

Marriage and Family

“What God has joined together let no man separate.”

Key question

What does the Bible say about marriage and the family?

Key text

Galatians 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

- A. **QUIZ: True or False** (from *Diversity in Families* by Zinn and Eitzen)
1. Until the Protestant Reformation, human sexuality was generally viewed by the church as an obstacle to spiritual health. (True) *The history of the church’s view of human sexuality has been a great embarrassment in that for centuries it was thought to be the essence of spiritual “carnality.” It was necessary for procreation only.*
 2. Family life among the Puritans in the New England colonies was especially disciplined, harmonious, and stable. (False) *The family was a breeding ground for tension and conflict, especially during the winter, when its members were forced into close and constant contact with each other in small, cramped houses. High mortality rates meant stability was hard to achieve. The average length of marriage was less than a dozen years. One third to one-half of all children lost at least one parent before the age of twenty-one.*
 3. During the colonial period, the rigorous puritanical code reduced the rate of premarital pregnancies to the lowest level in American history. (False) *Even among the Puritans, fornication and adultery were common in the seventeenth century. In certain communities of eighteenth-century America, 30-40% of brides were going to the marriage alter pregnant.*
 4. The idea of childhood as a unique period in life is a relatively modern concept. (True) *Until after the industrial revolution, children were viewed and treated as small sized adults with undeveloped abilities.*
 5. Families everywhere are similar in form because the family is a natural unit, based on timeless functions of love, caring, and childbearing. (False) *Families are not merely biological arrangements, but are grounded in particular social settings, which produce wide-ranging family differences.*

6. Slavery destroyed African family systems and left a legacy of dysfunctional cultural patterns. (False) *Although their families were frequently disrupted, slaves rebuilt kinship structures that enabled them to cope with enslavement.*
7. Industrialization replaced the extended family of early America with the nuclear family form. (False) *Nuclear families did not emerge as a response to industrialization but were brought here by the nation's earliest White settlers.*
8. Public anxiety about “the crisis of the family” is a recent development. (False) *The idea that the family is falling apart is as old as the nation itself. The earliest New England settlers feared that the family was endangered and children were losing respect for authority.*
9. Families that did not conform to the “standard” model (nuclear in form, with a breadwinner father and a homemaker mother) were exceptions to the rule. (False) *The breadwinner father/homemaker mother form that developed during industrialization was one of many family forms that emerged in the new society.*
10. As indicated by the trends of increased cohabitation, marrying later, and high divorce rates, Americans are becoming disillusioned with marriage. (False) *Marriage remains a vital institution: 90% of adults eventually marry; and approximately two-thirds of divorced people remarry.*
11. Because living together is practicing for marriage, cohabitants who later marry have more successful marriages than those who do not. (False) *Couples who live together before marriage are more likely to break up than those who do not.*
12. The effects of divorce on children are generally positive. Divorce is preferable to the tension and conflict of a troubled marriage. (False) *Broken marriages are devastating for children whether the parents are formally divorced or not.*

B. History of Marriage and Family

1. The traditional (Western) Greco-Roman tradition.

Andreas Kinneging, The Geography of Good and Evil, Intercollegiate Studies Institute Press, p.205-

- a. The family (more than the individual) was the center of social moral concern. This respected that critical role the family plays in raising children to responsible adulthood.
- b. The traditional marriage (between a man and woman) was based on an assumed order of nature. It was assumed to be:
 - 1) **Hierarchical** – the man was the head of the household with natural gifts and responsibilities to provide and protect his wife (and children) even if it meant sacrifice of self.
 - 2) **Exclusive** – both polygamy and adultery were viewed as harmful to a strong family.

NOTE: The sexual fidelity of the wife was more critical than that of the husband because she was more inclined to link sexual infidelity with emotional/spiritual infidelity thus destabilizing the family. This is why traditional cultures treated concubines differently than sex with another man's wife. The biggest threat to the family from the husband's infidelity was the fathering of illegitimate offspring who would not have a father's support of protection.

- 3) **Permanent** – In traditional societies, women and children who were without a husband and father were very vulnerable. This fact has not changed as much as some would like us to believe. Recent studies have indicated significant penalties to women and children of divorce.

2. The Ancient Christian Heritage.

- a. Human sexuality was often linked with **sin**.
- b. **Celibacy** was viewed as a sign of spirituality.
- c. Families were **patriarchal**.
- d. “It was Augustine who epitomized a general feeling among the church fathers that the sexual act was fundamentally “disgusting.” “Arnobius called it filthy and degrading, Methodius unseemly, Jerome unclean, Tertullian shameful, Ambrose defilement.” *Reay Tannahill, Sex in History (Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.: Stein & Day, 1980), p. 141.*

3. The Middle Ages.

- a. The Roman Catholic Church made marriage a **sacrament**.
- b. **Celibacy** was required of the priesthood.
- c. By the 13th century “courtly” or **romantic** love became important, but only outside of marriage.
- d. Marriage was governed more by **practical** necessities than by romance.
- e. By the 19th century, **romantic** love became an important part of marriage.

