

Marriage and Family

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Marriage Definition:

1. Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines marriage as being:

"The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children."

2. Focus on the Family's Citizen Link Website (www.family.org/cforum/fosi/marriage/marriage/) says:

"Family is the fundamental building block of all human civilizations. Marriage is the glue that holds it together. The health of our culture, its citizens and their children is intimately linked to the health and well-being of marriage." "Theologically, marriage is the first human institution. Sociologically, marriage is the glue that holds communities together, regulates sexuality, civilizes the home and provides for the proper development of the next generation. Anthropologists tell us marriage, a permanent linking of men and women, is found in every civilized and uncivilized society throughout human history."

Biblical View of Marriage and Sexuality:

The Apostle Paul makes clear in Ephesians 5:22-33 that marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church (Christ is the bridegroom and the church is the bride). Gary Phillips, former professor of Bible at Bryan College, points out that, "We are made in God's image and that is why God judges sexual sin more harshly than other sins. It not only violates the law and character of God, it also violates the *being* of God. Our students must understand that God does not share our society's casual attitude toward sexual immorality. I tell students, 'Whatever you do, don't take God's being and image and violate it in the back seat of a car or in a motel room.'"

1. God created sex when He created the first man and woman. Sex was part of His plan to be enjoyed by humans. He placed strong sexual instincts in man so that His creation would continue to multiply. Sex, when in God's plan and timing, is beautiful and honoring to Him.
2. Marriage and family are part of God's eternal plan (see "*The Battle for the Family*" on page 18 for a detailed explanation).
 - Genesis 2:18-24: Woman is to be a "help-meet" to man, working with him in a complementary relationship to fulfill God's commands.
 - Genesis 1:26-30: The purpose of man/woman relationships is to fulfill God's purposes for the earth, to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it.
 - Genesis 17:9-10, Isaiah 44:3, Acts 2:39: God wants to bless the offspring of His people.
 - Ephesians 5:31-33: Husbands and wives are to respect one another because sexuality in marriage is a reflection of Christ's relationship with the church. To try to reflect Christ while directly disobeying him is to mock God.
 - 1 Peter 3:7: Men must deal righteously with women in order to not hinder their relationship with God.
3. The Bible clearly explains that sex is reserved for marriage and that sex apart from marriage is sinful.
 - I Corinthians 6:15-20: Our bodies belong to God. God is honored when our bodies are joined sexually in marriage. To join sexually with someone outside of marriage is to join God to that person immorally, and thus to mock God.
 - I Corinthians 6:18: Sexual sin is worse than other sins because in sinning against his own body, the Christian is mocking the Holy Spirit, who is templed in the body.
 - Malachi 2:14-16: God is deathly serious about the covenant of marriage. You are "to let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth." Many people take this to mean that to have sexual contact outside of the context of marriage is the same as having sex with another man's wife (even if the woman is not yet married to him).
 - Hebrews 13:4: Sex is only proper in marriage. God will judge fornication and adultery.

- Genesis 2:24: Adam and Eve became “one flesh.” This is not just a sexual term; it is a legal, covenantal term. In other words, God married Adam and Eve, and their relationship became righteous. God is the third party in a man and woman’s relationship.
 - Galatians 5:19: Christians are to abstain from sexual immorality.
4. Thinking about sex can be sin. Jesus said, “You have heard it said that you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you that everyone that looks upon a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28). Self-gratification is clearly a perversion of the sex act and is often accompanied by lustful thoughts of someone else.

Talk of sex can be sinful. Ephesians 4:3-4 says, “Let there be no sex-sin impurity once named among you. Let no one be able to accuse you of any such things. Dirty stories, foul talk and course jokes-these are not for you. Let no one be able to accuse you of any such things. Instead remind each other of God’s goodness and be thankful.” Jesus said in Matthew 12:34-36, “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.”

5. The best way to understand the seriousness with which God takes this issue is to imagine what it means symbolically if the marriage relationship between the man and the woman is meant to be a picture of Christ and the church. To be united to a person sexually outside of marriage is either to suggest that Christ is a predator or that the church can receive salvation without going through God’s plan. Homosexual unions become blasphemous; it is as if they say that Christ would be united with himself, or that the church would not need Christ but could find salvation and fulfillment through union with itself. This does *not* mean that men are “little Christs” or that women are the embodiment of Christ’s perfect plan. It does mean, however, that our behavior should honor that which God has designed it to represent.

Defense of the Traditional Family:

Loosening sexual morality destroys society. “As the research of the late Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin reveals, no society has loosened sexual morality outside of marriage and survived. Analyzing studies of cultures spanning several thousand years on several continents, Sorokin found that virtually all political revolutions that brought about societal collapse were preceded by sexual revolutions in which marriage and family were no longer accorded premiere status. To put it another way, as marriage and family ties disintegrated, the social restraints learned in families also disintegrated. Societal chaos ushers in tyrants who promise to restore order by any means. Self-governing people require a robust culture founded on marriage and family, which nurture the qualities that permit self-rule: deferred gratification, self-sacrifice, respect for kinship and law, and property rights. These qualities are founded upon sexual restraint, which permits people to pursue long-term interests, such as procreating and raising the next generation, and securing benefits for one’s children” (Robert Knight, *Family Policy*, Family Research Council, p. 5).

What are Marriage’s Purposes and Benefits?

by **Barbara Dafoe Whitehead**

This is the April 28, 2004 Senate testimony of Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Ph.D. (Co-Director of the National Marriage Project) before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions’ Subcommittee on Children and Families. [*The National Marriage Project (Rutgers University)*]

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<http://marriage.rutgers.edu/Publications/Pub%20Whitehead%20Testimony%20Apr%2004.htm>

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, for the opportunity to testify today on this important topic. My name is Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, and I am a Co-Director of the National Marriage Project at Rutgers, a research organization founded in 1997 to monitor and report on social trends affecting marriage.

I would like to address three questions: What is marriage for? What do we know about the benefits of marriage for children and adults? How does marriage benefit the society?

WHAT IS MARRIAGE FOR?

Marriage is a universal human institution. It performs a number of key functions in virtually every known society. Marriage organizes kinship, establishes family identities, regulates sexual behavior, attaches fathers to their offspring, supports childrearing, channels the flow of economic resources and mutual caregiving between generations, and situates individuals within families, kin groups and communities.

In our society, marriage is the central institution of the family. It establishes a family household, organized around the spousal couple and, in many cases, their dependent children. In this system, marriage plays a key role in fostering the social, economic and emotional bonds between husband and wife, parents and children, and the family and larger community. It prescribes a set of norms, responsibilities and binding obligations for its members. It shapes family identity, creates a context for intimacy and builds a sense of belonging among its members. Finally, marriage enjoys social approval and public recognition. It confers positive social status and a new social identity on men and women.

When marriage is low-conflict and, ideally, long-lasting, it is good for children. It brings together under one roof the mother and father who have brought the child into the world through birth or adoption and who share a mutual interest in the child's wellbeing. It gives children a chance to know, associate with, and develop close bonds with both parents. Marriage provides for regular paternal involvement and investment in children's family households. Indeed, more than any other family arrangement, marriage reliably connects kids to their dads and fathers to the mothers of their children.

Marriage contributes to the physical, emotional and economic wellbeing of individual adults as well. It provides an efficient way to pool resources, combine individual talents, and recruit kin support for the purposes of fostering the wellbeing of the family. It encourages wealth production and limits material hardship and want. Marriage unites mothers and fathers in the common work of childrearing and family life and helps to create a more equitable distribution of family responsibilities between the genders.

Marriage is also good for the society. Within the civil society, marriage fosters social connectedness, civic and religious involvement, and charitable giving. This is especially true for men. More than any other family arrangement, marriage connects men to the larger community and encourages personal responsibility, family commitment, community voluntarism and social altruism.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE?

Today, thanks to resurgent scholarly interest in family structure, we have a large body of social science research on marriage and its effects. Overall, the available research evidence persuasively demonstrates the advantages of marriage for children, adults and the society. Though it is impossible to cover the entire scope of the research in this limited space, let me summarize key findings.

BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

Marriage—especially if it is low-conflict and long-lasting—is a source of economic, educational and social advantage for most children. Researchers now agree that, except in cases of high and unremitting parental conflict, children who grow up in households with their married mother and father do better on a wide range of economic, social, educational, and emotional measures than do children in other kinds of family arrangements.^[1] According to some researchers, growing up with both married parents in a low-conflict marriage is so important to child wellbeing that it is replacing race, class, and neighborhood as the greatest source of difference in child outcomes.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Children from intact families are far less likely to be poor or to experience persistent economic insecurity. In fact, if it were not for the demographic shift from married parent families to other kinds of family structures in recent decades, the child poverty rate would be significantly lower. For example, according to one study, if family structure had not changed between 1960 and 98, the black child poverty rate in 1998 would have been 28.4 percent rather than 45.6 percent, and the white child poverty rate would have been 11.4 percent rather than 15.4 percent.[2] Children who grow up in married parent families are shielded from the economic effects of parental divorce. Estimates suggest that children experience a 70 percent drop in their household income in the immediate aftermath of divorce and, unless there is a remarriage, the income is still 40 to 45 percent lower six years later than for children in intact families.[3]

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Children from intact married parent families are more likely to stay in school. According to a 1994 research review by Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, the risk of high school dropout for children from two-parent biological families is substantially less than that for those from single parent or stepfamilies.[4] Children from married parent families also have fewer behavioral or school attendance problems and higher levels of educational attainment. They are better able to withstand pressures to engage in early sexual activity and to avoid unwed teen parenthood, behaviors that can derail educational achievement and attainment. They are significantly more likely to earn four-year college degrees or better and to do better occupationally than children from divorced or single parent families.

EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

Warm, responsive, firm and fair parenting helps to promote healthy emotional development and to foster emotional resilience in children. Parents, stepparents and grandparents in all kinds of family arrangements can, and do, manage to establish emotionally warm and secure environments, often against daunting odds. However, parents in long-lasting, low-conflict marriages are more likely to have the time, resources, relational and residential stability to coparent effectively. On average, children reared in married parent families are less vulnerable to serious emotional illness, depression and suicide than children in nonintact families. Further, because parental divorce is such a commonplace childhood experience, with close to four out of ten American children going through a parental divorce, it is an advantage to grow up in a low-conflict married parent household undisrupted by divorce. As the American Academy of Pediatrics notes, the effect of divorce on children is more than a set of discrete symptoms. It can be a “long searing experience.” [5]

Finally, in their own future dating and marriage relationships, children benefit from the models set by their married parents. Children from married parent families have more satisfying dating relationships, more positive attitudes toward future marriage and greater success in forming lasting marriages. According to a nationally representative survey of young men, ages 25-34, commissioned by Rutgers’ National Marriage Project in 2004, young men from married parent families are less likely to be divorced and more likely to be married. Among the never-married young men surveyed, those from married parent families were more likely to express readiness to be married than young men from other kinds of family backgrounds. In addition, young men from married parent households have more positive attitudes toward women, children and family life than men who grew up in nonintact families.[6]

BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE FOR ADULTS

Married people are better off than those who are not married in a number of ways. On average, they are happier, healthier, wealthier, enjoy longer lives, and report greater sexual satisfaction than single, divorced or cohabiting individuals.[7] Married people are less likely to take moral or mortal risks, and are even less inclined to risk-taking when they have children. They have better health habits and receive more regular health care. They are less likely to attempt or to commit suicide. They are also more likely to enjoy close and supportive relationships with their close relatives and to have a wider social support network. They are better equipped to cope with major life crises, such as severe illness, job loss, and extraordinary care needs of sick children or aging parents.

Married parents are significantly less likely to be poor. For example, according to a study by economist Robert Lerman, poverty rates for married couples are half those of cohabiting couple parents and one third that of noncohabiting single parents in households with other adults.[8] Even poor parents who marry gain economic advantage from marriage. Though marriage itself may not lift a family out of poverty, it may reduce economic hardship. This effect occurs because marriage, especially if it is long-lasting, allows couples to pool earnings, to recruit support from a larger social network of family, friends, and community members, to share risks, and to mitigate the disruptions of job loss, loss of job benefits, or loss of earnings due to absenteeism, illness, reduced hours on the job, or lay-offs.

BENEFITS TO MEN

Marriage promotes better health habits and greater longevity among men, largely due to the care, attention and monitoring by their wives. In fact, men appear to reap the most physical health benefits from marriage and suffer the greatest health consequences when they divorce. Once married, men are also less likely to hang out with male friends, to spend time at bars, to abuse alcohol or drugs or to engage in illegal activities. They are more likely than unmarried men to attend religious services regularly, to join faith groups, and to spend time with relatives. In brief, men settle down when they get married.

Married men earn more money than do single men with similar education and job histories. Indeed, for men, marriage reaps as many benefits as education.[9] The causes for this are not entirely clear. However, it is likely that married men benefit from specialization within marriage and from the emotional support they receive from their wives. It is also likely that married men's domestic routines and health habits reduce job absenteeism, quit rates, and sick days. And it may be that men's role obligation to provide for others gives them a greater sense of purpose and intensifies their commitment to work.

Marriage strengthens the bonds between fathers and their children. Married men are more involved and have better relationships with their children than unwed or divorced fathers. In part, this is because married fathers share the same residence with their children. But it is also because the role of husband encourages men to voluntarily take responsibility for their own children. Paternity by itself does not seem to accomplish the same transformation in men's lives.[10]

BENEFITS TO WOMEN

Women gain financially from marriage. Although married women often leave the workforce to care for children or other relatives, on average, they are still economically better off than divorced, cohabiting or never-married women. Even among the most at-risk women (minority mothers, mothers with low levels of educational achievement or low income), marriage has significant economic benefits.[11] Married women also enjoy their sex lives more than sexually active single or cohabiting women, a finding that researchers attribute to women's greater trust and expectation of marital monogamy and permanence. In addition, marriage makes for happier mothers. Compared to cohabiting mothers or single mothers, married mothers are more likely to receive the cooperation, hands-on help, emotional support, and positive involvement from their child's father and his kin. Having practical and emotional support reduces maternal stress, anxiety and depression and enhances a mother's ability to parent effectively.

INTERGENERATIONAL BENEFITS

Marriage creates a new and expanded set of binding obligations between spouses; between parents and children; and between the married couple and their combined kin groups. Such obligations are encoded within the social norms of marriage and are assumed voluntarily as part of the status of "being married."

Consequently, marriage generates higher levels of help, support and care from families than other kinds of family arrangements. Though single parents receive significant family support, they lose the benefits of sustained help and support from the estranged or absent biological parent's side of the family. Close to 17 percent of married parents report support from father's kin whereas just two percent of single mothers and no unwed mothers got financial support from relatives of the father.[12] At the same time that married couples receive more help from family, they are also better able to give help to elderly parents and relatives, an important benefit in an aging society.

HOW DOES MARRIAGE BENEFIT THE CIVIL SOCIETY?

Marriage is not simply a contractual relationship between two people or a government-sanctioned form of intimate partnership. It is also a central institution in the civil society. As such, marriage performs certain critical social tasks and produces certain social goods that are valuable to the community and far harder to achieve through individual action, private enterprise, public programs or through alternative institutions.

Marriage is a childrearing institution.

Though not all married people are parents, the institution of marriage reliably creates the social, economic and affective conditions for effective parenting. Of course, in fulfilling the task of rearing competent, healthy children, some married parents fail miserably while some single parents succeed brilliantly. Yet in general, marriage promotes parental investment and mother/father cooperation during what has become an increasingly prolonged period of youthful dependency. When marriages break up or fail to form, the task of rearing children becomes harder, lonelier and more stressful for parents, especially for those who are lone parents. When parents divorce or never marry, the state becomes more involved in requiring and regulating childrearing obligations that married parents assume voluntarily. Paternity establishment, child support, child custody, children's living arrangements, and even their school, sports and religious activities become matters for government oversight and enforcement. Moreover, from a child's standpoint, publicly sponsored alternatives for childrearing such as foster care, group homes or child support enforcement cannot easily replicate the advantages of growing up in a home with one's own married mother and father.

Marriage produces wealth.

Marriage provides economies of scale, encourages specialization and cooperation, provides access to work-related benefits such as retirement savings, pensions and life insurance, promotes saving, and generates help and support from kin and community. On the verge of retirement, one study found, married couples' net worth is more than twice that in other households. Because the accumulation of wealth usually requires time, the wealth-generating effects of marriage are strongest among those whose marriages are long-lasting. A study of retirement data from 1992 by Purdue University sociologists found that "individuals who are not continuously married have significantly lower wealth than those who remain married throughout the life course." Further, compared to those who are currently married, the researchers found a 63 percent reduction in total wealth. The study concluded that "participating in the social institution of marriage can lead to cumulative advantage" while not participating or interrupting participation can "set the stage for negative outcomes later in life."^[13]

Marriage is a "seedbed" of prosocial behavior.

Social scientists have long debated this question: Are the benefits and advantages of marriage due to the characteristics of people who marry and stay married (the so-called "selection effect") or does marriage itself—and the status of being a married person—create certain advantages? The answer is: both. People who are economically and educationally advantaged, who are religiously observant, and who grew up in married parent families themselves are more likely to marry and to stay married than others. However, marriage itself has a transformative effect on attitudes and behavior. Being married changes people's lifestyles, habits, associations, and obligations in ways that are personally and socially beneficial.

Marriage generates social capital.

Sociologist James Coleman introduced the concept of social capital to refer to goods that are produced through relationships among people.^[14] Unlike physical capital (machines, tools, productive equipment) and individual capital (skills, capacities, competencies), social capital is generated through relational bonds of mutual trust, dependability, commitment, shared values, and obligation. Social capital is not "acquired," as one might acquire a computer or a college degree. It is generated as a byproduct of social relations.^[15]

As the primary social institution governing familial and kinship relationships, marriage is a source of social capital. The social bonds created through marriage yield benefits not just for family members but for others as well. For example, married parents are more likely to vote and to be involved in community, religious and civic activities.

Because marriage embeds people within larger social networks, married parents are better able to connect with other parents, including those who are working single parents, and to recruit help, friendship and emotional support in the community. Marriage gets men involved with others. Married fathers serve as important role models, not only for their own children but also for other people's children. Their example and mentorship can be an especially valuable social resource in communities where there are too few married fathers and too many children who lack responsible fathers or positive male role models.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Let me conclude with a word of caution about the implications of these findings. Marriage is not a magic bullet solution to problems of poverty, disadvantage, crime, and discrimination. Nor should the existence of government funding for the promotion of healthy marriage be used as a reason for reducing or limiting other forms of government support for low-income families, such as childcare, healthcare, education, job training and other supports. Nor should marriage promotion be used as a substitute for other effective anti-poverty strategies such as reducing the incidence of unwed teen parenthood. Nor should the advantages of marriage be used to pressure everyone to get married.

Like all human institutions, marriage is far from perfect. And getting married does not turn people into saints. Yet the fact remains: despite its acknowledged problems and imperfections, marriage remains an indispensable source of social goods, individual benefits, mutual caregiving, affectionate attachments, and long-term commitments. And people who are married, though not saints, tend to behave in ways that benefit themselves, their children, families and communities.

