next several years, this “ideal family” came apart—with tragic results for each member. Their lives went from dream to nightmare.

This, of course, is not an isolated situation. A United States government report on alcoholism classified almost 18 million adults in the United States as problem drinkers. Of course, it is not merely the drinkers who have a problem. As in Bob’s case, the problem drinker directly affects the lives of others, especially the children who grow up in that environment.

The patterns of how we function in life are developed in childhood. The most important aspects of what we believe about ourselves—and about the world around us—are formed by the lessons learned at home. There are millions of adults who grew up in alcoholic homes. Millions more grew up with other scars. According to Susan Froward, coauthor of *Betrayal of Innocence*, at least ten million American women have been incest victims. While these particular statistics are based upon the United States, similar rates are found in Britain, Canada and Australia.

As we look around our hurting world, we should recognize that no one comes from a perfect background. However, millions have grown up in circum-

stances that have left particularly deep scars. These scars will, if not addressed and healed, simply perpetuate the sins of the fathers onto the children—even to the third and fourth generations (see Numbers 14:18).

With so many coming from unhealthy family backgrounds, does that mean that all of these millions have no chance for future happiness? Are you automatically doomed to repeat the problems of the family in which you grew up? Is it really possible to break the cycle and rebuild a healthy family?

### **Honestly Facing the Past**

The problem, of course, is not that people set out with a goal of being unhappy. They simply do not know how to do the things that produce happy results! So many times, growing up in a deeply troubled family environment, children promise themselves that they will not put their own children through such traumas in the future. Yet just the opposite is usually the case. Problems are perpetuated. Why?

Much can be traced to the lessons and survival strategies we learn as children. The hurt, the fear and the resentments accumulated during childhood are carried into adulthood. Those feelings are all too often carried into new relationships. Those who, as children, never learned to trust will find it hard, if not impossible, to enjoy true intimacy in adulthood. Often, the source of this problem is that their parents never taught them how to relate to others (Proverbs 22:6).

To change, one must first face the past honestly, looking into the mirror of God’s law (James 1:23–25). Truth is the gateway to real freedom. While we cannot choose our past, we can make choices about our future. Before we can go forward, we must face where we are in life and how we got there. By understanding the dynamics of our family system, we can come to understand things about ourselves—why we think and feel the way we do.

When a child grows up believing that his best will never be good enough, or that he must struggle to earn love, or that he is responsible for everyone else’s happiness, he will have real problems in establishing healthy adult relationships.

Facing the past is not about blaming Mom and Dad—it is about becoming honest with ourselves. We can never work on a problem that we do not see

or will not admit. Taking inventory of our own lives, including our feelings and the beliefs that underlie them, is crucial. If we want the future to be different from the past, we must specifically identify what we intend to do differently. Good intentions of “doing

Amnon away from Jerusalem, Absalom killed him and fled the country. King David was devastated by the news. He had now lost two sons—one dead, and the other in self-imposed exile. For three years, there was no contact between the king and his estranged

## THE BIBLE, CREATED BY THE DESIGNER OF THE HUMAN HEART AND MIND, IS THE WORLD'S BEST PSYCHOLOGY BOOK.

better” are not nearly enough. What exactly will we do differently? None of us can change in generalities, only in specifics!

Pretending that nothing is wrong does not make it so. We must not deceive ourselves (Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:22). However, when we honestly face an issue, we can see it for what it is, and we can make choices. This is a first step in dealing with childhood wounds.

### Forgiving and Letting Go

Terrible events leave terrible, deep scars. One of the hardest ways for us to respond to hurtful and unfair events is to let go of them. We often try to feel justified in holding on to resentments, blaming life's unfairness. In the long run, however, resentments cause the most hurt to those who harbor them!

The Bible is the world's best psychology book. The Creator, the one who designed the human heart and mind, authored it. In its pages are the stories of many real-life men and women, the choices they made, and the consequences of those choices.

One of the most tragic episodes recorded in scripture is the series of incidents that culminated in the rebellion of Absalom, son of King David. The story did not start with Absalom's rebellion, of course. It started almost ten years earlier when Absalom's sister Tamar was raped by her half-brother, Amnon. In the wake of this incident, Absalom seethed with a deep inner rage. He was furious about what had happened to his sister (2 Samuel 13).

