

Building Up Our Home Series-----#1

The Family **As Designed** **By God**

- 1 - The Family—A Blessing from God**
- 2 - Commitment to the Family**
- 3 - The Family—A Place of Training**
- 4 - Upholding Biblical Roles in the Family**
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Lesson One

"The Family—A Blessing from God"

God created man to be happy (blessed) and content! We know this to be true because God placed man in a beautiful garden with all that he needed to satisfy his needs (including a companion—woman). (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7-9, 18, 21-25). I don't believe that God created human beings to be unhappy or discontent from the above statements. But notice the many passages below that indicate that God wants man to be happy:

- Ps. 1:1-2** _____
- Ps. 32:1-2** _____
- Ps. 106:3** _____
- Ps. 112:1** _____
- Ps. 119** _____
- Ps. 128:1** _____
- Matt. 5:3** _____
- Matt. 5:4** _____
- Matt. 5:5** _____
- Matt. 5:6** _____
- Matt. 5:7** _____
- Matt. 5:8** _____
- Matt. 5:9** _____
- Matt. 5:10** _____
- Matt. 5:11** _____
- Lk. 11:28** _____
- Acts 20:35** _____
- Rom. 4:7-8** _____
- Jas. 1:25** _____
- Rev. 14:13** _____

The problem is not with God, but with man! He chose not to believe and listen to God; and it has been the same ever since! Man's search for happiness and contentment will never be found without believing and obeying the God of Heaven.

God's general blessings are for all people—food, clothing, and shelter! Jesus stated that the blessings of the sunshine and rain come upon the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45). Every good and perfect gift comes from above (Jas. 1:17). So, man is generally blessed by God as he lives and survives upon this earth. Marriage and the Family is definitely one of the main blessings designed for the benefit of all.

But, there are also special blessings from God for His believing, obedient, and redeemed people (Eph. 1:3) that go beyond His general blessings.

While marriage and the family are designed by God for the good, well-being, and happiness of mankind; such can also become a place of the very opposite! That which was intended to be a blessing can become a curse. Again, it comes back to the same problem that man has to deal with—willingness to listen to God! When God speaks, we should listen and learn!

Jas. 1:19 _____
Rev. 3:22 _____

Since God created human beings, He should also know the "answer" to the "how" of happiness. Do we believe that God wants us to be happy? If we answer "yes," then we should listen and learn! God has given special instructions that deal with Marriage and the Family. We need to search them out, and believe and follow God's way. If we say "no," then we are left to work out our own "salvation!" It might be well to see what happens to those who will not listen to God!

Gal. 6:7-8 _____

Rom. 2:5-9 _____

Blessedness comes from Satisfied Needs!

Human beings have needs! When these needs are satisfied, we feel good and content. We thirst for water—what a blessing to have good water to drink that satisfies our thirst. We feel hungry—we have an abundance of food to satisfy our hunger. Man also has sexual drives and urges, and God has provided "marriage" to find the "proper" way to satisfy these urges. And God warns that it is only in "marriage" that these desires should find fulfillment (Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:1-2). Man longs for intimate relationships and God has provided the "family" as one of the best ways to satisfy these longings. Most unhappiness can be traced back to a failure to give and to receive love. Jesus said that the two greatest commandments were to love God and love our neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). This love fulfills the demands of the Law of God—but these Laws are designed for our good or our well-being! Man has a need for security and the "family" is able to help give that security to a great extent.....but only when that home is listening to God and acting as God requires.

Concluding Thoughts

Just who are the truly blessed people? The happiest people on earth should be those who trust fully in God and follow His commandments.

Ps. 2:12 _____

PS. 84:12 _____

Ps. 119:2 _____

The Word of God is able to make us complete and ready unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, those who believe and obey God's Word should be greatly blessed. Their marriages should be blessed. Their family relationships should be blessed.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you believe God wants man to be happy and content?