Given these advantages, it makes good sense for the public and private sector to explore ways to reduce the barriers to healthy marriage and to make it possible for more parents to form strong and lasting marital unions. Even a relatively modest increase in healthy marriage formation and duration could reduce levels of child poverty, increase parental income and promote higher levels of child wellbeing among families with children.

[1] For a recent summary of relevant research, see Mary Parke, "Are Married Parents Really Better for Children?," Center for Law and Social Policy, May 2003. www.clasp.org. See also *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (NY: Institute for American Values, 2002) <http://www.marriagemovement.org>.

[2] Adam Thomas and Isabel Sawhill, "For Richer or For Poorer: Marriage As an Antipoverty Strategy," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 21:4, 2002.

[3] Parke, "Are Married Parents Really Better for Children?," 7.

[4] The risk for an average white child in a two parent family was 11 percent compared to 28 percent for a child in a single or step-parent family. For an average African American child in a two parent family, it was 17 percent compared to 30 percent in a single or step-parent family. For an average Hispanic child from a two-parent family, the risk was 25 percent compared to 49 percent for single or stepparent families. Cited in Parke, *Are Married Parents Really Better for Children?*, 2-3.

[5] Cited in *State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America, 2003* (Piscataway, NJ: The National Marriage Project), 2003. Available at <http://marriage.rutgers.edu>.

[6] *The Marrying Kind: Men Who Marry and Why*, *State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America, 2004*, (Piscataway, NJ: The National Marriage Project), forthcoming June 2004.

[7] A comprehensive summary of research evidence on the benefits of marriage for adults may be found in Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage* (NY: Doubleday, 2000).

[8] See Robert I. Lerman, "How Do Marriage, Cohabitation and Single Parenthood Affect the Material Hardships of Families With Children?," July 2002; see also Robert I. Lerman, "Married and Unmarried Parenthood and Economic Well-Being: A Dynamic Analysis of a Recent Cohort," July 2002. Available at <http://www.urban.org/expert.cfm?ID=RobertILerman>.

[9] See Robert I Lerman, "Marriage and the Economic Well-Being of Families With Children: A Review of the Literature," 2002. Available at <http://www.urban.org/expert.cfm?ID=RobertILerman>.

[10] Steven Nock, *Marriage in Men's Lives* (N.Y: Oxford University Press, 1998); David Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling New Evidence That Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society* (NY: The Free Press, 1996).

[11] Lerman, "Married and Unmarried Parenthood," 2002.

[12] Waite and Gallagher, *Case for Marriage*, p. 118; Lingxin Hao, "Family Structure, Private Transfers, and the Economic Well-Being of Families with Children," *Social Forces* 75, 1996, 269-92.

[13] Janet Wilmoth and Gregor Koso, "Does Marital History Matter? Marital Status and Wealth Outcomes Among Preretirement Adults," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 64: 2002, 254-68.

[14] James S. Coleman, Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital, *American Journal of Sociology* 1988,94:S95-S120.

[15] One illustration of social capital: During the deadly 1995 heat wave in Chicago, poor elderly residents who had regular social contacts with neighbors, shopkeepers, churches and who lived in neighborhoods with a bustling street life were far less likely to die than poor elderly residents who lacked these social contacts. Those who survived were drawn to familiar, safe, air-conditioned stores in their neighborhoods whereas those who suffered or died were unaware of, or reluctant to go to, special city "cooling centers" established during the

crisis. Thus, for these elderly Chicagoans, the presence or absence of "social capital" made a life or death difference. See Eric Klinenberg, *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Q&A: Why Not Same-Sex 'Marriage'?

By Pete Winn, CitizenLink associate editor

Taking a stand on homosexual "marriage" is about more than being against something. It's about being for the time-tested tradition of the union of one man and one woman.

Tuesday's [November 18th, 2003] decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court declaring one-man, one-woman marriage unconstitutional in that state raises all kinds of questions.

Is it wrong, for instance, to exclude gays from the marital bond?

Focus on the Family CitizenLink Associate Editor Pete Winn discussed some of the questions and issues with Glenn T. Stanton, senior analyst for marriage and sexuality at Focus on the Family and coauthor of "Why Marriage Matters."

Q. Glenn, homosexual activists have long said, "How does my ability to marry a homosexual partner impact your straight marriages in any way?" How do we answer that?

A. That is really more of an argument than it is an honest question. If marriage was truly a private affair that impacted nobody outside the couple themselves, then, yes, that question would be valid. But that is a very shallow understanding and a very uninformed understanding of the nature of marriage, because marriage is just as much — if not more so — about the community as it is about the couple themselves.

But it's not the community that gets married.

No, it's not the community that gets married, but it's the community that enforces marriage and develops marriage. We need to understand that marriage is just as much a social norm — a social ideal — of the kind of behavior that we expect and need for a healthy vibrant society; as much as it is about the emotional commitment of two people.

One of the biggest issues is the social role of marriage. Marriage domesticates men. Men who are not attached permanently to a woman are men that will practice and engage in socially unhealthy behaviors at a much higher level.

But why can't we say that gay "marriage" will socialize men?

Because men don't socialize other men. Women socialize men. And we find that not just in contemporary society, but in all human civilizations, that women as women demand certain things of men, require certain things of men, and that shapes them and molds them in some very important pro-social ways. That's found in early anthropological records and it's also found by current contemporary sociology. A man married to a woman is a much different social being than a man either cohabiting with a woman or a man who has just very close male relationships.

So that if same-sex marriage actually becomes a reality — and the norm for some — what are the implications for marriage?

Marriage becomes reduced down to nothing, because the moral argument for same-sex marriage is the same moral argument for group marriage, for polygamy, and it is going to be impossible to deny polygamous groups — and group marriage people — who come forth in all sincerity and say, "If you can't restrict marriage to only couples of opposite sex, then you can't restrict marriage to only two people." They are all very much interwoven.

The three things that you lose are: 1) the domesticating influence of marriage on men, which I already discussed; 2) the protective influence of marriage upon women from being victimized and objectified by men; and 3) it provides mothers and fathers for children.

When monogamy is lost as an ideal, the idea that a man should commit himself and forego all other sexual relationships but (the one with) his wife, then women become commodities to be used and collected by men. When committing yourself to a woman and subjugating your sexual desires for the sake of that woman — when that becomes just one lifestyle choice among many, it is devastating to a culture.

Same-sex "marriage" also denies every child it touches access to either a mother or father. It is never compassionate to intentionally deny a child either a mother or father.

In fact, there is a binary nature — a kind of "yin and yang" — to sexuality, isn't there?

There is. You know, if you take a pill, it does something in your body and there's something called the "active ingredient" that really makes the difference — that really makes things happen. In marriage, the union of the male and female is the active ingredient.

That's true for every known human civilization. It is the act of bringing together male and female in permanent relationships — to cooperate together, to build a domestic life together, to build an emotional life together and to raise their common children. That's what marriage really does.

The reason why it works is that males and females are incomplete human beings by themselves, and by coming together, they complete one another. Not just for procreation but emotionally, intellectually, creatively, intuitively — in all kinds of ways.

The procreative is obvious. But to get at all the other issues, think about a workplace that only contains women. And think about a workplace that only has men. While procreation is not a part of the daily work life, and you can take that off the table, you can still see that there are things that males and females do differently — the way that they act and interact, the way that they view the world and interact with the world — that are essential.

When you bring men and women together, you get a fuller picture, you get a fuller "whole" than what you would get from excluding either of the sexes.

And that is exactly what's at stake with same-sex "marriage" — it essentially says that what men and women bring to the table as unique males or females, isn't all that important.

Let's talk about the arguments that were raised by the Massachusetts decision. We'll start with the main one they presented: Equality demands that you allow homosexuals to marry; otherwise you're discriminating against them. Well?

Well, equality is the issue. Current marriage law treats everybody equally. We do not ban people from marrying based on sexual orientation. But we do have some criteria. You can't marry someone in your close family. You have to marry an adult. You can't marry someone who's already married. And you have to marry somebody of the opposite sex. Now, we don't ask people if they meet all those criteria — "Oh, by the way are you homosexual?" and if they answer, "Yes," then we deny them marriage. Marriage treats homosexuals the same. We don't care what their orientation is. We only care whether they meet the basic criteria.

But what the push for same-sex "marriage" is about isn't fairness or equality — it's about redefinition and destroying marriage itself. It's about redefining marriage to be something that it has never really been in any other civilization — and really can't be and still retain any meaning for the word.

In fact, marriage has really only meant one thing throughout all history — the permanent bonding of the two parts of humanity — male and female.

So that if we redefine it, it stops being marriage?

If we redefine it, it stops being anything meaningful, and it becomes anything we want it to be — which means, really, it becomes nothing.

Now the Massachusetts court said that civil marriage is whatever the state says it is. In fact, the justices took the Christian "three strands" analogy — that a man and woman join together with Christ's presence to

constitute a marriage; only they secularized it to say that a marriage is any two persons who come together and are joined by the state. What about that?

The state has an interest in civil marriage, and civil marriage is a creation of the state. However, marriage is not a creation of the state. Marriage transcends the state. Marriage transcends the Church. God incorporated it into humanity, and that's why we find it showing up in all human civilizations — even those without an established state, or without an established church.

That does raise the question, though: Is marriage merely a civil/legal institution, or is it essentially a spiritual institution?

It is all of those, and it is everything. It is simultaneously all of those things. And it needs to be. And that speaks to the fundamental nature of marriage and the transcendent nature of marriage — that it touches every part of our human life. So we can't say that it's merely a religious institution, or merely a legal arrangement or merely a sociological institution. It is all of those things together.

The Massachusetts court also compared restricting same-sex "marriage" to laws that state laws that once barred interracial marriage.

There are two things that need to be understood here. What this is rooted in is the Loving v. Virginia case in 1967, which struck down state bans on interracial marriage.

