

Promoting the God-Ordained Family Unit

*Refuting cohabitation, no-fault divorce, perverted partnerships,
and adoptions*

Introduction

The traditional family is important to God because it is a healthy, loving environment that reflects God's love for His children; it is also the wellspring of strong and healthy societies. But in the past fifty years the family has been neglected, even shunned. Therefore, we live in a society of immorality, pain, and spiritual longing. There is a direct correlation between broken homes and crime in America. Seventy percent of teenage criminals come from broken homes. The same goes for teenage murderers.¹ If we respected the Godly institution of family by marrying rather than practicing cohabitation, resisted the temptation of no-fault divorce, and opposed the legalization of perverted partnerships and adoptions, and, instead, honored the Bible's teachings, we could drastically improve the state of our waning society. As Dr. D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries says, "If America is going to survive and thrive, it will require a renaissance of the American family."² And if the family is truly the heart of a healthy society then it's time we got serious, because America needs a renaissance.

The Importance of Marriage and Family

We can see in the Bible, as early as Genesis, the importance of marriage and its ties to family. In chapter two, God creates Adam, but soon after, He says, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (2:18). Therefore, God creates Eve; verse 24 states, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Here begins the holy institution of marriage, and from marriage derives the God-ordained family.

¹ D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *As the Family Goes* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 14.

² *Ibid.*, 2.

Some opponents of traditional marriage argue, “Just because the Bible says marriage is good, doesn’t mean it’s good for me.” However, marriage is essential to human happiness, because companionship and intimacy are essential to human happiness. Dr. James Dobson puts it well in his book, *Marriage Under Fire*, when he writes, “...One might begin to suspect that something mystical within human nature must be drawing the sexes together – not just for purposes of reproduction as with animals, but to satisfy an irrepressible longing for companionship, intimacy, and spiritual bonding.”³ Indeed, it is our nature to crave human affection and deep relationships. Still, some individuals might argue that we don’t need to be married to have companionship, but no one can deny that the sacred bond of marriage brings two people together like nothing else. Through marriage, a couple finds security and oneness. This is not possible through long-term dating or cohabitation, because there is no eternal covenant between the two people holding them together. Men and women compliment each other because they need each other. Why else would God have said, “It is not good for the man to be alone”? Even Adam commented on his connection to Eve when God first created her (Genesis 2:23). And consider Gloria Steinem, the famous feminist who once said that women need men like fish need bicycles. Eventually, Gloria had to bite the bullet; she, too, got married.⁴

Marriage is also the oldest institution in the world. Anywhere we go in the world today, we will find men and women joining hands in matrimony. But it seems marriage is gradually becoming an ancient practice in the United States. In 2003, *The New York Times* wrote, “The United States is becoming a post-marital society.”⁵ This is bad news, since “institutions, governments, religious fervor, and the welfare of children are all dependent on its stability.”⁶

Marriage is essential to society because it is the foundation for strong families, which are crucial to the development of healthy societies. Many Americans define ‘family’ as a group of people who love one another, regardless of blood or marital relation. This definition is only half correct. A family should consist of people who

³ James Dobson, *Marriage Under Fire* (Sisters: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2004), 8.

⁴ Kennedy and Newcombe, *As the Family Goes*, 8.

⁵ D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *What’s Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 15.

⁶ Dobson, *Marriage Under Fire*, 9.

not only love one another but are related to one another, as well. This is the God-ordained family unit, where good upbringing begins. Children need role models, married parents who can demonstrate God’s love in their relationships with each other. According to more than ten thousand studies, “kids do best when they are raised by loving and committed mothers and fathers [and are] healthier both emotionally and physically, even thirty years later, than those not so blessed with traditional parents.”⁷ If the United States continues in its present state, more children will be tossed from one parent to the next, from grandparents to daycares, from one sibling to another. There will be little chance for stable lifestyles; living arrangements will constantly change. Children will go from school to school, have a harder time making friends, and lack a positive social environment.⁸ How can a child develop to their full potential in an environment of constant change, confusion, and self-interest? Sure, there are exceptions. There are children from broken homes who grow up to become faithful believers; after all, anything is possible with God. But statistics show that broken lifestyles often originate in broken homes.