2. Who does the Bible say is a happy (blessed) person?

3. Why is man unhappy and discontent?

4. Does God bless some people more than others? Explain your answer.

5. What happens to those who will not listen to God?

6. What does our "built-in-needs" have to do with happiness?

7. What needs do marriage and the family satisfy?

8. Who should be the happiest people on earth and why?

Space to Take Notes

Lesson Two

"Commitment to the Family"

There is a general belief in this country that "marriage" and the "family" as we know it Biblically is disappearing more and more. There are not only great numbers that are ending in divorce, but there is also a large increase in "live-in" situations that is not considered "marriage." Have "marriage" and the "family" lost their appeal or value to our society; or, is it a matter of stubborn refusal to believe in God and unwillingness to go by his way of living? There is a lot of domestic violence, dysfunctional and unhappy families in our society. Unfortunately, it is affecting the Lord's people in many places and help is needed to change things for the better. It is quite obvious that "life" brings unpleasant things into the lives of those who are married that have to be dealt with—aging, sickness, disagreements, disappointments, and hardships. Many marriages do not survive these things—mainly because of a **lack of commitment** to marriage and the family. They have lost sight of the great importance of the family to help deal with all of the problems we face.

What is Commitment?

Commitment is basically an agreement, pledge, or a vow to do something in the future. It is to obligate ourselves to a course of action that we feel is important. It is a promise made or decided upon and the willingness to stand by what we have pledged.

In our society, commitment has fallen by the wayside! A person's word or pledge is no longer valued as it once was. Instead, people make a pledge, sign an agreement, and when things get tight, they look for loop holes to escape their pledge.

What does God say? The following passages show us clearly what is right in the sight of God:

Ps. 15:1-5 _____

Eccl. 5:4-5 _____

Divorce is not the right answer (to the problems in marriage) to a committed person to God! God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). But He does allow it in an

extreme situation where sexual immorality (fornication or unfaithfulness) is involved (Matt. 19:8). The reaction of Jesus' disciples to what Jesus said shows that it was a difficult saying for them then (Matt. 19:10); and, as well, for us today! Jesus held a high view of marriage. The view that He taught was different from what many taught in that day. It is fast becoming a rejected view of most people today. Divorce is not what God wants; but rather, He wants commitment to marriage and the family! How does your view match up with Jesus' view?

Commitment needs to be put back into our attitudes toward marriage and the family. When we make our commitment to the Lord we will become and continue to be the kind of people that is committed to marriage and the family.

What does Commitment Involve?

We normally think that **commitment** involves keeping the marriage together; but it should also involve helping to make the marriage the best that we can. Otherwise, the couple may stay together, live in the same house, go to worship together, but be estranged from each other. Instead of family being a refuge, comfort, and a help, it becomes a place of strife, tension, loneliness, and pain. It is not enough to take divorce off the table. We need to also truly love each other and do everything possible to make marriage the blessing God intended.

Rom. 12:2 _____

Eph. 4:24 _____

Christians have committed themselves to God and righteous living (Rom. 6:13). Let's live up to this commitment. Let's truly crucify the old man of sin and put on the new man that walks in righteousness and godliness.

Concluding Thoughts

We need to be committed people! We first need to be committed to God and walk in His ways. Then we need to be committed to governing powers that are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1-7). We need to be committed to the Church that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18). And we need to be committed to marriage and the family. We need to see the great value of family and do all we can to uphold these righteous concepts. Otherwise, the consequences can be terrible.

1. We can rob ourselves of a wonderful marriage and family.
2. We can rob ourselves of an abundant life that Jesus came to give to us of joy, peace, and fulfillment (Jn. 10:10).
3. We can rob ourselves of eternal life that is reserved for the faith-ful.

4. But we can also rob our children of a wonderful home that they should have had.

A sight that we enjoy seeing is a young couple (with clean hands and pure hearts) saying their vows together in marriage—promising their love and devotion to each other for life! Is there anything more desirable than this? If there is, it would be an elderly couple that is at the end of their journey, but still faithful to each other through all the challenges and hardships of life. They have proven the great value of marriage and the family because they have successfully lived it. May God help us all to be that elderly couple some day!