That ruling from the Supreme Court affirmed marriage, rather than redefined marriage. It said that any male had a right to marry any female. What it did not do is redefine marriage. We did not have to redefine marriage to breakdown the barriers that had been wrongfully imposed upon marriage.

Besides, those bans were firmly rooted in racism. There was no compelling reason to keep that from happening. The definition of marriage to male and female is absolutely not rooted in homophobia and bigotry -- it's absolutely rooted in sociological fact: that male and female need each other, and that children need their mothers and fathers married so that we can be sure that they are there to participate in raising them.

So Glenn, bottom line — what's your biggest fear if gay "marriage" should come to pass and be legalized?

My biggest fear is that women, men and children will be hurt. Because we will be trying to act as if something that we are not made for — something we are not wired for — is just fine and glorious. We have seen a lot of tinkering with the family over the last 40 years. We've seen abortion, no-fault divorce, cohabitation, single-parenting by choice — and every one of those moves away from the ideal of marriage have not enhanced human well-being in any way. They have deeply hurt every measure of human well-being. They've deeply hurt human beings. So, that is my concern — that we would simply be contributing to that in a more dramatic way.

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Frequently Asked Questions on the Federal Marriage Amendment

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(www.family.org/cforum/extras/a0024645.cfm)

What is the Federal Marriage Amendment?

The Federal Marriage Amendment states: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution, nor the constitution of any State, shall be construed to require that marriage or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman."

What would the FMA do?

The FMA protects marriage from redefinition by legislatures and the courts, both state and federal. It would also prevent the courts from giving away the legal benefits of marriage to homosexual couples. State legislatures would retain their power, as the U.S. Constitution prescribes, to make decisions on matters of family law including the legal status of non-marital relationships and benefits.

Most importantly, FMA would take the precious institution of marriage out of the hands of judges, many of them unelected, and return it to the American people.

Why isn't the Defense of Marriage Act enough?

The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), enacted in 1996, establishes that for purposes of federal law, marriage is between one man and one woman and further, that states shall not be required to recognize any act "respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex treated as a marriage under the laws of any other state."

While DOMA precludes states from being *forced* to recognize same-sex unions, it does not *prevent* states from doing so. In addition, it does nothing to protect the citizens of any state from judicially-imposed homosexual "marriage," as the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts did in its 2003 decision *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*.

While DOMA is a good law, it will not prevent same-sex "marriage" from spreading throughout the entire country.

Why is the FMA necessary now ?

Recently, there has been a serious and coordinated movement to change the definition of marriage through an activist judicial system. Because homosexual activists learned they could not redefine marriage through legislatures accountable to the people, they began using the courts to impose their agenda. Currently, 12 states face court challenges to their marriage laws. As a result of one court challenge, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on May 17, 2004, became the first state in the union to legalize homosexual "marriage" in America.

Despite an effort to limit them to Massachusetts residents only, homosexual couples from 46 states now possess "marriage" licenses. It is predicted that, eventually, court challenges will be made to all state Defense of Marriage Acts (DOMAs). Indeed, a court challenge to both the federal DOMA and the Florida state DOMA was filed on May 12, 2004 in a Florida federal court.

A single federal judge can overrule both the federal DOMA and the DOMAs of 38 States by declaring they violate the Full Faith & Credit Clause of the U.S. Constitution. (The Full Faith and Credit clause requires states to recognize contracts and agreements from other states, such as marriage licenses. DOMA provides for an exception to this rule if a state so chooses.) Any federal judge can also strike down all DOMAs by ruling that they disenfranchise homosexuals and thus violate the 14th Amendment's guarantee of Equal Protection. (The 14th Amendment was passed to give equal rights to former slaves.) It is important to note that homosexual activist organizations openly say they will use these two provisions to succeed in overturning DOMA.

Professor Gerard Bradley and William Saunders stated it well in *DOMA Won't Do It: Why the Constitution Must Be Amended to Save Marriage* when they said "The only way to ensure that the Court as well as state judges and legislatures do not provide legal recognition of same-sex 'marriage' is to amend the U.S. Constitution."

Isn't marriage a state issue?

Some argue that states have always regulated marriage. This is true when considering details such as age of consent and licensing requirements. No state, however, has ever redefined marriage. The definition of marriage has always been a matter of national policy, and has always been defined as the union of one man and one woman.

Both Congress and the Supreme Court have proven the federal "jurisdiction" of marriage. In the 1800s, the U.S. Congress passed a handful of laws to eradicate polygamy (Morril Act, Edmunds Act, Edmunds-Tucker Bill) and required the inclusion of anti-polygamy provisions in some state constitutions as a condition of admittance to the

Union. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Supreme Court struck down several state marriage and divorce laws including *Zablocki v. Redhail* and *Turner v. Safley*.

Our country cannot sustain multiple definitions of marriage — which is what “leaving it to the states” would produce. To leave the definition of a foundational institution to 50 separate government units is irresponsible and dangerous. It would create societal confusion, legal chaos, and the trivializing of marriage.

Marriage must be defined nationally. As President of Liberty Counsel Mathew Staver has said, “Whether imposed judicially or otherwise, marriage, in whatever form, will be, and always has been, national.” The only question is *who* will define it. It will either be the American people, acting through their legislators to pass a constitutional amendment, or homosexual activists and rogue judges through the courts.

Isn't same-sex "marriage" the new civil right?

Absolutely not. Miscegenation (interracial) laws were about keeping the races apart; marriage is about bringing the sexes together. Marriage is the joining of one man and one woman to give children the best start. The Federal Marriage Amendment is intended to send our children positive messages about marriage and family — not to oppress or discriminate.

If any group in this country understands what violates civil rights, it would be African-Americans; yet the vast majority of African-Americans strongly oppose same-sex marriage. Well-known leaders in the civil rights movement of the 1960's reject the notion that the fight for legally-recognized homosexual unions has any moral equivalence to the African-American struggle for basic human rights.

According to Jesse Jackson, “Gays were never called three-fifths of a person in the Constitution and in that they did not require the Voting Rights Act to have the right to vote.” The Rev. Richard Richardson has said “The defense of marriage is not about discrimination. As an African-American, I know something about discrimination....The institution of Jim Crow laws, including laws against interracial marriage, was about discrimination. The traditional institution of marriage is not discrimination. And I find it offensive to call it that. Marriage was not created to oppress people. It was created for children. It boggles my mind that people would compare the traditional institution of marriage to slavery.”

How does someone's homosexual “marriage” threaten the rest of us?

Gay activists are not asking for just one homosexual marriage, even though they often say, “Don't interfere with my family and I won't interfere with yours.” What the activists want is a new national policy saying that no longer is a mom and a dad any better than two moms or two dads. That policy would turn some very important principles upside down.

Marriage would become merely an emotional relationship that is flexible enough to include any grouping of loving adults. If it is fair for two men or two women to marry, why not three, or five, or 17? Polygamy and group marriage would be virtually impossible to prevent.

Parenthood would consist of any number of emotionally attached people who care for kids. “Mother” and “father” would become only words.

Gender would become nothing. The same-sex proposition cannot tolerate the idea that any real, deep and necessary differences exist between the sexes. If real differences did exist, men would need women and women would need men. Our children would learn that sexual differences are like mere personality types.

Marriage is not just a private affair. Every marriage is a public virtue in that it responsibly regulates human sexuality, brings the two parts of humanity together in a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship and it delivers mothers and fathers to children. Society benefits from the well-being of marriage; nearly every dollar spent by our government on social welfare is in reaction to a marriage breaking down or failing to form.

Allowing same-sex "marriage" would drastically weaken the institution of marriage for everyone, including those in traditional marriages. Stanley Kurtz, in his Feb. 2, 2004 Weekly Standard article entitled, "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia," documents how 10 years of same-sex "marriage" in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have further undermined marriage in those countries. Instead of encouraging a society-wide return to marriage, Scandinavian gay

marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable. (Weekly Standard, Vol. 9, No. 20, Kurtz, p. 26)

Perhaps most important of all, homosexual "marriage" will hurt our children, because homosexual unions deliberately deny a child either a mother or a father. Social science research is conclusive that children without a married mom and dad suffer significantly. They have higher levels of poverty, welfare dependency, child abuse, sexual abuse, substance abuse, premature and promiscuous sexuality, early unwed pregnancy, educational failure, juvenile delinquency, adult criminality and suicide as well as lower levels of physical and emotional health.

Upholding traditional marriage is about justice for children. Children do not have the ability to protect themselves from family arrangements which deliberately deny them a mother or a father. Homosexual "marriage" places adult desire above the best interest of children, which the government has a special responsibility to uphold.

The Federal Marriage Amendment will preserve traditional marriage, therefore protecting the best interests of children.

Focus on the Family's Position on The Federal Marriage Amendment

by Glenn T. Stanton, Senior Analyst for Marriage and Sexuality for Focus on the Family

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The Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) has been introduced in Congress. Crafted by the Alliance for Marriage and introduced by Rep. Marilyn Musgrave as House Joint Resolution 56 and by Senator Wayne Allard as Senate Joint Resolution 26, the amendment is supported by members of both parties as well as a broad coalition of Protestants, mainline and conservative, Catholics, historical African-American churches, Jews, Orthodox and secular groups. Wording of the FMA is simple. It states:

Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman.

Neither this constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.

Focus on the Family strongly supports the Federal Marriage Amendment.

The battle over same-sex unions is being fought at two levels: the courts and the legislatures. The FMA is essential because it protects marriage from redefinition by either state legislatures or the courts. In addition, the FMA completely stops activist courts from giving away the legal benefits of marriage to same-sex couples.