4. The Colonial (traditional) Family.

- a. Marriage was an **expected** part of life.
- b. Marriages choices were **influenced** by parents and based upon companionship more than romantic love.
- c. Although **premarital sex** was viewed as sinful, an estimated one-third of all marriages in the eighteenth century took place with the bride pregnant (today the figure is about 20%). Promiscuity was rare however.
- d. Women were generally married in their early 20s and were **mothers** most of their adult lives.
- e. Men were seen as the **head of the home** and were respected as such by both wives and children.
- f. The **mortality rate** was about 25 percent for those twenty-one and younger (today it is about 1 percent).
- g. A woman’s first child was usually born about sixteen months after marriage; her last was not born until the woman was about **forty years old**.
- h. Children were viewed as **small adults** from about the age of seven, and strict proscription of childish rebellion was common because they were viewed as evil by nature.
- i. Childhood education was on the **job** and at **home**.
- j. In 1790 fewer than 3 percent of the households were **single-person households** (today the figure is about 23%).

5. The 19th Century Family.

- a. **Industrialization** and **urbanization** shattered the old family model.

- 1) Man became the sole provider for the family. The “**housewife**” at home was a product of this trend.
 - 2) When the world of work had centered on the home and the farm, family values had had a significant impact on work decisions. Life had not been divided between what a person did to earn a living and the rest of his or her existence. This was no longer the case.
- b. Women were placed on a **pedestal** and were considered warmer, finer, more virtuous, and more delicate than men.
 - c. Children were considered **innocent** and were nurtured. It was the world that was corrupt and corrupting to the child.
 - d. Childhood education took place in a classroom. The **public school** also had a socializing effect.
 - e. Childhood **adolescence** (a period of innocence and protection) was recognized during this period by the middle class.
 - f. **Child labor** became an economic necessity for many.
 - g. Marriage was based upon **romantic** relationship, not economic necessity.
 - h. **Women** gained a new sense of **power** and independence in selecting their mates.
 - i. The **divorce** rate began to increase as the success of the marriage depended on the success of the emotional relationship rather than on how well the family met its material needs.
 - j. The family became more **private** -- a retreat from the working world.
 - k. Husbands and wives were expected to **develop and correct** each other to further personal character development.
 - l. Procreation was now seen as not the only **purpose for sex**.
 - m. As many as 20 percent of pregnancies ended in **abortion**.
- 6. The 20th Century (modernity).**
- a. The fragmentation of consciousness (a sense of reality) or cognitive dissonance led to confusion about values and a lack of confidence in traditional norms.
 1. The **sexual revolution** has challenged traditional sexual ethics.
 2. The social and political **liberation of women** has brought a confusion of gender role expectations.
 3. The **secularization** of the major institutions of society (school, church, media) challenges traditional worldviews.
 4. The erosion of any sense of assumed values made **communication** more difficult and a sense of **community** more illusive.
 - b. **Globalization** brought greater diversity and with it a challenge to tribal values.
 - c. Increasingly, a person’s identity became associated with **careerism** and **consumerism** as economics dominated the definition of self worth.
 - b. The breakup of the traditional family has created a generation of **insecure children**.
 - e. The heavy emphasis upon **personal fulfillment** and **autonomy** puts a strain on intimate relationships.

- f. The family was displaced by the isolated and **subjective individual** on the one hand and the **political state** on the other as the moral guide or locus of decision making.
- g. The following chart provides a helpful summary. From *The Family* (3rd edition) by Jack and Judith Balswick p347

Impact of modernity	Dilemmas for the family	False hopes
<i>Fragmentation of Consciousness</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation of thought • Religious and moral pluralism • Disjunction between faith and life • Subjectivization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis in morality and authority • Dichotomy between private and public life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditionalism: restoring the family of the past • Cult of the expert • Privatization
<i>Complexity of Communication</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline of significant symbols • Mystifying technical language • Impoverished conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse backgrounds and linguistic styles • Generation gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over reliance on techniques of communication • Isolation of communication from regular activities
<i>Disintegration of Community</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disintegration of traditional community life • Lack of social control • Individuals confronted by bureaucracy and mass society • Government encroachment into private matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated nuclear family • Lack of community support and control • Increased family dependence on mass institutions • Development of a youth culture • Little parental stake in children's marriages • Lack of ties between extended families • Diminished parental authority • Equalization of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family as a self-contained unit • Extra familial care of children, the elderly, and the handicapped • Alternative family forms

	power within the family	
<i>Dominance of Commodities</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of society around economic values • Separation of economic from church life • “Commodification” of social life • Dominance of technical means 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family as the unit of consumption instead of production • Separation of work and family life • Individual and family worth determined by economics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the fair market value of housework • Community through consumption • The family as the center of cottage industry • Full employment for both husband and wife (careerism)

C. God’s original design – Genesis 1-2

1. Spirituality and Sexuality – the first two principles of humanity.

Gen.1:26-29 “²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." ²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.”

- a. The Biblical story starts with the motif of “family” (Adam and Eve in marriage with a mandate to procreate).
- b. The first two things that are noted about humanity are that man is spiritual and sexual. The relationship of man and woman is fundamental to the story as is their joint relationship with God.
- c. The man and the woman were to “rule over” the creation together. This function was fundamental to the reason for their existence. Humanity stands above the creation with a mandate to control and govern it. This may have implications for humanity’s exploration and control over their own biology.
- d. The commands to be “fruitful”, “fill the earth”, and “subdue” it seem to be a part of “ruling over.” Procreation is commanded and blessed. Sexuality is not evil.
- e. In this chapter it is suggested that humans and animals are to eat only plants.

f. All that God had made was pronounced “good.”