After two years of holding this bottled-up rage, Absalom invited all of his brothers, including Amnon, to join him at his home for a meal. Having coaxed

son. Then a ruse by Joab, who was a nephew as well as a close aide to King David, prompted the king to ask Absalom to return to Jerusalem. But even after Absalom's return, David would not spend time with his son, or even see him face to face. King David was so hurt by what Absalom had done that he could not bring himself to reconcile completely. Several more years passed, and Absalom grew increasingly resentful of his father.

Finally, Joab succeeded in breaking the logjam once again, and King David invited his son Absalom to visit him (2 Samuel 14:21). There was an outward reconciliation, but Absalom was now so consumed with resentment that he began to plot a revolution to seize his father's throne. When he thought the time was ripe, he struck. At first it seemed that he would be successful, but in the end his army was defeated in battle. Before the armies had clashed, King David had instructed the soldiers not to hurt Absalom, but to “deal gently for my sake with the young man.” Those instructions were ignored, and Absalom was killed. David was devastated. “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place!” he cried. “O Absalom my son, my son” (2 Samuel 18:33).

This whole tragic account shows what can happen when we hold on to deep hurts and resentments. Were those hurts real and understandable? Of course they were! However, we can see how they had a devastating effect on those who held on to them.

Jesus Christ emphasized, again and again, the importance of forgiveness—of letting go of the resentment and hurt. Even as Christ was taken to be executed, He exercised unilateral forgiveness. Speaking of the soldiers who were carrying out His crucifixion, He said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

If you have come out of a painful background and have experienced deep hurt, one of the most important decisions you can make is to let go of the hurt and resentment. This is often hard to do, since we may

consider ourselves entitled to those feelings because of what happened. Yet resentment is the source of most spiritual maladies and, when retained, is the root from which bitterness grows.

Face the past honestly. Acknowledge the hurt and loss. It is okay to grieve a loss, but then let it go. Whether to hold on to past hurts or to release them is your choice. Choose to forgive and to go forward.

### **Trust and Respect**

Trust and respect are elements at the heart of healthy relationships. Hurtful experiences in a sick family environment undermine proper respect and damage the ability to trust. But why are these elements so vital, and what can be done to rebuild them?

In healthy families, good communication is one of the most important tools. Knowing others' thoughts, ideas and feelings allows problems to be addressed and resolved. Using negative and hurtful words, and not listening attentively, will stifle attempts at communication. "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife" (2 Timothy 2:23). Failure to show respect to other family members will undermine their willingness to express what is really on their minds. No one wants to be held up to ridicule or belittled. We only really open up to those with whom we feel safe. A dysfunctional family is not a safe emotional environment. As a result, its members do not learn healthy communication skills.

If you grew up in such an environment, then you must learn new and different skills if your current family is to have a different atmosphere than your family of origin. Much of this hinges on building an atmosphere of trust and respect (1 Peter 2:17; Hebrews 12:14). Trust is built up by consistently carrying through in many little things. People feel respect when they are paid attention to and treated with courtesy.

Your mate will never open up to you until he or she feels safe in doing so. How do you create this safe environment? First, you must ensure that private com-



ments are never repeated in a way that embarrasses the person who confided them to you (Proverbs 25:9). Also, confessions of inner fears or insecurities must never be saved up as ammunition to be thrown back in the face of the one who said it the next time there is a disagreement.

Where there are people, there will inevitably be conflict from time to time. But when an atmosphere of trust and respect prevails in the home, that conflict will be resolved in healthy ways. Concentrate on building trust and showing respect by both your actions and your words, even in times of conflict (Philippians 2:3). With time, there will be tangible results. None of us can make someone else change, but we can choose to make changes in our own lives.

### **Achieving Balance**

"Balance," it has been said, "is a razor's edge!" Over-compensating—going from one extreme to another—seems to be the human tendency. Substituting different extremes does not promote balance.

Some family systems are so rigid and controlling that they stifle family members. Others are so loose and permissive that they produce a sense of chaos. Neither of these is a healthy balance. If one mate is too strict, lenience from the other mate does not produce



balance. A structured environment, on the other hand, produces proper balance in the home, in which each family member is still able to flourish as an individual.