To date, the courts and select mayors have caused 100 percent of the damage. In Massachusetts, it's the state supreme court that is attempting to force the legislature to approve same-sex marriages after the Vermont state supreme court did the same thing regarding civil unions in that state. In Hawaii, the courts supported these unions. The New Jersey and Arizona courts currently have cases before them from gay activists seeking access to marriage. Of the first 4,600 civil unions were entered into in Vermont, only 16.5 percent of civil unions granted in Vermont involved Vermonters! Any of these couples could press their home-state courts to legally recognize their same-sex unions, representing thousands of judicial time bombs. With increasing opportunity, there is every indication that the courts, if left unchecked, will remain the most pernicious opponents in this battle to protect marriage. That is the primary reason the FMA is needed.

The city of San Francisco has been the most notable of several cities that began issuing "marriage licenses" to same-sex couples.

A small handful of conservatives see the FMA as insufficient because, while it constitutionally protects marriage from activist judges, it does not block legislatures from enacting some types of civil unions. True, the FMA does not do everything. It intentionally does not wholly block legislatures in order to respect federalist concerns. This is essential in attracting a larger coalition, which is necessary for passage. Given this, a "do everything" amendment

would end up doing nothing.

However, the FMA does do something and what it does do is very important, strategic and worthy of support. The FMA would stop the courts from reinterpreting marriage and forcing legislatures to do so as happened in Vermont.

This is no small thing. With the removal of court interference, the battlefield of same-sex unions will be much smaller and more manageable. Liberal state legislatures are highly reluctant to tinker with marriage. A few states will consider bills enacting civil unions, but with the combined effort of the pro-family community, such bills can be turned back as AB 1338 was in California. (However, a bill like AB 1338 would be declared unconstitutional under the FMA because it sought to extend the full equivalent of marriage to same-sex couples!) In Hawaii, a state even more liberal than California, after the state court said yes to same-sex marriage, the legislature turned the decision over to the people who voted overwhelmingly against same-sex marriage.

In addition, the residual impact of our United States Constitution clearly defining marriage under the FMA will be substantial. Even though legislatures will still be able to consider legislation on some civil unions, the fact that our Constitution will clearly define marriage as between one man and one woman will make it more difficult for homosexual activists to assert that marriage is anything they want it to be.

Opposition to the FMA because it does not do everything is akin to the old pro-life argument that has called for an absolute ban on all abortions right now or nothing. In terms of political reality, this "all-or-nothing" approach has gotten us very little in defense of life and it will get us very little in defense of marriage.

Passage of an amendment to the Constitution is very difficult, as our Founding Fathers intended. Therefore, the FMA needs a large, cohesive coalition behind it and efforts to assemble a broad-based coalition around a strong amendment have been successful. Political friends on Capitol Hill say the current wording of the FMA is the strongest that can be attained and has a better chance if the conservative movement unifies behind it. As our culture continues to slide, it will be increasingly difficult to attain this in years to come.

Focus on the Family endorses the Federal Marriage Amendment and strongly encourages the support of this important, strategic effort. Please call your representatives in Congress and ask for their support of the Federal Marriage Amendment.

Important Note: FMA is now MPA

(The Federal Marriage Amendment is now known as the Marriage Protection Amendment.)

Christopher Norfleet, Public Policy Media Representative for Focus on the Family, explains:

The Constitutional marriage amendment was originally introduced in the Senate in 2003 as the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA). When the House of Representatives introduced their version later that year they changed the name to the Marriage Protection Amendment (MPA), a change later carried over into the Senate version as well. The name change was a result of a decision by Republican leadership, who decided that "Marriage Protection Amendment" was a better and more appropriate name to use in promoting and passing the measure. MPA is now the appropriate title for the amendment in both houses of Congress.

This is not to be confused with the Marriage Protection Act (also known as MPA), which is a "court-stripping" bill involving court authority over state marriage laws. This bill has passed the House of Representatives but has not yet received Senate approval.

Guidelines for Healthy Relationships

1. Basic principles of healthy guy/girl relationships for Christians
 - A. Accountability. The most healthy guy/girl relationships are those, which seek out the advice of parents and other mentors. In particular, the guy spends time with the girl's whole family, especially her father, welcoming their guidance. Especially focus on spending time with older couples who have sustained, healthy marriages. Being accountable to others helps develop respect for each other and avoided isolation from other vital relationships.
 - B. Character. Rather than focusing on physical gratification, emphasize character development. The focus is on becoming the right person rather than finding the right person. Courtship says that before the commitment to marriage, a guy and girl are brother and sister in the Lord and should behave like brother and sister, not boyfriend and girlfriend. This provides a stronger and more reliable foundation for the relationship and helps avoid sexual temptation.
 - C. Preparation. Young adults should not pursue exclusive relationships until they are spiritually, emotionally, and financially prepared for marriage. Passages such as Song of Solomon 2:7 (not awakening desire before its time) and Proverbs 24:27 (preparing your fields before you build your house) demonstrate the wisdom of getting an education, developing a realistic career goal, creating a plan for gaining financial stability, and learning practical life skills before focusing on issues of the home, such as courting and marriage. George Washington, for example, became a commander in the army by age 23, gaining experience in leadership, and settling into marriage and home management in his later twenties. This established a foundation for his success as a businessman, military commander and statesman.

2. Answers to Questions about Christianity and Sexuality

- A. What if we really love each other? (responses by 'Professor Theophilus,' Boundless Webzine)
 1. There is no commitment without marriage: "When you're married, you have one, and when you're not married, you don't. Before the marriage ceremony, everything is reversible — your thoughts, your feelings, even your intention to get married. As a matter of fact, people who have sex outside marriage usually *don't* wind up marrying each other."
 2. Marriage is a promise, not a feeling: "Feeling married doesn't make you married; having sex doesn't make you married. What makes you married is a solemn public promise, in front of God and the assembly of His people, to love, honor and live with each other, as husband and wife, until death. The reason you have to do it in front of the rest of your worship community is that at the same time the two of you make a vow before God to each other, all those witnesses make a vow before God to hold you to your promise. You haven't made yours; they haven't made theirs.
 3. God forbids *all* sex outside marriage. "Limiting your sexual disobedience to a single person doesn't turn it into obedience. Neither does limiting it to someone whom you think you would like to marry, or to someone with whom you have enjoyed God's blessings in the past."
- B. How far is too far?
 1. Fleeing temptation is the goal. "Many young Christians assume that when they find themselves in situations which weaken their sexual self-control, they should just stay put and be tough. That's a huge mistake. Scripture doesn't tell us just to stay put in the face of temptation. It tells us to flee temptation. Avoiding it will require some changes in your relationship, because the first thing an unmarried man and woman need to do is stop

spending their time together ALONE. Alone is what you do on your wedding night; that's why it's so cozy. So when you spend time together with your sweetheart, do it where others are present. When you date, go out with a group. When you pray, have others join you, because this is the most intimate time of all. Sounds odd, right? That's just because we're no longer used to it. It used to be called common sense (Your Turn 2000, J. Budziszewski, May 3, 2000).

2. Sexual arousal is for marriage. "Do you want to save sex for marriage? Then don't do anything that gets your motor running. God invented sexual arousal to prepare your bodies for sex; did you think it was for something else? And don't think, "We'll do things that arouse us, but we won't cross that line." That's like turning on powerful rocket motors, but saying 'Don't lift off.' If sex is for marriage, sexual arousal must be too" (Your Turn 2000, J. Budziszewski, May 3, 2000).

C. Is it okay to date non-Christians?

1. Scripture says to not be "mismatched" with unbelievers (II Corinthians 6:14-18). The purpose of marriage for Christians is to submit to God in all things and together to build His kingdom. It is impossible to do this with someone who is not a Christian. Dating and marriage are not the same, of course, but to develop a romantic relationship with someone who does not share your Christian convictions is to risk falling in love with someone who is clearly not for you. This is both dangerous and misleading to the other person.
2. The relationship between husband and wife is to reflect the relationship of the believer to Christ (Ephesians 5:21-33). When one partner is not a Christian, it is not possible for the couple to reflect Christ.
3. Dating someone to witness to them is dangerous. If you fall in love with them, you have in a sense made a "commitment" to them that you will either have to violate, at the cost of broken heartedness, or follow-through on, at the cost of disobeying God. What kind of witness would it be to lead someone on and then break up with him or her because he or she is not a Christian? What kind of witness would it be to become sexually involved with someone who is a non-Christian? Even if the person becomes a Christian, there may be a dramatic difference in the level of spiritual maturity that may make it hard for them to lead or follow in marriage as God has designed.

What's Good About Sex? By J. Budziszewski

Is sex bad? A case could be made for that view.

Midnight. John is trying to explain his way out of calling his wife by another woman's name during their embraces.

One o'clock. Shelly, 16, is in her bedroom, secretly cutting herself with a razor because of what her boyfriend made her do.

Two o'clock. His wife asleep, Steven is busy downloading shameful images from Internet bulletin boards.

Three o'clock. Marjorie, who used to spend each Friday night in bed with a different man, has been bingeing and purging for four hours.

Four o'clock. Pablo stares through the darkness at his ceiling, wondering how he is going to convince his girlfriend to have an abortion.

Five o'clock. After partying all night, Michael takes another man home, not mentioning that he tests positive for HIV.

Six o'clock. Lisa is in the bathroom, crying.

Not quite what my generation expected when it invented the sexual revolution.

Although still not quite willing to give up that enslaving liberation, feminist writers like Naomi Wolf and Katie Roiphe exhibit signs of fatigue and confusion. A few secular people toy with the idea of abstinence — an abstinence not so much of purity as of boredom, fear and disgust. In Hollywood, of all places, it has even become fashionable to talk up Buddhism, a weary doctrine that finds the cure of suffering in the cessation of desire, and the cure of desire in the cessation of existence.

What's more, some Christian writers give the impression they hold the same dismal view. Overwhelmed by the sheer number of things to warn about, they have forgotten how to do anything but scold.