Questions for Discussion

1. What are two warning signs that marriage and the home are in trouble in this country?
2. Have you noticed these things happening in the church?
3. How would you define commitment?
4. Do people in our society still strive to live up to their word? What do you base your answer on?
5. What does God say about pledges (vows) we make?
6. Why is divorce not the answer to our decline in valuing marriage?
7. Do you hold to the same view that Jesus did as stated in Matt. 19:9?
8. Why is Jesus' view of divorce so hard to accept?
9. Can a person who is truly committed to the Lord divorce their mate?
10. What are the two main factors of commitment?

Lesson Three

"The Family—A Place of Training"

Young people often make three of their most important decisions in life:

- a) Whether to become a Christian?
- b) What kind of Job do I want to have?
- c) Who will I marry?

It is often stated that they have very little training to make such life-affecting decisions! But, I think that we forget about the 18-22 years they are in our homes being taught, trained, and prepared to take their place in life. Certainly, this training will vary from house to house, but some young people have good training in their homes. Let's look back and think about the possibilities of training they could receive:

1. 1. They have lived in a family environment that provides living examples of how to live in a marriage or a family.
2. They have the example of their parents to consider in the process of decision making.
3. They have been attending public school for 12 years or more that could provide training of various things that pertain to living on earth.
4. They have attended Bible Classes and Worship Services for more years than public school—which could provide much good insight on God's view on these three areas of decision-making.
5. If they become a Christian during the teen years, this should affect their decision about a job as well as a future mate.

Training for Marriage

1. How do you train young men and women for marriage? This preparation should start in early childhood by the examples of their parents. But along with that, some simple but vivid teaching from the Scriptures would be of much help. The parents should help them understand God's instructions on the role of men and women, as well as, the basics on how to treat each other's mate.

Eph. 5:22-33 _____

1 Pet. 3:1-7 _____

The parents could then help to illustrate this teaching in their own marriage and/or the marriage of others. Immaturity, selfishness, and pride needs to be dealt with early in life. Parents can make a big difference here by their teaching as well as their example. (The self-centered person usually makes a poor mate). But when one becomes a Christian, Christ is enthroned in his or her heart. The Words of Christ must be taught and exemplified, so they can understand how to be a good husband or wife, father or mother.

2. How do you train children to be good workers and providers for their family? They must be taught by example of the parents first. Then, the Scriptures should be taught to children about the responsibility of working and providing for one's family.

Eph. 4:28 _____

1 Tim. 5:8 _____

2 Thess. 3:10 _____

Children must not see hypocrisy in their parents, but a life consistent with the teaching of Scripture. Work is not a curse, but a blessing. Work was designed for man even before he sinned and were driven out of the garden.

3. How do you train children to be pure in mind and body for marriage? Modesty in dress and in actions needs to be stress early in the life of children. Wrong teaching about sexual activity in marriage must be avoided at all cost! They need to realize that such has been planned and given by God for the well-being of mankind and that it is not dirty, evil, or wrong in Marriage!

Heb. 13:4 _____

1 Cor. 6:9-11 _____

1 Cor. 6:15-20 _____

The sexual drive is strong in young men and women and it is designed by God to lead to marriage. But at the same time, during the dating process, it can be a dangerous time because of the "strength" of the temptation. As parents, we need to help them to know and avoid the temptation traps that they may have to deal with. The sexual drive is strong and when awakened, it can cause all kinds of problems (outside of marriage). As parents, we must help them know the difference between love and lust. We can do this by emphasizing how love can be recognized:

| | | |
|----------|----------|---------------|
| Honesty | purity | unselfishness |
| Nobility | humility | modesty. |

We need to teach them that pre-marital sex has its dangers:

- a) Pregnancy;
- b) Venereal disease,
- c) Problems in marriage,
- d) Guilt,
- e) Ruined reputation, etc.