In unhealthy families, the leader either abdicates his responsibility to guide or else seeks to control all the other members. What is a healthy leadership style? The early New Testament Church provides an interesting example. After all, the Church is called the “household of God” (Ephesians 2:19) and has many of the characteristics of a family.

From Acts 6:1 we learn that the number of the disciples in Jerusalem had multiplied greatly. Next, we learn that problems arose with certain ones feeling that their needy were being neglected. How did the leadership respond? They could have called everyone together and “chewed them out” for voicing complaints. They could have become defensive, responding that they were doing the best that they could, and putting a guilt trip on those who complained. They did neither.

Instead, they listened to what was being said! After listening, they called everyone together and established the parameters of a solution. They next delegated, to those closer to the situation, the responsibility for filling in details. In this case, the problem was resolved by preparing a list of individuals who met the qualifications the apostles had enumerated. The result was received positively, and the Church grew even more (v. 7).

The apostles avoided making several of the most common mistakes that cause people to be frustrated with their leaders. They did not stifle communication by becoming angry with those who brought them unwelcome news. Neither did they frustrate the Church by going to extremes of either failing to respond and provide leadership or else trying to micro-manage and control every facet of the solution.

This is a clear picture of how healthy leadership works, and how it applies to the home just as much as to the Church or to other contexts. Listening, establishing parameters and guidelines, and then giving people room to work out specifics are all-important keys to balanced leadership.


A dysfunctional family is an unbalanced environment. Rebuilding healthy families that function prop-

erly always involves a restoration of balance. Children must be given guidelines and parameters of acceptable behavior. However, within those boundaries, they should be allowed to develop their own individual tastes and interests.

Families should neither be disconnected and uninterested in one another’s lives, nor enmeshed and entangled in each other’s lives. There is a healthy balance in maintaining interest and involvement while still giving others room to be individuals and resolve problems. The Creator God said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). A new family unit was to be created. Of course, loving children will continue to honor and respect their parents, and loving parents will remain deeply interested in the welfare of children and their new families.

Unhealthy, dysfunctional families perpetuate themselves—but not because people consciously seek them. They persist because people lack the knowledge, the skills and the will to build something better. How, then, can you guarantee that your future will be different than your past?

First, you must choose to acknowledge the past honestly, and then to let it go. You can make a choice to turn loose your hurt, and replace it with forgiveness. Forgiveness, after all, is a choice! Instead of being controlled by fears and insecurities developed over a lifetime, begin to develop a deep, personal relationship with your Creator. When you choose to be guided by trust in God, rather than fear of people and circumstances, you will find whole new vistas of life opened to you. Seek to build trust and respect into all of your relationships by giving respect and showing yourself trustworthy. Finally, seek balance by learning how to be involved without being enmeshed.

We live in a world of hurting and broken family relationships. Yet, regardless of your background, it is possible to rebuild a healthy family. Your Creator has provided the instruction book, but you must put His instructions into practice to gain new knowledge and new skills. Seek help and go forward. The result will be worth all of the hard work ahead! 

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# God Is Creating a Family



By **Dexter B. Wakefield**

**A** mistake can be very instructive! There is an old story of three blind men who lived in a land where the people's god was a sacred elephant. The blind men took a long pilgrimage to worship the elephant, and upon arrival were allowed to approach and touch the elephant in order to experience it in the absence of sight.

The first man touched the elephant's tail and said: "Ah, our god is like a great serpent, and is truly the wisest of all creatures." The second touched a massive leg and said: "Ah, our god is like a great tree, from which all the creation is fed." The third man felt the huge body of the elephant, and said: "Ah, our god is like a great house in which all the creatures may dwell." After leaving, they argued angrily, all the way back to their village, about the nature of their god—because each had experienced a different part.

The flawed moral of this story is that as physical beings we are like these blind men; that a spiritual God is beyond our comprehension, and that no individual should be so presumptuous to think that he or she comprehends what God is actually like.

This is wrong. The flaw in the story is that, unlike the elephant, our God is self-aware, knows that He is God and is capable of revealing Himself and His plan for humanity. The elephant in the story did not know that he was held to be a god, but our God is still God whether we know it or not, and He reveals Himself to

us. The fact that God reveals what we cannot discern by ourselves is vitally important.