Maybe the sexual revolution was an even grimmer joke than we thought. Maybe there is nothing good about sex. Maybe sex is just plain bad.

A gift of God

What's wrong with this picture? Although there is plenty of bad in the contemporary sexual scene, it's clear that we're forgetting something. The only way to get something bad is to take something good and spoil it. Whenever you find a bad thing, look for a good thing somewhere in the ruins.

The idea that sex is inherently bad doesn't come from the Bible. It comes from ancient gnosticism, which taught that the Creator wasn't God, but a lesser being who made a botch of things. Gnostics thought spirits good, bodies bad and sex just a matter of bodies.

But the Bible calls God the Creator. He invented sex; it was His idea. And let's not forget that after He finished His work, He called the whole creation "good." Dazzled by His handiwork, Christianity espouses a higher view of sex than any other religion. That's why it also has the strictest rules about it. Anything so important has to be handled carefully.

So what's good about sex? Sex serves not just one great good but three. However, they need marriage to come into their own.

First among the goods of conjugal sex is *procreation*. God told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply." This was part of their dominion of the earth.

Second is *union*. When Adam was lonely, God didn't give him a man, an animal or a crowd of people, but a woman — different than he, yet made with him in God's image. When Adam first gazed upon his new companion, he was so astonished that he cried, "This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

The third good of conjugal sex becomes real only when the spouses are united to Christ, for that is when they become a *living emblem* of His sacrificial love for the Church and the Church's adoring response. Paul is so awed that he calls matrimony one of God's secrets. "This mystery is a profound one," he says, "and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church."

These three goods are the point of sex. They are what sex is for.

What about pleasure? I hear you ask. Has Christianity got something against that? No, pleasure is great. God is for

it. But by His design, pleasure is a byproduct — an outgrowth of other things that are more important.

If you pursue pleasure for its own sake, two things happen. First, it disappears. Philosophers call this the “hedonistic paradox.” Second, it steers you wrong, because pleasure can result from doing wrong as well as doing right.

Three great goods

Let’s talk about each of the three great goods of conjugal sex in turn.

Procreation. In procreation we cooperate with God, offering our bodies, marriages and homes as the occasions for His creation of new life. This is an incredible privilege. It is even more mind-boggling to consider that the birth of a child is the birth of an image of God who will live forever, who will one day be older than the sun and stars are now.

Procreation isn’t just about your kids. Once grown, the kids will have kids, remember? We not only raise our kids, but help them establish their own new families.

Union. Love isn’t just romantic feelings. Love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person. Otherwise, how could a bride and groom promise to love each other? You can’t promise to have a feeling.

If love is a commitment of the will, then what has sex got to do with it? Consider procreation again. Do you see how different — how special — it is? In every other biological function, such as eating, digesting and growing, the man and woman are separate organisms. For procreation, they join to become a single unit, functioning in covenantal harmony. Conjugal union is a true merging. They become a one-flesh unity — and I’m not just talking about their bodies.

When I say that I’m not just talking about their bodies, I mean that at every level, male and female were designed to complete each other. In sexual self-giving, the hearts and minds and spirits of the husband and wife cooperate with their bodies. They are united not just in their bodily dimension, but in *every* dimension.

This unity also helps prepare them to be parents, and the hope of children joins them in solidarity with every past and future generation.

Casual sex can’t achieve that. It endlessly joins and severs, joins and severs. Imagine what it would be like to repeatedly tear off and reattach your arm. There would come a day when no earthly surgery would suffice; the reparative power of your body would be lost. It is the same when you repeatedly tear off and reattach your various sexual partners. Eventually they will all seem like strangers; you just won’t feel anything. You will have destroyed your capacity for intimacy.

Mystery. Think again of Paul’s words regarding the union of husband and wife: “This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church.” What was he talking about? So far in salvation history, we have only hints; we won’t know the whole until it happens.

Think of the Song of Songs, of the Old Testament love poem that begins, “Kiss me with kisses of your mouth.” Many readers are mystified as to how it got into the sacred Scriptures, but the ancient rabbis had an explanation. They said it not only portrayed the love between husband and the wife, but symbolized the love between God and His people. Shocking! Yet the New Testament speaks in the same way. The Revelation of John foretells the coming “marriage of the Lamb” — a future union between Christ and His Church, more intimate than anything we have known, not to be consummated until He comes again.

In some way that passes our present understanding, and for all its present flaws, conjugal intimacy is a symbol of that piercing heavenly intimacy. The little humiliations and the mutual sacrifices of the husband and wife are a training for heavenly union; the awe of their wedding night and the ecstasy of their embraces, a glimpse of it.

So is there any good in sex? In marriage, yes! God the Giver has made conjugal union the vaulted arch into two great goods, and the mysterious emblem of an even greater good — a good which in this life we cannot comprehend. That’s why we dare not uproot sex from marriage, the garden where God has planted it. Too much

good is at stake to treat it lightly; too much power and danger to waste it on selfish games.

From the best gifts come the worst miseries, if we are too foolish to follow the Giver's directions.

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The Battle for the Family

Jeff Myers, Ph.D.

[Author's note: I want to express appreciation to many people who have given me much to think about regarding the book of Genesis: Bernie Kuiper, Ray Sutton, Bill and Barbara Mouser, Carter Johnson, Cal Beisner, John Stonestreet, and Walter Kaiser.]

I. Truth: In Our Heads, But Not In Our Lives

Sometimes we know the truth in our minds, but have no idea how it applies to our lives. This came home to me some months ago when my son Graham (age five) and I visited the Oakland, California boat show. We gawked at hundreds of boats, ranging from inflatable dinghies to enormous delta cruisers with price tags in the millions.

But nothing caught Graham's attention quite as much as the Sheriff's Water Safety Puppet Show. Graham joined a crowd of children watching in rapt attention as the puppets acted out the horrible things that could happen if you swam in canals, disobeyed signs that said "No Swimming" or "Sharks," or used drugs or alcohol while boating.

Later that evening over dinner at the grandparents', I asked Graham if he would like to share what he had learned that day. He stood up and solemnly declared, "Do not swim in canals. Canals are very, very bad." He then proceeded to preach hellfire and brimstone about the dangers of canals, squelching each giggle from his onlookers with a severe shushing.

After 30 seconds or so, however, Graham turned to me and asked, "Papa, what's a canal?" Graham knew exactly what was *wrong* with canals. He just didn't know what they *were*.

II. Biblical Truth: Do We Really Understand What it Means?

The battle for the family is like that. We understand that God designed the family, and that it is somehow important. We consider our own families to be important. When public officials make pronouncements about the significance of the family, we nod solemnly.

Yet we do not fully realize the implications of God creating the family as the agency through which he would bring about his plan for the earth. We don't grasp the fact that the family is not incidental to God's plan, it is foundational. We forget that the human story did not begin with the evolution of a cell, but with a wedding.

Very shortly after the creation of mankind, for reasons I hope will become clear in this special report, Satan declared all out, winner-takes-all, *war* on the family. His purpose is nothing less than the utter annihilation of the family as God designed it. Why? Because if the family succeeds, Satan is doomed.

In this special report I'll share three biblical truths about the family: (1) God's plan for the family, (2) Man's fall from grace, and (3) Satan's plan for the family. I'll conclude with several suggestions for how families can proactively thrive in difficult times.

Before I jump in with both feet, allow me to clarify a few theological points. I *do* believe in Satan (I'll explain why in a couple of pages). I do *not* believe that Satan is the equal and opposite of God. I do *not* believe Satan will win, nor do I believe that the ultimate responsibility to defeat Satan belongs to human beings. The battle referred to in this report is not regarding the ultimate triumph of good over evil, but of the responsibility God has given us to stand for truth and fight against evil and injustice.

(1) God's Plan for the Family

In the act of creation, God:

- (A) Created man, male and female, to bear his image (Genesis 1:27). Together the male and the female bear God's image and complement one another in carrying out God's purposes.
- (B) Commanded man to multiply (Genesis 1:28), thus increasing the ranks of those bearing his image.
- (C) Commanded man to subdue the earth and rule over it as caretakers or stewards (Genesis 1:29-30, 2:15). It should be noted that the word for "subdue" here is not the word "kabash" (uproot or destroy), but the word "dabar" which means to answer to, commune with, tend, be the spokesman for, work on, and instruct. In other words, Adam was the "viceroy"—not the king, but the representative of the king—on earth to "teach" the earth, to coax productivity out of the earth, and to turn wilderness into garden.

III. The Immense Burden/Pleasure of Stewardship

Before creating the woman, God commanded the man to give names to the creatures of the earth and the birds of the air. This is highly significant. The Hebrew word for "name" used here is "sem" which is the Hebrew word which comes closest to our concept of personality. The *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* says "the sum total of a person's internal and external pattern of behavior was gathered up into his name...knowing the name of a person was equivalent to knowing his essence..."¹ In addition, naming something implied the establishing of dominion over and a commitment to protect that which was being named.² Thus, by naming the creatures, and ultimately the woman, Adam observed, organized, categorized, and established a protective relationship over that which God had given him to rule.

Imagine for a moment the burden on Adam. It was as if God said, "Adam, I have created this earth and want you to rule it for me."

"What do you mean, Lord?"

"I mean this: I have created this earth as a wilderness and I want you to turn it into garden, just like this garden I have created for you."

"Okay...how big is this earth?"

"It's 25,000 miles around, Adam. MOW IT."

That's just my interpretation, of course, but it underscores the obvious: Adam's responsibility was overwhelming. Thus it was no small thing when God said that Adam needed a "helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:21). Adam didn't need a "life companion" or "best friend"—he needed someone to work side by side with him in shared community and shared purpose, assisting him in obeying God's commands.