2. Intimate relationship is an important part of being human.

- a. Spoken language is one of the characteristics distinguishing humans from other forms of animal life.
- b. Language enables a level of intimacy that is not possible without it. We are created for a depth of relationship that is unique and vital to our created purpose.

3. Gender distinctives – the role relationship of man and woman.

Gen.2:15-25 “¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." ¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and what ever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." ²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. ²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”

- a. The term “man” (Hebrew, ADAM) in chapter one refers to “human kind” both male and female. In chapter two “man” refers to the male Adam.
- b. “Being alone” is not good and not God’s intent. Intimate union of man and woman is a basic principle in God’s design purpose. Family (marriage) is organic and foundational to human welfare. We are not designed to be alone.
- c. The woman is a “helper suitable for him.” This does not suggest inferiority but a complementary relationship.
 - 1) “**Helper**” is not a demeaning term. It is often used in Scripture to describe God, as in **Ps. 33:20** “*Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our **HELP** and our shield.*” and **Ps. 70:5** “*But I am afflicted and needy; hasten to me, O God! Thou art my **HELP** and my deliverer.*” It does suggest that the man is the head of the wife as Paul indicates in I Cor.11:3; Eph.5:22-24. Peter uses the term “joint heirs” in I Pet.3:7.
 - 2) “**Corresponding to him**” means basically that what was said about him in Gen. 2:7 (“*Man became a living soul*” distinct from the rest of creation) is also true of her.
- d. In ancient culture, the authority to name something was significant in that it suggested “headship” or leadership. From the very beginning we see hints of gender roles that are played out in human experience and expressed in the Apostle’s teaching. Eph.5:21-32; I Cor.11:3; I Pet.3:1-6.

- e. The recognition of the woman by the man as his counterpart is the first hint at sexual attraction. The man is drawn to the woman as to nothing else in the creation.
- f. Woman is created “for the man” (I Cor.11:8-10). This does not mean that she is his “property” but rather that she submits to his role as “head”. Paul instructs the wife to wear a symbol to that effect (vs.10). The order of creation is also an indication of the man’s role as leader in the relationship.

D. **God’s original design is altered by sin – Genesis 3**

1. **The effect of sin on marriage.**

- a. It is apparently significant that Eve not Adam is the person that is first deceived and led astray by the serpent (Satan). Paul picks up this point in I Tim.2:14.
- b. It must be noted that when Paul places blame for the “fall” of the race, he points to Adam not Eve (Rom.5:12-14).
- c. The first negative effect of the Fall on the relationship of man and woman was **shame and the fear of exposure to one another**. This would remain as a great challenge in the relationship of husband and wife. “⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”
- d. The second negative effect of the Fall on the relationship of man and woman was the **passing of blame**. “¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." ¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”
- e. The judgment on the woman after the fall (vs.16) was 1) Pain in her role as a parent (the Hebrew term may refer to more than childbirth) and 2) Tension in your relationship with her husband. Eve would both be drawn to her husband and yet dominated by him. Some have suggested that the language suggests the beginning of a tight for control and dominance.
- f. The judgment on the man (vs.17-19) would consist of frustration in his work, which would now become toilsome. The distinct judgments may suggest a different gender focus or role in life.

2. **Paul’s teaching in I Corinthians 7.**

- a. The distortion of human sexual response in Corinthian culture, lead Paul to advise sexual abstinence (vs.1-2).
- b. But Paul gives no indication that sexual activity within marriage is not natural or proscribed. As a matter of fact, he exhorts couples to serve each other’s needs both spiritually and physically (vs.2-6).
- c. Paul makes it clear that sexual response in marriage is a calibration of intimate union with spiritual overtones as marriage is a picture of Christ and the church (Eph.5:31-32).

E. **Jesus' teaching on marriage.**

1. **Matt.5:27-31; 19:1-9**
2. See apttoteach.org theology file #409.

F. **The Apostles' teaching on marriage.**

1. **Eph.5:22-6:4**
2. **Col.3:18-21**
3. **Heb.13:4**
4. **I Cor.5-7**

G. **The basics of communion in marriage:**

1. **COMMITMENT** -- Am I in this for the long haul, through thick and thin?
2. **COMMUNICATION** -- Am I willing to share my inner life (feelings, values, pain, weakness, fear, failures)?
3. **CARING** -- Am I willing to think of my mate and not just of myself?
4. **COOPERATION** -- Am I willing to work with my mate as a team?
5. **COMPROMISE** -- Am I willing to sacrifice things that are valuable to me to show that my mate and marriage are more important than my personal wants?
6. Four types of love relationships (Balswick P62)
 - a. **Complete Love (a balance)**
 - #1 Passion (Eros)
 - #1 Commitment (Agape),
 - #1 Intimacy (Philia)
 - b. Self-giving Love
 - #1 **Commitment** (Agape)
 - #2 & #3 Passion (Eros), Intimacy (Philia)
 - c. Friendship
 - #1 **Intimacy** (Philia)
 - #2 & #3 Commitment (Agape), Passion (Eros)
 - d. Infatuation
 - #1 **Passion** (Eros)
 - #2 & #3 Commitment (Agape), Intimacy (Philia)

H. **How to avoid intimacy in marriage.**

1. Don't talk about how you feel. Talk about facts, ideas, and plans, but not feelings. Feelings get us in trouble.
2. Never show your feelings. Never let on that you are interested in being intimate on an emotional level. Emotions too often get us in trouble by distracting us from our convictions.
3. Always be pleasant, especially when something is bothering you. Your Christian witness is at stake.
4. Always win. Never compromise or admit you are wrong, because others will lose respect for you.

