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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Matthew 19:3-9
Lesson #23
Focus on the Family
03/19/2023

Romans 12


“1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present **your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

- Following Christ demands that we **sacrifice our physical self** to spiritual service.
- Without a **renewed mind**, Christian ethical teaching seems unreasonable and foolish.
- This text has **profound implications** for Christian marriage and family life.

1

The wind of “me” centered culture

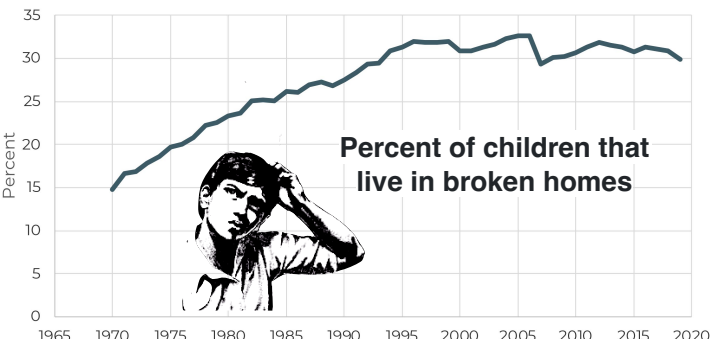
- 1. Maximize sexual freedom** -
(viewing sexual moral restrictions as a violation of our right to find happiness)
- 2. Minimize gender differences** -
(viewing gender differences as a threat to justice and democracy)



Both address the way we view our body and undermine a traditional marriage and the family.

2

Nearly 1/3 of American children live without one or both parents.

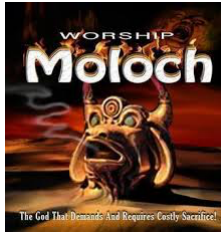


Percent of children that live in broken homes

U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics

3

Child Sacrifice



The sacrifice of children to the Canaanite god, **MOLOCH** was the pinnacle of idolatry in the ancient world.

It was a mockery of God's Image in humanity and a seed for the destruction of human society.

4

Child Sacrifice


Then & *Now*



Canaanite debauchery *Abortion* *Divorce*

5

“What must it be like for a little boy to read that Daddy never loved Mummy?”




Princess Diana

6

Three predictors of poverty and social disfunction

- Growing up in poverty (broken home)
- Bearing a child out of wedlock
- Failure to finish high school

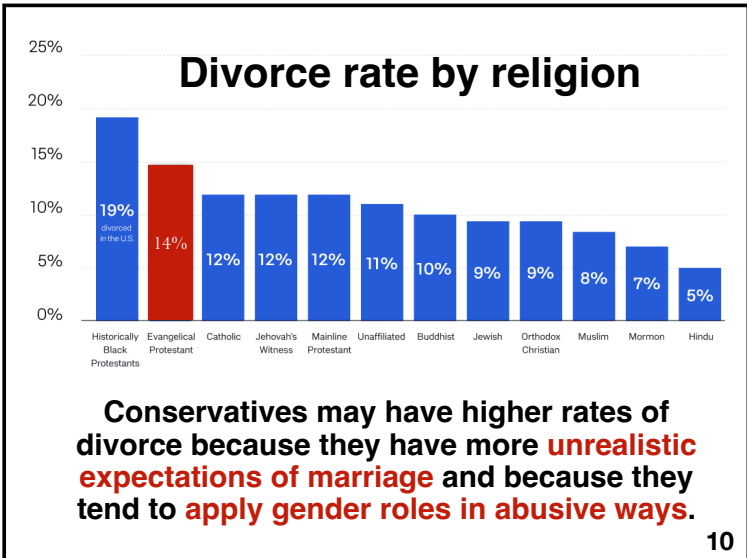
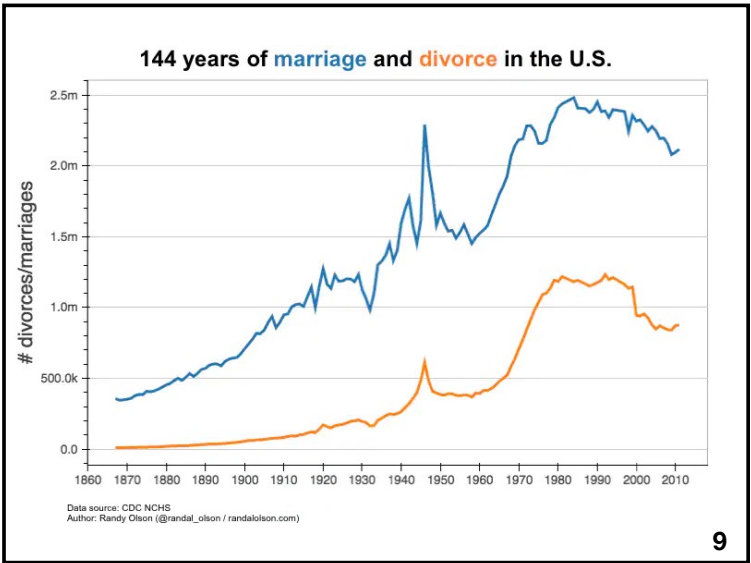