IV. The Family Was Central to God's Plan

The man and the woman together made a family and that family was central to God's plan; it was God's chosen mechanism for accomplishing his purposes in the earth. When God created the woman (Adam named her, by

¹ Merrill C. Tenney (ed.). *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), p. 363.

² Ibid. pp. 363-364.

the way—a good indication that headship existed before the fall) the text says that they became "one flesh." The Jewish Encyclopedia points out that the original meaning of this term "flesh" (basar) was "clan."³ It is hard to miss the close connection between the sexuality implicit in this term and the legal, covenantal relationship it represented.

In other words, being "one flesh" means, at least in part, that the man and the woman had entered into a covenant of marriage. This was not a covenant with each other; it was a covenant between the couple (represented by the man) and God (this is apparently what is meant by the reference to the man leaving his father and mother—he was establishing a new covenantal household).

All of that technical language leads to an elegant conclusion: God performed the marriage between the man and the woman, and all marriages are still performed by him. Today, just as with Adam and Eve, a married couple's enjoyment and fulfillment is in direct proportion to how their relationship achieves God's purposes, thus bringing glory to Him.

The picture is this: the man and the woman loving one another through a binding covenantal relationship, sharing God's purposes, working hard with fruitful results, and bearing children who would in turn love God with heart, soul, mind and strength.

Even in singleness, God's plan for man and woman is still in effect. The Apostle Paul was single, and, in First Corinthians 7, he expresses that it is a good and positive thing for the sake of the church that people remain single. In this case, men and women do not forfeit their God-given design. Rather, they apply their God-given aspects to the benefit of the church (i.e. men as husbandmen, defenders, and sages, and women as helper-completers, life-givers, and women of wisdom).

In any event, we can say this with certainty: God's plan for the family was profound, and it was perfect.

(2) Man's Fall From Grace

But then something tragic happened. The man and the woman fell from grace by directly disobeying God. The blow-by-blow narrative is recorded in Genesis chapter three. For the sake of brevity, here are some of the lessons it teaches:

Lesson #1 from the fall: Adam abused his responsibility. The serpent (which Revelation 12:9 explains is Satan) approached the woman and asked, "Did God really say 'You must not eat of any tree of the garden?'" The woman's response was mixed. She correctly replied, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden" but then she incorrectly told the serpent "but God did say 'you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die'" (emphasis mine).

Here the woman was wrong. God had said nothing about not touching the tree. Where did she get this idea? One clear possibility is that, since God had given the command to "not eat from the tree" to Adam before the woman had been created, the woman had learned about it second-hand.

If this is the case, it may mean that Adam had taught the woman incorrectly and had thus taken responsibility for something that was not rightfully his. Namely, he felt free to add his own words to those of God and imply, "thus saith the Lord." This made the woman vulnerable to temptation.

Lesson #2 from the fall: Adam abandoned his responsibility. The serpent approached the woman, who was the newest and presumably the less experienced of the two (Adam certainly knew that the serpent was the most crafty of the creatures—since he named it, he must have known its "essence").

Where was Adam during this deception? The Hebrew in Genesis 3:6 translates the woman took the fruit and ate it and she gave some to her husband "with her." Where was Adam? Is it possible that he was right there, stupidly observing the entire deception without intervening?

³ The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 5 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1903), p. 409.

First Timothy 2:14 seals Adam's fate. The Apostle Paul states there that Adam was not deceived. In other words, he knew what was going on and chose not to stop it. Adam knew the serpent's tendencies. Adam knew that the woman had mis-stated God's commands. Adam knew to not eat from the tree. Adam knew to not allow the woman to eat from the tree. On every count he knew what was right but still shrugged off his responsibility.

Lesson #3 from the fall: the woman abused her responsibility. When the serpent approached, the woman could have deferred to her husband. "Look, serpent. You need to talk to Adam. He's in charge here." But the woman felt comfortable stepping out from under Adam's authority. Adam made this easier by his lack of responsibility, of course, but that doesn't excuse the woman's actions.

Lesson #4 from the fall: the woman abandoned her responsibility. The woman succumbed to the temptation, as far as we can tell, based purely on her emotional judgment of the situation. She judged that, in spite of God's commands (and Adam's reinforcing instruction), the fruit was *useful*, it *looked good*, and it could *empower* her (Genesis 3:6). By abandoning what she *knew* to be true and acting on what she felt was best, the woman failed in her responsibility.

What is the point? As Bill and Barbara Mouser so eloquently point out in their *Five Aspects of Man* and *Five Aspects of Woman* Bible studies (<http://www.fiveaspects.org>), sin always involves abusing or abandoning God-given responsibility. It started in the garden and it is true today.

Lesson #5 from the fall: irresponsibility is quickly followed by paranoia. Immediately upon eating the fruit the man and the woman realized they were naked. In their shame, the man and the woman made coverings for themselves. Furthermore, when they heard the sound of God walking in the garden, they hid. Sin always leads to a knee-jerk impulse to cover up.

Lesson #6 from the fall: paranoia gives way to blame. When God confronted the man and the woman, the man justified himself by blaming the woman and ultimately God himself ("the woman YOU put here with me"). Not only is the man blaming God for his problem, he is actually blaming God for his *design* (i.e. "Your design in making the woman to complement me was flawed"). The woman merely claimed to be a victim of the serpent's deception. Notice the cycle of sin:

1. Taking responsibility where one shouldn't.
2. Avoiding responsibility one SHOULD take.
3. Committing sin.
4. Experiencing paranoia.
5. Engaging in self-justification.
6. Portraying the self as a victim.
7. Blaming God for his design.

I dare say that sin still follows this cycle today. Our natural tendency is to create a protective shell around the sin rather than to expose it and allow it to be removed. This self-protective instinct is one solid piece of proof that we cannot save ourselves; we can no more redeem ourselves than a bank robber could transform himself into a police officer and arrest himself. The "self" cannot be the solution when the "self" is the problem. Since we cannot redeem ourselves, we need a Savior who can rescue us from ourselves and restore us to our rightful place as image-bearers of God.

In the Genesis account we see that God, in his mercy, provided the promise of that Savior even as he pronounced the curse. It is this curse, and the promise of redemption, ironically, which led to Satan's all-out war on the family.

V. In Defense of the Devil

Before I go into the details of the curse and Satan's response to it, let me address something here. According to the latest survey of teens (<http://www.barna.org>), 65% of self-identified evangelical Christian teens do

not believe in a literal Satan. I don't know what their parents believe. I suspect the percentage is about the same. I don't blame the young people, by the way. Their parents told them that Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy existed, and they were lying. Why should their parents be believed about the guy with the red suit and pitchfork?

I don't have deep theological reasons for believing in Satan. The Bible's references (including those of Jesus) are not in jest, so I take them seriously. But furthermore, belief in Satan does seem logical. After all, for evil to be truly evil, it must be intentional (unintentional acts are inconvenient, even tragic, but not considered evil by us). If it is intentional, it is because there is an intelligent *will* which intended it.

In addition, if evil really exists, it can only be because there is an ultimate standard against which we are measuring it; there is an "ultimate good" and an "ultimate evil." These do not have to be equivalent in power or will, but they must *exist* for our ideas of good and evil to have any meaning beyond our personal preferences.

It all comes down to this. Either evil is real and is personified by an ultimate evil will, or it is an illusion (or at least beyond the control of any will, and therefore not truly evil). The Bible calls this evil will the serpent, Satan, the devil, Lucifer, etc. It is clearly *not* merely a "force" or the "dark side"—the references are clearly to a *person* or *being*.

(3) Why Satan Declared War on the Family

Immediately after listening to their accounts, God pronounced curses on the serpent, the man and the woman. The serpent was first: "Cursed are you above all livestock...the offspring (seed) of the woman will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15)

The subsequent curses on the man and the woman, interestingly enough, did not withdraw God's original commands to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it. They merely pronounced that the womb would now rebel against the woman, and the earth against the man, as the man and woman had rebelled against God. Think of it: every frustration, every setback, every interpersonal conflict, every broken piece of equipment, every crime—even death and destruction in nature—all of these things would serve as reminders of our fallenness.

Yet even in the curse God planted the seed of redemption. In pronouncing the curse on Satan ("the offspring of the woman will crush your head"), the word "offspring" is the Hebrew word "zera'." According to Hebrew scholar Walter C. Kaiser, "zera'" is always used as a collective noun in the singular, "thus the word designates the whole line of descendants as a unit, yet it is deliberately flexible enough to denote either one person who epitomizes the whole group...or the many persons in that whole line of natural and/or spiritual descendants."⁴ In other words, it refers both to the coming Messiah who would redeem God's image-bearers *and* to all of the offspring of the woman as a group (the reference historically is considered to be specific to the male offspring).

Again, this is of extreme significance. Genesis 3:15 is, at the same time, (1) a prophecy of the coming of Christ, who would conquer death and bring salvation to his chosen ones, and (2) a prophecy of everlasting frustration for Satan as the offspring of the woman fulfilled God's commands and eroded his influence in the world.

Maybe this helps explain Romans 16:19—"The God of peace will soon crush Satan underneath *your* feet." As children are born and trained to obey God and seek His purposes, they become Satan crushers. Needless to say, if this happens, Satan's kingdom is in grave danger, and Satan is most assuredly displeased with this possibility.

I can easily imagine what Satan was thinking as God pronounced the curse that his head would be crushed: "*We will just have to see about that.*" It is easy to see how by declaring war on the family Satan saw that he was attacking the very heart of God's plan.

⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, "Zera'" in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (eds.) (Chicago: Moody, 1980), Vol. 1, p. 253.