5. Always keep busy with your work, hobbies, etc. Don't let people know that time with them is important to you.
6. Never argue. People in a healthy Christian family should always get along.
7. Make your partner guess what you want. If they are spiritually sensitive, they will know what is needed.
8. Always look out for number one. Pull your own weight. Be independent. This is what it means to be a servant.
9. Keep the television on.
10. If there are problems, pray about them, ignore them, and trust that they will go away.
11. Hide your pain or, better yet, deny that it is real. Christians shouldn't be hurt.

I. **Attending to your moods.**

1. ***“Be quick to hear”***

- **Prov. 1:5** *“A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.”*
- **Prov. 18:13** *“He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.”*
- **Prov. 21:28** *“A false witness will perish, but the man who listens to the truth will speak forever.”*

2. ***“Be slow to speak”***

- **Prov. 10:19** *“When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise.”*
- **Prov. 17:28** *“Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is counted prudent.”*
- **Prov. 18:2** *“A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.”*

3. ***“Be slow to anger”***

- **Prov. 17:27** *“He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.”*
- **Prov. 29:22** *“An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.”*

J. **Five levels of communication**

1. **POLITE CLICHES** -- *“How are you today?”*
2. **REPORTING FACTS** -- *“We are overdrawn at the bank again.”*
3. **GIVING JUDGMENTS** -- *“We should not make any big purchases this month.”*
4. **VENTING FEELINGS** -- *“I am fed up with always having too much money at the end of the month.”*
5. **SHARING LOVE** -- *“I am upset with myself for spending so much, but I tend to take it out on you. Let's sit down and see what can be done to solve this problem. What do you sense is needed?”*

K. **How to give constructive feedback or criticism.**

1. Three levels of feedback:

- a. **DECREE** -- “This is the way it is.” “This is not a discussion, it’s a lecture.”
The goal is forced control.
 - b. **DEBATE** -- “This is a contest of ideas and view points.” The goal is coerced agreement, to win the debate.
 - c. **DISCUSSION** -- “This is an attempt to understand and be understood.” The goal is mutual understanding.
2. Focus on “I feel” statements.
- Level #1 **GENERAL FEELINGS** -- “*I don’t feel comfortable with this person.*”
- Level #2 **ILLUSTRATED FEELINGS.** -- “*I felt rejected when he turned his back just as I started to talk.*”
- Level #3 **EVALUATED FEELINGS.** -- “*I feel guilty about being so self-conscious and hurt when he ignores me.*”

Ministry or Manipulation

(What follows is an outline inspired by material in Larry Crabb’s excellent book, *The Marriage Builder*)

I. A commitment to the goal of ministry

A. What is my real goal?

1. **We all have deep personal needs** for security and significance that cannot be met outside a relationship.
2. Many people learn to **deal with these needs in the wrong way.**
 - a. We learn how to deal with these needs while yet very young. (**Parents and other "significant others"** in our lives show us how or force us to cope.)
 - b. We often develop wrong **beliefs** about how to become secure or significant (or how to avoid insecurity or insignificance).
 - c. These beliefs suggest **goals**, which then motivate us to do what we do. These goals become life principles around which we organize our efforts.
 - 1) Some popular but inadequate goals:
 - a) **PLEASURE** -- "What feels good now"
 - b) **POWER** -- "I am in control"
 - c) **POSITION** -- "I am admired"
 - d) **PEACE** -- no hassles
 - e) **PROSPERITY** -- \$\$
 - 2) The best way to understand why we do what we do is to ask, "**What am I trying to accomplish or avoid?**"
 - d. We tend to look to our marriage **partners as instruments** of security and significance (reaching our goals).
 - 1) The result is a **manipulative relationship** designed to use each other for personal satisfaction.
 - 2) Because no marital partner is fully adequate to meet another's personal needs, such an exploitative relationship will inevitably experience **conflict**.

3. **Only Christ can meet our needs**, that is, provide us with eternal security and legitimate significance. We therefore must depend on Him to give us what our personal nature requires.
4. **It is difficult for us to grasp deeply the reality of our worth in Christ.** To become subjectively and convincingly aware of our security and significance in Christ, we must --
 - a. **Trust His love enough** to give ourselves fully to our spouse in an effort to minister to their needs, and choose to continue our efforts to minister, regardless of our spouse's response to us.
 - b. Honestly **explore the impact we make on each other's experience** of self-acceptance as worthwhile individuals.
5. We repeatedly face challenges to be **hypocritical, either to our feelings or to our convictions.**
 - a. We often must **choose** which we will honor.
 - b. The basis for true commitment to marriage is the **goodness of God.**
 - c. Honoring commitments because of a profound trust in God's goodness will feel **less like "doing one's duty" and more like pursuing one's deepest desires.**
 - d. Lack of joy in honoring the marriage commitment cannot be blamed on our spouse. **The fault lies in our failure to depend on the goodness of God.**

B. What is involved in making a commitment to minister to my mate?

1. Renewing my mind with respect to my **needs, beliefs, and goals.**
 - a. **Recognizing** false beliefs and goals.
 - b. **Repenting** of false beliefs and goals.
 - c. **Relying** on Christ to minister to me.
2. A decisive and continuous willingness to **adopt the commitment to minister.**
3. A substantial awareness of **my partner's needs.**
4. A conviction that **I am God's chosen instrument** to touch those needs.