Yet many people today live their lives as if they were one of those blind men, reaching for an unknown elephant. Some years ago, a newspaper religion writer, Sydney J. Harris, reflected on the story of the blind men and the elephant, and his comments reveal an approach all-too-common in our modern age:

"Suppose, just suppose, that everyone is wrong, that every faith is partial and fragmentary, that each religious conviction has only a piece of the truth by the tail [the elephant's], and imagines it possesses the whole truth? Suppose that gods are created in the various images of man, just as man is said to be created in the image of God?... What is remarkable is that no matter how our conception of the world has changed and expanded, these obsolete images still remain, not only in our vernacular, but in our minds as well..."

"Despite St. Paul's admonitions, we are still more superstitious than religious in our imagery... Most people retain the religion of children, without their innocence, so that what they suppose is their 'faith' is a fairy tale. This attitude makes atheists out of the skeptical, and infants out of the rest, to the despair of the deeper thinkers among the philosophically devout of all sects" (*Miami Herald*, June 26, 1986).

The French philosopher, Voltaire, summed up this thinking quite well when he wrote: “If God created man in his own image, man has certainly returned the compliment.”

### God Reveals Reality

But the great Creator God sees things very differently from the natural, human mind. We need to understand God by how He reveals Himself, not by how we imagine Him to be. Reality is the world as God sees it, and He reveals essential things to us through His Word and creation that we cannot discern ourselves.

God says: “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

The Apostle Paul, a great scholar, admonished the Corinthians “that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom

of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew;

for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5–10).

Herbert W. Armstrong, whose half-century of ministry pioneered the work carried on by the publishers of *Tomorrow’s World*, used to say: “You can’t understand who and what God is until you understand type and antitype.” A type is not merely an analogy or a metaphor, but a true model of a greater fulfillment to come. Scripture teaches us that the physical mirrors the spiritual—it is not the other way around. Examining how this is so can help us to understand

God’s nature, and what He reveals about His plan for humanity.

Having the right words to express an idea helps us think about the idea. So at this point, understanding the meanings of two words will be useful. The word “anthropomorphic” (from the Greek *anthropos*, “man”) means to put human characteristics onto non-human things. Examples of anthropomorphic metaphors would be “the laughing brook” or “the long arm of the law.” Men such as Voltaire and Harris, as mentioned above, take an anthropomorphic view of our concept of God as a Father or Healer. Human beings tend to reason anthropomorphically about God.

Another useful word is “theomorphic” (from the Greek *theos*, “god”). This refers to putting divine or spiritual qualities onto physical things. Contrasting the erroneous anthropomorphic view of God with the biblical theomorphic view of creation is a good way to understand how God reveals His nature and purpose to us.

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and

Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). Here, Paul clearly teaches that physical things can teach spiritual lessons,

## OUR GOD KNOWS THAT HE IS GOD AND IS VERY CAPABLE OF REVEALING BOTH HIMSELF AND HIS PLAN FOR HUMANITY.

and that we may look to them for understanding.

When God created the cosmos, He began from scratch. Everything in the universe reflects the imprint of His planning. He did not create it with attributes that are totally alien to Himself. Rather, spiritual things—the invisible things—can be understood clearly by the physical things that God has made, even the Godhead or divine nature. It makes sense that God would do this if He planned to reveal Himself and His plan to His children. God’s Spirit also works in our minds to enable us to understand things as He does. This understanding is often the opposite of what men reason about God.

For instance, Scripture describes the relationship between Christ and the Church as a marriage relationship. However, theologians and churchmen



frequently refer to this as merely an analogy or metaphor, since they assume that marriage is primarily physical and human. They reason that the Bible uses an anthropomorphic analogy in order to give us something that we can relate to from our own world.

But the Bible sees it differently. Jesus Christ “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4). So the marriage relationship between Christ and the Church existed in God’s plan for humanity prior to the institution of human marriage. God did not pattern Christ’s marriage to the Church after human marriage.

It is clear that human marriage pictures the relationship between Christ and the Church, not the other way around. For example, when you take a photograph of a friend, the photo has many characteristics of your friend, but it is hardly the reality. Your friend existed first—the photo came later. So it is with the marriage between Christ and the Church.