VI. Think Like the Devil for a Moment

C. S. Lewis once wrote a book called *Screwtape Letters* from the perspective of demons trying to tempt a Christian into renouncing his beliefs. Let's borrow that mindset for a moment. If you were Satan, and you knew that the family's success would ensure your destruction, what would you do? I've asked this question of audiences all around the U.S. Here are some of their replies:

- Kill babies. No babies, no future Satan crushers.
- Cause husbands to stop taking responsibility for their wives and their children. Get them out of the home completely if possible. If this is not possible, keep them busy and distracted.
- Convince wives that if husbands are not going to take responsibility, they should step in and take over. This will make a mockery of the idea of male headship, allow the men to be confirmed in their passivity, and confuse the children—especially the boys—about God's design for male and female.
- Assure people that love relationships exist only for mutual enjoyment and satisfaction and have nothing to do with God's purposes and design. Once everyone becomes self-absorbed, their threat will be significantly diminished.
- Cause men to fall in love with men and women with women. Since God designed marriage between a man and a woman as a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church, to encourage same-sex relationships will create open blasphemy against the name of Christ, mar the picture of what marriage is meant to represent, change the sociological function of marriage, and reconfigure the moral dimension of traditional moral structures—all at the same time.
- Convince everyone that right and wrong are a matter of personal opinion. Then they won't stand for truth and fight against evil and injustice. The potential Satan-crushers will grow up, but they'll be whimpering moral imbeciles and thus be no threat.
- Give people a completely distorted idea of what the family should be like, so they are confused and their efforts are dissipated. Reinforce this distortion through at least 28 hours of television a week (average for American adults).
- Make sure the parents have no role in the shaping of the child's mind and spirit. This will make it easier to later convince the children that their parents are irrelevant.
- Make sure the parents start to see *themselves* as irrelevant. Spread the message, "Just leave the kids alone. *You* don't know what's right for *them*."
- Cause young men and women before marriage to get into a cycle of meaningless physical intimacy and breaking up. This will reinforce distrust and cynicism toward the opposite sex, and make it virtually impossible for them to be "one flesh" later in life. Furthermore, it will reinforce their view of sex as just an act that is "no big deal," diminishing its awesomeness and trivializing God's commands regarding it.
- Cause men and women in otherwise healthy relationships to have separate goals for life: separate careers, interests, whatever—*anything* except a shared mission and purpose in life.
- Distort the family's priorities, making it difficult to discern what the family should actually strive for. Any time the trivial replaces the ultimate, people are led away from God's purposes.

VII. As Goes the Family...

I could go on, but you get the idea; almost every social ill we face in America could be seen as an attack on the family's ability to live out God's purposes for mankind. You've almost certainly seen the effects of one or more of these stratagems in your own family. You could probably make a long list of your own.

What is the point? The "family" is not just another issue—it is a *definitive* issue. If I am even partially right, then this special report should serve as a clarion call to fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters to put family issues—personally, in the church, and in public policy—front and center. As William D. Gairdner writes,

Family is important. Very important. The vast majority of people, in poll after poll, repeatedly insist it is the most important reality in their lives. For this reason, each of us must decide, before it is too late for our civilization, what role we must play in the defense of the natural family.... We must recognize that there is no

such thing as a mere passenger on the ship of life. Everyone is crew; each of us must decide whether we will help with the voyage or harm it, and in what way.⁵

Here are specific steps:

1. Be reconciled one to another. To reconcile means to bring back into harmony. Our problems as families and as nations have been caused by a lack of harmony with God's purposes, and a lack of understanding of the harmony God intended between men and women and within the family. We must recognize that we cannot truly or fully accomplish God's purposes unless we are reconciled. This means individual reconciliation with God, but it also means being reconciled one to another (Matthew 5:23-24). Don't delay in seeking forgiveness and/or granting forgiveness for past wrongs.

2. Consider the impact of government on the family. Government cannot save you, but government is not irrelevant either. As you consider candidates and their views, and the various public policy issues that come forward, think about their impact on the family. How will they affect the ability of society to produce the kind of young men and women who will stand for truth and fight against evil and injustice?

3. Live out God-given roles. Everyone seems to tiptoe around this tulip, so I guess I'll just stomp right on it. If God designed men to be the stewards and women to be their helper-completers, we must either deny this part of Scripture, explain it away, or figure out how to live it out.

Yes, in our fallenness we will mess-up in how we live it out. Men will abuse and abandon their God-given roles, and even abuse and abandon the people they love. Women will abuse and abandon their God-given roles as well. But the fact of sin should not stop us from recognizing the beauty of God's design and seeking to be redeemed to it.

I was recently at a meeting in which a woman explained that in her mixed-gender Sunday school class the women always seemed to be the ones who prayed publicly. The ladies in the class complained about the passivity of the men until this particular woman explained that their own willingness to jump in might be part of the problem.

The next week the women all agreed beforehand to remain silent until the men took initiative in prayer. Nearly a full minute of torturous silence passed before the first man began to pray (as it turns out, men often need time and silence to compose their thoughts before speaking, and they had felt "outclassed" by the articulateness and grace of the women's prayers). The lady telling the story said that the willingness of the women in the class to remain silent *forced* the men into a position of leadership. Before very long, the men began to feel more confident in taking initiative—not only in prayer, but in the class in general.

It is almost never a problem with "men" or with "women"—it is usually a problem with whether men and women relate properly according to God's design and purpose. That's what I mean by living out God-given roles.

4. Raise children in God-given roles. If God designed men and women differently to complement one another, then should we continue to raise boys and girls in exactly the same way? What would happen if instead of trying to strip the ornery masculine tendencies out of boys, we worked to channel those energies into standing for truth and fighting against evil and injustice? What if instead of trying to deny the life-giving nature of girls we helped them channel it into productive cultivation of societal grace? Books such as *Raising a Modern Day Knight* by Robert Lewis will really help for boys. Mike Farris' book *How a Man Prepares His Daughters for Life* is a good one for raising daughters.

5. Live properly in the body of Christ. Marriage is given to us in Scripture as an analogy of the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:30-33). When we trust Christ, it is as if we become dead to the law and "married" to Christ for the purpose of bearing fruit for God (Romans 7:4). The fruitfulness which is to typify the relationship between marriage and creation is also to typify the relationship between the church and the spiritual harvest we bring to God. In short, we are not lone-rangers. Our gifts are to be used for the common good and for the building of the kingdom (First Corinthians 14:12).

⁵ William D. Gairdner, *The War Against the Family* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1992), p. 96.

6. Become Christ-like. I put this last because it is the thought I want to leave you with. We must never forget that God designed us to bear His image. To be like Christ, to bear his image in a dark world, is the highest honor that can be given to a redeemed viceroy. We were once lost but are now found and have been restored to a position of significance—to the glory of God and the building of his kingdom.

VIII. Redemption: The Ultimate Point

The thread of Scripture is ultimately very simple: we were created as perfect image-bearers of God. We fell from grace. The possibility of redemption has been opened up to us through the power of the creator himself, Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-20). We have not just been redeemed *from* something, we have been redeemed *to* something. To what? To kingdom-building—to bearing God's image everywhere we go, in every sphere of life. Thus, the creation mandate still applies today through the great commission and the maintenance of our stewardship responsibilities.

The ultimate point of redemption is that redemption is the ultimate point. As Flannery O'Connor said, "For I am no disbeliever in the spiritual purpose, and no vague believer. I see from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. This means for me the meaning of life is centered in our Redemption by Christ and what I see in the world in relation to that."

We must begin seeing our *families* in light of the Redemption as well. God saves souls one by one, but it appears that he desires to use families and the church to be bearers of redemption to the world in ways that are really going to give Satan a headache.

Resources

Articles:

- How is Marriage Dying in Our Culture?* by Glenn T. Stanton
www.family.org/cforum/fosi/marriage/facts/a0028319.cfm
- Why Marriage Should Be Privileged in Public Policy* by Bridget E. Maher
www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=IS03D1

Books:

- Men and Marriage* by George Gilder (Pelican Publishing Company, 1992). Gilder's controversial study argues that "sexual liberation" leads inevitably to "social suicide" and that only a return to traditional family values can stem the tide of disaster. This is one of the best, most scholarly books on the subject.
- The Family: God's Weapon for Victory* by Robert Andrews (Winepress, 1995). God's people are at war, and the family is part of His plan for victory. This book covers the biblical theology of marriage, the roles of men and women, experiencing oneness in marriage, raising children, and building a heritage. George Grant says "it is a book of profound Biblical truths and straight forward practical counsel."
- The Marriage Builder* by Larry Crabb (Zondervan, 1992). This has been called the one necessary book on marriage for Christians. It shows how a couple's relationship with the Lord frees them to develop "soul oneness," and a deeper, more fulfilling relationship.

Websites:

www.family.org—Focus on the Family’s website features everything you need to know about families: marriage, relationships, public policy information, and more. Dr. Dobson’s past newsletters are featured, as are dozens of reports on issues ranging from homosexuality, to gambling, to the social benefits of marriage.

www.family.org/cforum/fosi/marriage—CitizenLink, Focus on the Family’s social issues website, devotes an entire section to marriage and the family, which includes numerous articles on: cohabitation, divorce, same-sex unions and parenting, marriage recovery initiatives, and fatherhood.

www.frc.org—From a public policy standpoint, Family Research Council’s website is the most useful site for studying marriage and family issues. Articles on homosexual marriage, political issues affecting marriage, abortion, etc. are all featured.

www.marriagedebate.com—MarriageDebate.com, a project of the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, answers questions about same-sex marriage’s possible effects on the social institution of marriage.

www.marriagewatch.org—MarriageWatch is a website designed to inform attorneys, policymakers, and the general public about marriage in law and society. Our purpose is to strengthen the institution of marriage and to affirm the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. MarriageWatch offers current news related to marriage law, summaries of state marriage laws, and other resources to assist those working to protect marriage.