II. A strategy for handling negative emotions, that neither violates the goal of ministry nor crates distance between the partners

A. WHAT DO I DO WITH MY FEELINGS?

1. **Feelings** (even negative feelings such as anger and anxiety) are not necessarily sinful or virtuous.
 - a. They derive (to a large extent) from **my relationship with my goals.** If my goal is blocked, I feel anger. If I sense my goal *may be* blocked or if I find out that my goal did not satisfy me, I may be anxious.
 - b. I must "**own**" (**honestly admit**) **my feelings** if I am to be healthy.
 - c. Negative emotions which **block out compassion may fairly be thought of as sinful**, while emotions, which are not inconsistent with compassion are not sinful.
2. There are **two equally inappropriate ways** of dealing with my feelings:
 - a. **STUFFING** them inside, denying them, repressing them.

- b. **DUMPING** them on others, getting things off my chest, “I have a right to be me, no matter what that does to others.”
- 3. **When an emotion arises** within me, I am to --
 - a. **Acknowledge** to myself and to God how I feel, allowing myself to inwardly experience the full weight of my emotions.
 - b. **Subordinate** the public **expression** of my feelings to the goal of allowing God to use me for His purposes.

B. HOW AM I TO UNDERSTAND AND TREAT MY PERSONAL DESIRES?

1. No matter how resolutely I commit myself to the goal of ministering to my spouse, I will experience an unquenchable **desire for my partner to minister to me**.
2. **I must never allow this desire to become my goal.**
3. A **goal** is an objective that is under my control. A **desire** is an objective that I may legitimately and fervently want, but cannot reach through my efforts alone.
4. **Pray for your desires and assume responsibility for your goals** (not vice versa).

C. HOW AM I TO COME TO ACCEPT MY MATE?

1. I must learn to distinguish between **ACCEPTING** and **ENJOYING**.
 - a. **Accepting** my partner is a command of God that I can choose to obey **no matter what my emotional response might be**.
 - b. **Enjoying** my partner is a blessing or gift that I should be thankful for but **not feel obligated to always sense or feel**.
2. The experience of accepting a spouse depends on the work of **forgiveness**, which in turn depends upon a willingness to see the offensive behavior of the spouse in a **Biblical context**.
 - a. **To accept someone means** that I minister to the person with no resentment or pressure. It involves --
 - 1) The **decision** to minister.
 - 2) The **absence of the feelings that interfere** with ministry.
 - b. Although the **nature** of the event will determine whether the emotional response is positive or negative (enjoyment or displeasure), the **evaluation** of the event by the individual will influence the specific content and intensity of the emotional response. (Points b. 1-5 from *The Marriage Builder*, by Larry Crabb)
 - 1) **People respond** to significant interpersonal events with both a **decision** and an **emotion**.
 - 2) **The decision** may be to **minister** in spite of an offense or to **manipulate** because of an offense and the hurt it provoked. Because the decision represents a free choice, we must bear full responsibility for the alternative we select.
 - 3) **The primary (or immediate) emotional response** to a significant event will be either **enjoyment** or **displeasure**. Which of the two emotions we feel depends entirely on the nature of the event. Because we have no control over which emotion we experience, we must accept no responsibility (credit or blame) for feeling either one.

- 4) The primary emotional response to an event shifts quickly into a **secondary (or mediate) emotional response**, a feeling that can be either sinful or nonsinful:
 - a) Enjoyment can become **dependency** (sinful) or **satisfaction** (nonsinful).
 - b) Displeasure can become **bitterness** (sinful) or **disappointment** (nonsinful).
- 5) Whether a primary emotion develops into a sinful or nonsinful secondary emotion depends not on the nature of the event, but on the **evaluation** of it:
 - a) If I evaluate an **enjoyable event** as relevant to my **needs**, my secondary emotion will be **dependency**.
 - b) If I evaluate an **enjoyable event** as relevant to my **desires**, my secondary emotion will be **satisfaction**.
 - c) If I evaluate a **displeasurable event** as relevant to my **needs**, my secondary emotion will be **bitterness**.
 - d) If I evaluate a **displeasurable event** as relevant to my **desires**, my secondary emotion will be **disappointment**.

c. When should I tell my partner how I feel?