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Research shows a positive correlation between **children from broken homes** and:

- **Academic performance** - failure to finish high school.
- **Incarceration** for a crimes as a juvenile.
- **Poverty**.
- Teens engaged in **drug, alcohol, premarital sex**.
- **Divorce** in later life.
- **Physical illness**.
- **Child abuse** experiences.
- **Psychological distress**, and the emotional scars that last into adulthood.

8



Evangelical's commitment to marriage is too low and their expectations of marriage are too high.

- Marriage is designed for my fulfillment
- Finding God's right person will secure a successful marriage.
- Marriage is expected to meet my emotional needs.
- Christian marriages come with a guarantee.



11

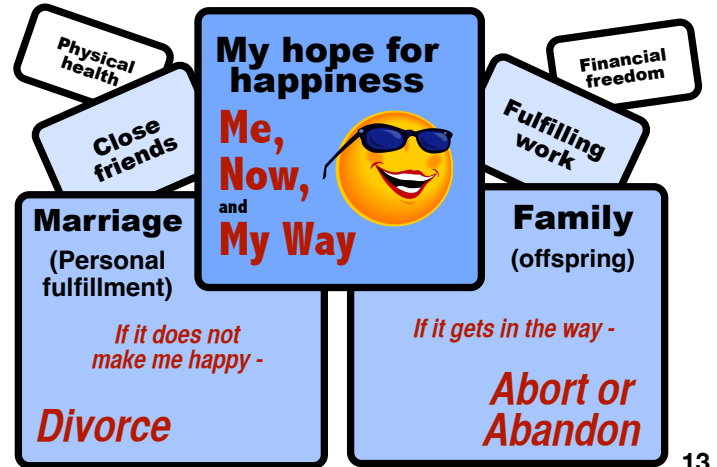
We live in a culture that tends to:

**Worship at work
Work at play and
Play at worship.**



12

Where do we find hope for our soul?



13

Our commitments are increasingly held together only by

SUBJECTIVE FEELINGS.

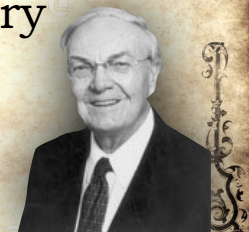


A healthy marriage is based on more than “falling in love” and “staying in love”.

14

“The Scripture’s emphasis is to love the person we marry more than marry the person we love.”

Bruce K. Waltke



15

If we are to be serious in addressing social issues, we must follow the N.T. focus.