Divorce

While Christians debate the topic of divorce, the Bible is pretty clear about it: God hates divorce, but He permits it because He knows how weak we are. But He only allows it under one circumstance. But first, let’s look at the book of Matthew. Chapter 19 seems to best reveal the Bible’s definitive position on divorce. In verses 4 through 6, Jesus explains how God made us “male and female” in the beginning. He reasserts the importance of marriage, citing the scripture that says a man will leave his father and mother to unite with his wife. “Therefore,” Jesus says, “what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Then, in verses 8 through 9, Jesus says, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard...I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

Indeed, marital unfaithfulness is the only circumstance by which God will permit divorce. It is important to realize, though, that

⁷ Ibid., 54.

⁸ Ibid., 55.

while God allows divorce under this one condition, He does not approve of it.⁹ It is one of the countless sins Jesus paid for on the cross. Another vital issue to consider is the meaning of “marital unfaithfulness.” In Greek, it means *porneia*, which is “fornication and all forms of illicit or unlawful sexual intercourse in general.” This might include unlawful heterosexual relationships, homosexual practices, incest, and bestiality. It goes beyond mere “marital incompatibility, or disloyalty.”¹⁰

So does an unhappy couple have no choice but to continue living together unhappily? Well, God never said the Christian walk would be easy. Marriage is a reflection of our relationship with God, which is full of its own struggles and hardships. But God asks that we stay strong and continue to believe in Him. He promises everlasting joy if we just stay true to Him. Therefore, our response to those unhappy married couples is to try counseling. They must try to work through it. They can pray together – pray with friends. They must do everything they can to work it out, because they have made the eternal covenant with one another, which was never meant to be broken. Giving up and getting a divorce might seem the easy way out. God never calls us down the easy road. And recent sociological studies on marriage and divorce have shown that eighty-six percent of couples who choose to fix their marriage, rather than end it, are happy five years down the road, while only “22 percent of those who [go] ahead with the divorce [are] happy.”¹¹

Cohabitation

From a Christian perspective, cohabitation should really seem a no-brainer. It is inappropriate, irresponsible, and can only lead to sinful lifestyles. The practice of cohabitation (non-married couples living together) has grown 850 percent since 1960.¹² As sinful creatures, we are prone to selfish, godless behavior, and the temptation to have sex is severely heightened when couples live

⁹ Joseph Warren Kniskern, *When the Vow Breaks* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 79.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Kennedy and Newcombe, *What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?*, 17.

¹² David Popenoe and Barbara DaFoe Whitehead, “The State of Our Unions 2002: The Social Health of Marriage in America,” The National Marriage Project, Rutgers University (June 2002), 22.

together. Cohabitation fosters lack of commitment between partners, and under such circumstances, sexual relations are more accessible and easier to hide. Our flesh is weak, and we should not subject ourselves to that kind of temptation.

Perverted Partnerships & Adoptions

Of the many issues facing our nation today, the battle over same-sex marriage is one of the gravest, because so many things hinge on its result. Perverted partnerships, meaning same-sex unions or same-sex marriages, pose a great threat to the United States. The stability of our society is at risk. If same-sex marriage is legalized, the younger generation will grow up with a confused and incorrect view of in the institution of marriage. It will completely warp our future. The younger generation will “[lose] its understanding of lifelong commitments, emotional bonding, sexual purity, the role of children in a family, and [the] “sanctity” of marriage.”¹³ For the very same reasons, perverted adoptions cannot be allowed. How can a child grow up knowing God’s love represented through his or her married parents if they are of the same sex? What does this tell a child about right and wrong, about moral and immoral? Homosexual marriage will spread across the world, because other countries look to America as the leading trendsetter.¹⁴ Children will be impacted most due to the strains of non-traditional family life. Furthermore, same-sex marriage will rob them of the love and nurture only a father *and* a mother can offer.¹⁵ And when we uproot the institution of marriage, we uproot the doctrine of God.

Conclusion

Matters are worse than most realize. In 2001, the U.S. Census Bureau released its findings that the traditional family is dying in America. Traditional family households have dropped below 25 percent, an all-time low in our nation’s history, and the

¹³ Dobson, *Marriage Under Fire*, 47.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁵ Kennedy and Newcombe, *What’s Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?*, 57.

percentage of babies born to unmarried women rose from 3.8 percent, where it was in 1940, to 33 percent.¹⁶

Marriage and family are the foundations of strong societies. Through both, we come to better understand God's love as we experience healthy relationships and wholesome lifestyles within a community of believers. We cannot allow these ancient institutions to wither away with time, or our nation will crumble from its base. Every great society that has turned from these God-ordained establishments has fallen into ruin, and America is far from invincible. How can we turn our backs on the good things God has made?

¹⁶ Dobson, *Marriage Under Fire*, 33-34.