Human marriage is a type—a picture of a far greater, pre-existing spiritual reality that God planned from the beginning. Herbert W. Armstrong used

to say: “Family relationships are God-plane relationships!” He meant that the marriage between Christ and the Church was not anthropomorphic; rather, human marriage and other family relationships such as father/son or brother/sister are theomorphic. God put these relationships into His creation so that we could understand greater spiritual realities and prepare for them.

### God Is Truly a Father

Theologians often reason that the spiritual world cannot be anything like the physical world, so God must not be like anything that we know. From that faulty premise, they reason that the idea of God’s familial nature (Father, Son, Husband, etc.) must be anthropomorphic, and that God is a father merely by analogy, like the “father of an idea.”

“We become children of God and he our Father in virtue of a moral likeness... while of any... metaphys-

ical, or (so to speak) physical relation to God, Jesus says nothing” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Christianity,” 11th ed., p. 282).

This kind of reasoning is often used in formulations of the Trinity. But Scripture reveals that the familial nature of God is not anthropomorphic; rather, the familial nature of the family is theomorphic. The human family is modeled after God’s nature. Those who prefer their human reasoning to God’s revealed knowledge get it backward.

The Father is actually a father, and He is the reality of what human fatherhood pictures. Jesus Christ is actually a husband and our great, firstborn Elder Brother. The New Jerusalem is called the “mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26). Resurrected saints are actually sons of God, and the Church collectively is actually a bride, the affianced wife of Christ.

Human beings may reason that God is not like anything we know. But the Bible reveals that some things we know are like God. Here are a few examples:

## GOD DESIGNED HUMAN MARRIAGE TO PICTURE CHRIST AND THE CHURCH, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’” (Genesis 1:26). The Bible often describes God and man as having char-

acteristics in common, but God is not like man—man is like God.

The physical creation and the spiritual are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the creation is a subset of the spiritual: “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

When God teaches us that “as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12), He means true children. “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption [sonship]. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him” (Romans 8:15–17, NRSV). And we will also be “conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (v. 29).



Many people cannot bring themselves to believe what the Bible actually says: that we are created to be the Father's true children, sons of God, joint heirs with Christ, to be glorified with Christ, conformed to the image of Christ who is the firstborn of many sons of God. The Father is actually making children and bringing us to His glory, and Christ Himself calls us His brethren (Hebrews 2:10–11).

This is not merely a “family-like relationship” or an analogy. It is the reality of family. We are to be glorified with Christ and to be the same kind of son that He is, though clearly lesser in power and authority than He and the Father. Our Elder Brother has all power in heaven and earth, and He is going to share with us the glory that He and the Father had “before the world was” (John 17:5). This is because the Father's great transcendent purpose for mankind is the creation of immortal children (1 Corinthians 15:53–54).

Human reproduction is only a physical type of this greater spiritual reality. This is why Herbert W. Armstrong said: “God is reproducing Himself!” The Father plans to bring children into the glory and oneness that He and the firstborn Son have together. Christ said: “Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one


as We are” (John 17:11, cf. v. 22). It is not a question of whether God is one, but how God is one. The oneness of the human family is a physical type of the greater spiritual reality of the oneness of God.

Scripture is clear. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God... Beloved, now we are the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:1–2, KJV).

This is our incredible human potential! Our Elder Brother “will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:21). These plain statements are so astonishing that many people simply cannot believe what God is saying. But this revealed knowledge is at the core of a full understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

This is why the Living Church of God, which produces the *Tomorrow's World* magazine and television broadcast, continues to teach what Herbert W. Armstrong taught for so many years about who and what God is. Stated simply, “God is family,” and understanding what this means is at the heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. A kingdom has a ruling family, and Christ promises: “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21). He promises to make His brethren “kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10), with Christ as “King of kings” (Revelation 17:14).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is the Gospel that He preached everywhere He went. Bringing many sons to glory in the Kingdom of God is our Father's great transcendent purpose for creating humanity, and everything revolves around this purpose!

Understanding our family relationships as God sees them—as types of far greater spiritual realities to come—helps us to understand our incredible potential and future in the Family of God. 

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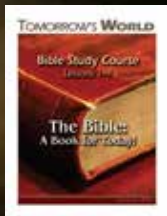
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