- 1) Be slow to express anger.
 - 2) Acknowledge anger.
 - 3) Think through goals.
 - a) Does my anger tell me something about my goals?
 - b) Clarify goals and desires.
 - 4) Assume responsibility for the proper goal.
 - 5) Express negative feelings if doing so serves a good purpose.
3. Focus feedback on observations of behavior rather than on inferences about or judgments of the person.
 - a. *“Do you realize what you are doing?”* instead of *“Why do you feel bent on devastating everyone's life?”*
 - b. *“Your body language suggests disinterest. Is that how you really feel?”* instead of *“You're so selfish, you don't really give a rip.”*
 - c. *“His response to her could be misunderstood.”* instead of *“He is always messing people up.”*
 4. Focus feedback on observations that respect the dynamic process in a person's life. Avoid *“always,” “never,” “every,”* etc.
 5. Focus feedback on sharing ideas or offering alternatives rather than giving advice.
 - a. *“Have you thought about trying to ---?”* instead of *“What you need to do is ---”*
 - b. *“What are the alternatives that we have to work with?”* instead of *“I think you should ---”*
 6. Focus feedback according to the need of the moment.
 - a. **FIRST AID** -- Stop the bleeding, then mend the broken leg. Note: Sometimes structured separation may be needed to heal a bad marriage.
 - b. **PHYSICAL THERAPY** may be needed after surgery.

7. Focus feedback on the amount the recipient can process.
 - Level #1 **THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SUBJECT.** “*Things like bad breath can make face to face communication difficult.*”
 - Level #2 **THE LEADING QUESTION.** “*Do you sense that people are avoiding you?*”
 - Level #3 **THE GENERAL EXHORTATION.** “*Be sure to check your breath before you go out.*”
 - Level #4 **THE SPECIFIC EXHORTATION.** “*Your breath is bad.*”
8. Focus feedback at the appropriate time and place.
 - a. **Eph. 4:29** “*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment that it may give grace to those who hear.*”
 - b. **Col. 4:6** “*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.*”

Catholic Encyclopedia on the Family

(While some of what is written here is controversial if not unacceptable to evangelical Protestants, by in large the article is a helpful statement about the family.)

What is a family? A term derived from the Latin, *famulus*, servant, and *familia*, household servants, or the household (cf. Oscan *famel*, servant). In the classical Roman period the *familia* rarely included the parents or the children. Its English derivative was frequently used in former times to describe all the persons of the domestic circle, parents, children, and servants. Present usage, however, excludes servants, and restricts the word *family* to that fundamental social group formed by the more or less permanent union of one man with one woman, or of one or more men with one or more women, and their children. If the heads of the group comprise only one man and one woman we have the monogamous family, as distinguished from those domestic societies, which live in conditions of polygamy, polyandry, or promiscuity.

Is the family to be monogamous? Certain anthropological writers of the last half of the nineteenth century, as Bachofen (*Das Mutterrecht*, Stuttgart, 1861), Morgan (*Ancient Society*, London, 1877), Mc'Lennan (*The Patriarchal Theory*, London, 1885), Lang (*Custom and Myth*, London, 1885), and Lubbock (*The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man*, London, 1889), created and developed the theory that the original form of the family was one in which all the women of a group, horde, or tribe, belonged promiscuously to all the men of the community. Following the lead of Engels (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, tr. from the German, Chicago, 1902), many Socialist writers have adopted this theory as quite in harmony with their materialistic interpretation of history. The chief considerations advanced in its favor are: the assumption that in primitive times all property was common, and that this condition naturally led to community of women; certain historical statements by ancient writers like Strabo, Herodotus, and Pliny; the practice of promiscuity, at a comparatively late date, by some uncivilized peoples, such as the Indians of California and a few aboriginal tribes of India; the system of tracing descent and kinship through the mother, which prevailed among some primitive people; and certain abnormal customs of ancient races, such as religious prostitution, the so-called *jus primæ noctis*, the lending of wives to visitors, cohabitation of the sexes before marriage, etc.

At no time has this theory obtained general acceptance, even among non-Christian writers, and it is absolutely rejected by some of the best authorities of today, e.g. Westermarck (*The History of Human Marriage*, London, 1901) and Letourneau (*The Evolution of Marriage*, tr. from the French, New York, 1888). In reply to the arguments just stated, Westermarck and others point out that the hypothesis of primitive communism has by no means been proved, at least in its extreme form; that common property in goods does not necessarily lead to community of wives, since family and marriage relations are subject to other motives as well as to those of a purely economic character; that the testimonies of classical historians in the matter are inconclusive, vague, and fragmentary, and refer to only a few instances; that the modern cases of promiscuity are isolated and exceptional, and may be attributed to degeneracy rather than to primitive survivals; that the practice of tracing kinship through the mother finds ample explanation in other facts besides the assumed uncertainty of paternity, and that it was never universal; that the abnormal sexual relations cited above are more obviously, as well as more satisfactorily, explained by other circumstances, religious, political, and social, than by the hypothesis of primitive promiscuity; and, finally, that evolution, which, superficially viewed, seems to support this hypothesis, is in reality against it, inasmuch as the unions between the male and the female of many of the higher species of animals exhibit a degree of stability and exclusiveness which bears some resemblance to that of the monogamous family.