But, at the same time, teach them the main reason for avoiding sexual immorality is because God says it is wrong! Help them to put their trust in God—He knows what is best! Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2) and there is a price that will have to be paid for that sin (Rom. 6:23). Fornication is condemned by God (1 Thess. 4:4-7; 1 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 5:3-5). Help them to understand that they have no right to stir up desires that they have no right to fulfill and satisfy outside of marriage! It is important that they learn how to choose wisely where they go as well as with whom they go.

4. How do you prepare children for problem solving in marriage? Every marriage will have its peaks and valleys—its challenges and joys. How can you help them to learn how to deal with these things that are sure to come, as well as, things that will challenge their vow to live together until death! Children need to learn that life can be difficult at times, unfair, and unending; but, that God can always be there if we put our trust in Him to see us through.

Concluding Thoughts

One thing I believe we can see for sure—the home can be a wonderful place of teaching and training for life; but, it won't be done by the lazy and indifferent parent. They definitely teach the wrong lessons. It would be wonderful if every family did the teaching and training that they are very capable of—to the best of their ability; and then, to take advantage and encourage the help of our schools and the church to help back up and add to that teaching and training.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you give a good reason why God has designed for three important decisions to be made by "young people?"

2. In what sense are children being trained for making these three important decisions?

3. Why is preparation for marriage important for young people?

4. What is a most effective way for parents to train their children?

5. Why do children need to bring purity of mind and body into marriage?

6. How can you help children to avoid the sexual traps in dating?

7. Why has God made the sexual urge so strong in young people?

8. What is the difference between "love" and "lust?"

9. What is the main reason for avoiding fornication (sexual immorality)?

10. How do you train children to deal with problems that come into their lives?

Lesson Four

"Upholding Biblical Roles in the Family"

It would seem to be vitally important that our children understand that:

1. Marriage and the Family has been designed by God;
2. He has given us basic roles (responsibilities) to fulfill;
3. And to realize the great value of marriage and the Family when it is guided by God.

All of our teaching and training is focused around the Home being what God has designed it to be.

1. Roles (responsibilities) must be taken on willingly and responsibility;
2. Changing of these roles can not only bring God's displeasure, but other consequences as well.
3. These roles are determined by how and why God created a man and a woman;
4. In some instances, some responsibilities can only be fulfilled by the one or the other.

In this lesson, we want to look briefly at the roles of the man, the woman, parents, and children as designed by God. We will give a few Scriptures on each and some brief comments.

The Role of the Man in the Home

1. He is to serve as the "head" or the "leader" in the home. He was given this position by God (Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:3). If man originated this arrangement, then it can be changed by man. If it is a God-given role, then it is **right, best, and to be respected.** Man must assume the leadership role or be in disobedience to God. He needs to have or develop the capacity to lead and lead well. He must lead, not just talk about it. While authority belongs to the man, yet **servitude** belongs to both (Eph. 5:21).

2. He is to love his wife. (Eph. 5:23-33). He is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church...and to love his wife as he loves himself! This love is described in 1 Cor. 13:4-7 and needs to be studied seriously by the man, but yet by all. This love is to "temper" the man's exercising of leadership so that it will not be tyrannical or harsh, but loving and kind. Additional Scriptures that emphasizes this love:

1 Jn. 3:11, 14, 16 _____

3. He is to live "considerately" with his wife. (1 Pet. 3:7). It is important that the man learn his wife's needs and problem areas. He needs to ask: "*What does she need? What makes her happy? What makes her nervous? What makes her relaxed? What makes her depressed?*" There are generally problem areas that most wives would have to face that the husband needs to be aware of and help where he can.

- a) Low self-esteem
 - b) Fatigue and Time pressure
 - c) Loneliness & Isolation
 - d) Absence of romantic love
 - e) Financial difficulties
 - f) Sexual problems
 - g) Menstrual & Physiological problems
 - h) Problems with children
 - i) Aging
- etc.

4. He needs to Honor his wife. (1 Pet. 3:7). Another word for honor could be "to show respect." Why should a man "honor" is wife?