1. Build healthy families,
2. Starting with intact marriages,
3. That are a part of a supportive community.

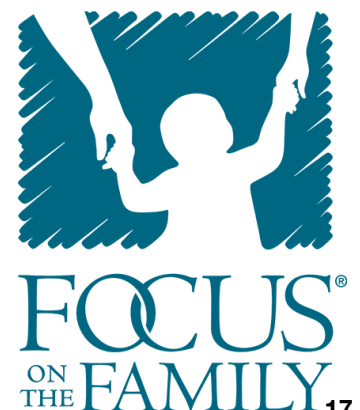


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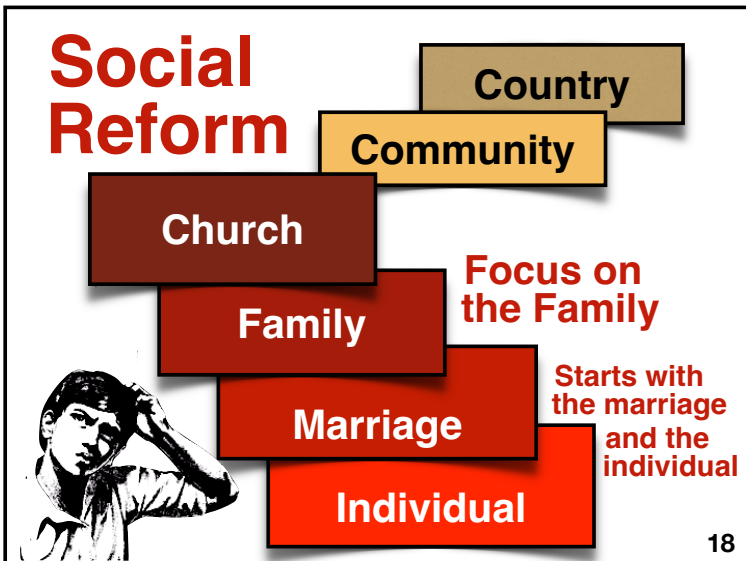
“Our success as a society, depends not on what happens in the White House, but on what happens inside your house.”



Barbara Bush



17



Biblical social ethics
Focus on the Family

Gen.2:24, Matt.19:5, Eph.5:31

“For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and **the two shall become one flesh.**”

The O.T. is Focused on a biological Family (Abraham).

The N.T. is Focused on a spiritual Family (Bride of Christ).

19

Deuteronomy 24:1

“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found **some indecency** in her, (he can) write her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,-”

The meaning of “some indecency” is unclear.

HILLEL - “for any reason”

SHAMMAI - “sexual offense”

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Matthew 19

“³ And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?” ⁴ And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning *made them male and female,* ⁵ and said, ‘*For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.*’ ⁶ Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**” ⁷ They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to *give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?*””

21

Matthew 1 (Jesus’ birth)

“¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been **betrothed** to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to **put her away (divorce)** secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, **do not be afraid** to take Mary as your wife;. . .”

Marriage

legal betrothal ← 1 year ? → sexual union

Divorce ?

22

Matthew 19:8-9 - Jesus’ clarifies this text

Matthew 19

“⁸ He said to them, “**Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.** ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for **immorality**, and marries another woman commits adultery.””

- The meaning of “immorality” (*porneia*)
 - ✓ It is **not** the normal word for adultery.
 - ✓ It is used **only** in Matthew’s account.
 - ✓ It is implied of Jesus’ birth in Jn.8:41.
 - ✓ It is **distinct** from “adultery” in Matt.15:19.

23

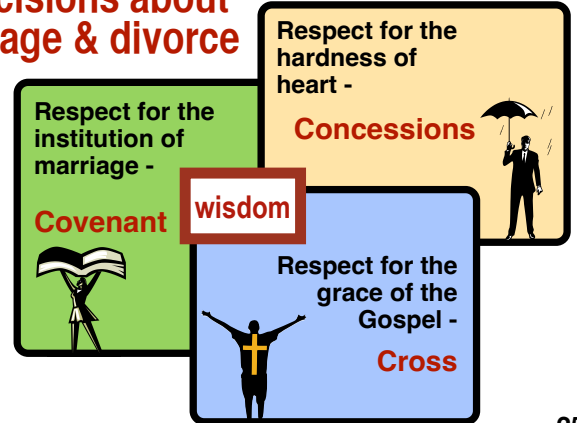
Biblical marriage rules are strict.

(Matt.5:31-32, 19:1-9, 1 Cor.7:1-40)

- Legitimate marriages **between two Christians** are not to be dissolved. If there is a separation there is **no freedom to marry another** without being guilty of adultery.
- In the case of **mixed marriages** the believer is to strive to preserve the relationship but if the unbeliever departs the believer may be free to remarry in that the first marriage is annulled as with a mixed marriage in the day of Ezra. (1 Cor.7)
- Marriages and divorces **before coming to Christ**, are forgiven.
- In a broken world **“damage control”** is often needed and must be respected (Deut.24:1).

24

Three critical considerations in decisions about marriage & divorce



25

“Divorce is an earned right only after you have done everything possible to save the marriage.”

Dr. Phil McGraw

26

Earning the right to a “Christian” divorce

- ✓ Have you made marriage a sacrificial ministry?
- ✓ Have you done everything within reason to build and save the marriage?
- ✓ Have you sought outside help early?
- ✓ Are you able to do this out of love not anger or fear?
- ✓ Are you committed to picking up the pieces after a divorce?
- ✓ Are you willing and able to forgive?



27

“We should aspire to the kind of marriage that makes our kids **want to get married and stay married.**”

28

A Berean’s look at ...



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