The utmost concession, which Letourneau will make to the theory is that "promiscuity may have been adopted by certain small groups, more probably by certain associations or brotherhoods" (op. cit., p. 44). Westermarck does not hesitate to say: "The hypothesis of promiscuity, instead of belonging, as Professor Giraud-Teulon thinks, to the class of hypotheses which are scientifically permissible has no real foundation, and is essentially unscientific" (op. cit., p. 133). The theory that the original form of the family was either polygamy or polyandry is even less worthy of credence or consideration. In the main, the verdict of scientific writers is in harmony with the Scriptural doctrine concerning the origin and the normal form of the family: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). "Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). From the beginning, therefore, the family supposed the union of one man with one woman.

What about polygamy and marriage? While monogamy was the prevailing form of the family before Christ, it was limited in various degrees among many peoples by the practice of polygamy. This practice was on the whole more common among the Semitic races than among the Aryans. It was more frequent among the Jews, the Egyptians, and the Medes, than among the people of India, the Greeks, or the Romans. It existed to a greater extent among the uncivilized races, although some of these were free from it. Moreover, even those nations, which practiced polygamy, whether civilized or uncivilized, usually restricted it to a small minority of the population, as the kings, the chiefs, the nobles, and the rich. Polyandry was likewise practiced, but with considerably less frequency. According to Westermarck, monogamy was by far the most common form of marriage "among the ancient peoples of whom we have any direct knowledge. On the other hand, divorce was in vogue among practically all peoples, and to a much greater extent than polygamy.

What about divorce? The ease with which husband and wife could dissolve their union constitutes one of the greatest blots upon the civilization of classic Rome. Generally speaking,

the position of woman was very low among all the nations, civilized and uncivilized, before the coming of Christ. Among the barbarians she very frequently became a wife through capture or purchase; among even the most advanced peoples the wife was generally her husband's property, his chattel, his laborer. Nowhere was the husband bound by the same law of marital fidelity as the wife, and in very few places was he compelled to concede to her equal rights in the matter of divorce. Infanticide was practically universal, and the *patria potestas* of the Roman father gave him the right of life and death over even his grown-up children. In a word, the weaker members of the family were everywhere inadequately protected against the stronger.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Is the family a means of God's grace? Christ not only restored the family to its original type as something holy, permanent, and monogamous, but raised the contract from which it springs to the dignity of a sacrament, and thus placed the family itself upon the plane of the supernatural. The family is holy inasmuch as it is to co-operate with God by procreating children who are destined to be the adopted children of God, and by instructing them for His kingdom. The union between husband and wife is to last until death (Matthew 19:6 sq.; Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11; 1 Corinthians 7:10). That this is the highest form of the conjugal union, and the best arrangement for the welfare both of the family and of society, will appear to anyone who compares dispassionately the moral and material effects with those flowing from the practice of divorce. Although divorce has obtained to a greater or less extent among the majority of peoples from the beginning until now, "there is abundant evidence that marriage has, upon the whole, become more durable in proportion as the human race has risen to higher degrees of cultivation" (Westermarck, *op. cit.*, p. 535).

While the attempts that have been made to show that divorce is in every case forbidden by the moral law of nature have not been convincing on their own merits, to say nothing of certain facts of Old Testament history, the absolute indissolubility of marriage is nevertheless the ideal to which the natural law points, and consequently is to be expected in an order that is supernatural. In the family, as re-established by Christ, there is likewise no such thing as polygamy (see the references already given in this paragraph, and POLYGAMY). This condition, too, is in accord with nature's ideal. Polygamy is not, indeed, condemned in every instance by the natural law, but it is generally inconsistent with the reasonable welfare of the wife and children, and the proper moral development of the husband. Because of these qualities of permanence and unity, the Christian family implies a real and definite equality of husband and wife. They have equal rights in the matter of the primary conjugal relation, equal claims upon mutual fidelity, and equal obligations to make this fidelity real. They are equally guilty when they violate these obligations, and equally deserving of pardon when they repent.

The wife is neither the slave nor the property of her husband, but his consort and companion. The Christian family is supernatural, inasmuch as it originates in a sacrament. Through the sacrament of matrimony husband and wife obtain an increase of sanctifying grace, and a claim upon those actual graces, which are necessary to the proper fulfillment of all the duties of family life, and the relations between husband and wife, parents and children, are super naturalized and sanctified. The end and the ideal of the Christian family are likewise supernatural, namely, the salvation of parents and children, and the union between Christ and His Church. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it", says St. Paul (Ephesians 5:25). And the intimacy of the marital union, the

identification, almost, of husband and wife, is seen in the injunction: "So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself" (Ephesians 5:28).

From these general facts of the Christian family, the particular relations existing among its members can be readily deduced. Since the average man and woman are not normally complete as individuals, but are rather the two complementary parts of one social organism, in which their material, moral, and spiritual needs receive mutual satisfaction, a primary requisite of their union is mutual love. This includes not merely the love of the senses, which is essentially selfish, not necessarily that sentimental love which anthropologists call romantic, but above all that rational love or affection, which springs from an appreciation of qualities of mind and heart, and which impels each to seek the welfare of the other. As the intimate and long association of husband and wife necessarily bring to the surface their less noble and lovable qualities, and as the rearing of children involves great trials, the need of disinterested love, the ability to sacrifice self, is obviously grave.