1 Pet. 3:7 _____

Gen. 1:27 _____

Gen. 2:18 _____

A young married man will usually exercise his responsibilities toward his wife much like what he has seen at home or possibly other homes—unless he has been affected by a diligent study of Scripture on the subject. Children tend to learn their attitudes from their fathers and mothers.

The Role of the Woman in the Home

1. She is to be in a submissive role. The woman serves as a "*help suit-able for the man.*" (Gen. 2:18). What are the Biblical reasons given for why she is to be in a submissive role?

Gen. 3:16 _____

1 Cor. 11:3 _____

Eph. 5:22 _____

Eph. 5:24 _____

Eph. 5:33 _____

Col. 3:18 _____

1 Tim. 2:11-12 _____

1 Pet. 3:1 _____

1 Tim. 2:13 _____

1 Tim. 2:14 _____

1 Cor. 11:8-9 _____

A wife needs to believe in her husband and show it. The only security she has is her husband's ability and drive. Husbands must prove themselves in the eyes of their wife. If she makes her husband look bad in public, she is destroying his ego. She should support her husband's decisions as much as possible. They won't be right every time, but neither would they be if the wife were making them. Place emphasis upon the good and right parts of decisions—build on these!

2. She is to be a Homemaker. (Tit. 2:3-5). The two Greek words are translated in the following ways: "**Homemakers**" (NKJV); "**Workers at Home**" (ASV); "**Homekeepers**" (Williams); "**Housekeepers**" (Berkeley); "**Domesticated**" (TCNT); "**Home lovers**" (Phillips). The idea seems to be....."**one who keeps their own house.**" A key passage that helps with this idea is:

1 Tim. 5:13-14 _____

So, whether a woman works outside the home or not, her primary responsibility is to "guide, manage, or keep her home," and not to be idle, a gossip, or a busybody in other people's lives.

3. She needs to love her husband. (Tit. 2:3-5). The Greek word for "love" is **Phileo**. This word is never used in the sense of a command with the exception of this passage. It is used here to stress that she needs to have a warm affection for her husband. How can this love be expressed or shown to her husband?

Eph. 5:24 _____

1 Cor. 7:3-5 _____

Prov. 19:14 _____

Eph. 5:33 _____

4. She is to beautify the Inner Person. (1 Pet. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:9-10). The man is more oriented towards seeing, while the woman is more oriented towards feelings. The tendency on the part of women is to "over-dress" outwardly in order to attract the man, rather than to get his admiration from her "inner beauty." God wants to reverse this process and says so in the two passages above. Please examine the following passages that will help to better understand the two passages above:

Jn. 6:27 _____

Matt. 6:19-20 _____

1 Cor. 1:17 _____

A happy marriage is not one-sided—it takes both working at their special roles to find the peace, contentment, and happiness that God has intended to come from this special relationship between a man and a woman in the bonds of marriage.

The Roles of Parents and Children

1. Parents must love their children. (Tit. 2:4). This love is shown by proper behavior towards their children. These roles must be always kept in mind: Parents are Parents; Children are Children! Parents are over the Children—not Children over Parents!

Col. 3:21 _____

Eph. 6:4 _____

Heb. 12:5-11 _____

Prov. 20:7 _____

Prov. 13:24 _____

2. Children must honor their parents. (Eph. 6:1-3). This honor is shown by the child's willingness to be obedient to their parents.

Prov. 13:1 _____

Prov. 15:20 _____

Prov. 19:26 _____

Prov. 20:20 _____

Jesus offered a strong rebuke to some religious leaders who were not showing honor to their parents (Matt. 15:1-9).

Concluding Thoughts

A happy home is one in which all are striving hard to be obedient to God's instruction about how they are to act towards one another. Our efforts to improve our attitudes and actions should never end—continue to the end of our existence here on earth.

Lesson Five

***"Balancing Family Life
with Jobs and other Activities"***

Fifty to one hundred years ago, this topic may not have really been a challenge to the family as it is now. Drastic changes in our society have brought about the need to adapt. When so many families worked on the "farm," they were together—they didn't have too much choice if they wanted to survive. Also, there were lots of opportunities to observe, to learn, and to mature as a family. At present, there are more and more living in the cities—which requires separation primarily of the father from the family during the day. However, since so many of the wives or mothers work outside the home also, "togetherness" as a family has been greatly affected. Our school system does a lot of the teaching to our children and much of the emphasis on the moral and spiritual have been banned from the classroom. Also, the "after-school-activities" and sports in general make it even harder for the family to be together. How do, and how should, families deal with the present challenges that all of the above indicate.

Make the Family a Priority!

God has obviously designed for the family to be together for good reasons. Yes, we have to have jobs and we often need to be involved in other activities that have value to us. But the family is basic! If it breaks up, the job or other "important" activities are not worth losing the family. Togetherness of the family must be retained! Discuss how the following Scriptures can help to keep the family as a priority.

Eph. 5:24-25 _____

Eph. 6:1-2 _____

Eph. 6:4 _____

2 Thess. 3:7-9 _____

1 Tim. 3:4-5 _____

1 Tim. 5:14 _____

Tit. 2:4-5 _____

If family is our priority, we will plan our work and other activities in such a way as to retain the importance and value of the family. It is not only important that the family be together, but to make good use of that time to build a unified and effective family. Of course, one of the most effective times of being together can be when we attend worship and Bible study as a family (Heb. 10:24-25).

Do a lot of Teaching!

One of the primary values of the home is the ability and opportunity to teach great moral and spiritual truths for individuals in the family. The passage in Deuteronomy expresses this clearly!

Deut. 6:4-9 _____

Jesus showed us by the use of Parables that the physical world has the ability to help us understand great spiritual truths! We need to observe life around us, decide what is meaningful and more important, and use even the little things to teach the great spiritual truths that come from God. We only have our children for a short time—we need to make the best use of that time to teach by example and the Word of God!

Prov. 22:6 _____

Prov. 1:8-9 _____

One of the great sources for teaching our children is found in the book of Proverbs.

Emphasize the Value of Family!

There are many good things about having and being a part of a family. There should be a "**oneness**" built and made strong in the family relationship. (Matt. 19:5). It is to be like the "oneness" that God (the Father) and God (the Son) possess. (Jn. 17:21). There needs to be a sense of "**permanence**" in the family. There should be no thought nor discussion about separation, break-up, or divorce. It is to be permanent—"**until death do us part!**" (Matt. 19:6). There should be a "**companionship**" emphasized in the family. (Gen. 2:18). This is

not only for the benefit of the husband and wife, but for the children as well. There is a sense of "**security**" when these things are built and held to in the family. But most of all, there needs to be a proper understanding of the "**love**" of God and how each member of the family needs to have and receive this love! This "love" needs to be genuine, unselfish, and freely given and received whether the person deserves it or not!

Rom. 12:10 _____

Eph. 5:25 _____

1 Jn. 3:16 _____

Phil. 2:3-4 _____

Concluding Thoughts

These are the things that help to create a good atmosphere in the home and make it a place that people desire to be a part of. This is the kind of family that is built upon the "rock!" (Matt. 7:26). This is the kind of family that will stand up under the great challenges of life and be successful. The destiny of our nation, the well-being of our homes, and even our eternal destiny are all deeply affected by how the family goes!

Lesson Six

"The Family and the Nation"

"As goes the family, so goes the nation!" This concept has been expressed many times in similar wording in the writings of men in this country as well as other countries. The connection between the family and the nation seems to be an obvious fact to most people! ***"Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."*** (Prov. 14:34). The home is where righteousness needs to be taught and practiced. What a blessing to be raised in a home where righteousness prevails; but what a blessing also to be raised in a country where righteousness prevails.

Unfortunately, there are insidious things that are striving to undermine the family and its effectiveness for good in society. Up until a few years ago the "concept of marriage" had a positive effect on "sex," "procreation," and "child-rearing." The weakening of this effect has taken its toll on marriage and the family—but it is also affecting the nation as well. We need to look at what is happening to this nation as a results of **"changed"** views on marriage and the family.

The Break-up of Marriage

Statistics reveal that from 1960 to 2000, the divorce rate more than doubled in this country (20% to 50%) of all first marriages. The very thing that God said that He "hated" is now being accepted by a large portion of the people of this country. (Mal. 2:14-15)—easy divorce for any reason! Children in these broken homes are probably affected more than any one else. The following things have been listed as affects upon children of broken homes:

1. They are more likely to end their marriage in divorce;
2. They will be more likely to have marital problems;
3. They will likely suffer from mental illness and delinquency;
4. Many will drop out of high school;
5. They will have poor relationships with one or both parents;
6. And, they will have problems committing themselves to a marital relationship.

But, please notice the following in the way of a general results:

1. Divorce is associated with poverty, depression, substance abuse, and poor health.
2. Widespread divorce will poison the view that marriage and the family are valuable.

3. It will sow distrust, insecurity, and a low-commitment mentality among married and unmarried adults.
4. Couples who take a permissive view of divorce are significantly less likely to invest themselves in their marriages and less likely to be happily married themselves.

For these and other reasons, divorce threatens to undermine marriage, hurts children, and brings on undesirable consequences for this nation as a whole!

Illegitimacy

Again, statistics show that from 1960 to 2003, the percentage of children born out of wedlock rose from 5% to 35%. Most children born out of marriage will spend the majority of their childhood in a single parent home. The reason for this is that the vast majority of cohabiting unions (even the ones involving children) end in dissolution. Probably, the biggest problem with illegitimacy is that it usually denies children from having two parents who are completely committed to each other and to their children for life. These children are much more likely to experience negative or bad outcomes in their lives, such as: **imprisonment, depression, teenage pregnancy, and high school failure.** God saw the need for there to be both a father and a mother in the home for the good of the family. When people will not respect what God has arranged, they will have to pay the consequences of their decisions.

Gal. 6:7-8 _____

"Same-Sex Marriage"

Of recent, there has been a push by some in this country to get laws passed that permits the same sex to get married and have all the "privileges" that married people have. The freedom that we have in this country to generally do what we want to has to be controlled for the good of the nation as a whole. This is the reason for Laws that regulate the actions of people. While those who do not believe in God or the Bible as the Word of God can believe that this is okay and a law should be passed to grant people this privilege; yet, to the believer, it is a "far-fetched" thing to do! It certainly undermines God's arrangement of marriage and the home in our view of things. Marriage is to be between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:22-24)—not a male with a male or a female with a female. And, the Bible does plainly condemn such (Rom. 1:26-32).

But there are further indications of the bad effects this will have on our society at large.

1. Children reared by same-sex parents will experience greater difficulties with their identity, sexuality, attachments to kin, and marital prospects as adults.
2. "Same-sex marriages" will tend to undermine sexual fidelity, since "gay-marriage" advocates and "gay-couples" tend to downplay the importance of sexual fidelity.

Concluding Thoughts

While a great deal of effort has been made by the religious groups in this country to uphold God's arrangement in marriage and the family, it evidently has not been sufficient to stem the tide of those who are advocating radical changes in the views and actions of people to the arrangement of marriage and the family. And, at the same time, some of these religious groups are slowly giving in to such views themselves. It will be well worth the effort to strive to uphold the Biblical view of marriage and the family—not only for the good of God's people, but for our nation's benefit as well. For God has said....."***Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.***" (Prov. 14:34).

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the connection between righteousness and upholding the marriage and family arrangement advocated by the Bible?

2. What affect does "marriage" have on "sex," "procreation," and "child-rearing?"

3. What are some of the outcomes or consequences of Divorce?

4. Why is divorce connected with poverty and substance abuse?

5. Why has illegitimacy risen so high?

6. What are some of the effects of illegitimacy upon children?

7. What would be some of the "common sense" objections that you would have with same-sex marriage?

8. If you were a preacher and you were asked to perform a wedding ceremony for a same-sex couple, would you say yes?