The obligations of mutual fidelity have been sufficiently stated above. The particular functions of husband and wife in the family are determined by their different natures, and by their relation to the primary end of the family, namely, the procreation of children. Being the provider of the family, and the superior of the wife both in physical strength and in those mental and moral qualities, which are appropriate to the exercise of authority, the husband is naturally the family's head, even "the head of the wife", in the language of St. Paul. This does not mean that the wife is the husband's slave, his servant, or his subject. She is his equal, both as a human being and as member of the conjugal society, save only that when a disagreement arises in matters pertaining to domestic government, she is, as a rule, to yield. To claim for her completely equal authority with the husband is to treat woman as man's equal in a matter in which nature has made them unequal. On the other hand the care and management of the details of the household belong naturally to the wife, because she is better fitted for these tasks than the husband.

Since the primary end of the family is the procreation of children, the husband or wife who shirks this duty from any but spiritual or moral motives reduces the family to an unnatural and unchristian level. This is emphatically true when the absence of offspring has been effected by any of the artificial and immoral devices so much in vogue at present. When the conjugal union has been blessed with children, both parents are charged, according to their respective functions, with the duty of sustaining and educating those undeveloped members of the family. Their moral and religious formation is for the most part the work of the mother, while the task of providing for their physical and intellectual wants falls chiefly upon the father. The extent to which the different wants of the children are to be supplied will vary with the ability and resources of the parents. Finally, the children are bound, generally speaking, to render to the parents implicit love, reverence, and obedience, until they have reached their majority, and love, reverence, and a reasonable degree of support and obedience afterward.

The most important external relations of the family are, of course, those existing between it and the State. According to the Christian conception, the family, rather than the individual, is the social unit and the basis of civil society. To say that the family is the social unit is not to imply that it is the end to which the individual is a means; for the welfare of the individual is the end both of the family and of the State, as well as of every other social organization. The meaning is that the State is formally concerned with the family as such, and not merely with the individual. This distinction is of great practical importance; for where the State ignores or neglects the

family, keeping in view only the welfare of the individual, the result is a strong tendency towards the disintegration of the former. The family is the basis of civil society, inasmuch as the greater majority of persons ought to spend practically all their lives in its circle, either as subjects or as heads. Only in the family can the individual be properly reared, educated, and given that formation of character, which will make him a good man and a good citizen.

Inasmuch as the average man will not put forth his full productive energies except under the stimulus of its responsibilities, the family is indispensable from the purely economic viewpoint. Now the family cannot rightly discharge its functions unless the parents have full control over the rearing and education of the children, subject only to such State supervision as is needed to prevent grave neglect of their welfare. Hence it follows that, generally speaking, and with due allowance for particular conditions, the State exceeds its authority when it provides for the material wants of the child, removes him from parental influence, or specifies the school that he must attend. As a consequence of these concepts and ideals, the Christian family in history has proved itself immeasurably superior to the non-Christian family. It has exhibited greater fidelity between husband and wife, greater reverence for the parents by the children, greater protection of the weaker members by the stronger, and in general a more thorough recognition of the dignity and rights of all within its circle. Its chief glory is undoubtedly its effect upon the position of woman. Notwithstanding the disabilities--for the most part with regard to property, education, and a practically recognized double standard of morals--under which the Christian woman has suffered, she has attained to a height of dignity, respect, and authority for which we shall look in vain in the conjugal society outside of Christianity. The chief factor in this improvement has been the Christian teaching on chastity, conjugal equality, the sacredness of motherhood, and the supernatural end of the family, together with the Christian model and ideal of family life, the Holy Family at Nazareth.

The contention of some writers that the Church's teaching and practice concerning virginity and celibacy, make for the degradation and deterioration of the family, not only springs from a false and perverse view of these practices, but contradicts the facts of history. Although she has always held virginity in higher honor than marriage, the Church has never sanctioned the extreme view, attributed to some ascetical writers, that marriage is a mere concession to the flesh, a sort of tolerated carnal indulgence. In her eyes the marriage rite has ever been a sacrament, the married state a holy state, the family a Divine institution, and family life the normal condition for the great majority of mankind. Indeed, her teaching on virginity, and the spectacle of thousands of her sons and daughters exemplifying that teaching, have in every age constituted a most effective exaltation of chastity in general, and therefore of chastity within as well as without the family. Teaching and example have combined to convince the wedded, not less than the unwedded, that purity and restraint are at once desirable and practically possible. Today, as always, it is precisely in those communities where virginity is most honored that the ideal of the family is highest, and its relations purest.

DANGERS FOR THE FAMILY

Among these are the **exaltation of the individual** by the State at the expense of the family, which has been going on since the Reformation (cf. the Rev. Dr. Thwing, in Bliss, "Encyclopedia of Social Reform"), and the modern facility of divorce (see DIVORCE), which may be traced to the same source. The greatest offender in the latter respect is the United States, but the tendency seems to be towards easier methods in most of the other countries in which

divorce is allowed. Legal authorization and popular approval of the dissolution of the marriage bond, not only breaks up existing families, but encourages rash marriages, and produces a laxer view of the obligation of conjugal fidelity. Another danger is the deliberate limitation of the number of children in a family. This practice tempts parents to overlook the chief end of the family, and to regard their union as a mere means of mutual gratification. Furthermore, it leads to a lessening of the capacity of self-sacrifice in all the members of the family. Closely connected with these two evils of divorce and artificial restriction of births, is the general laxity of opinion with regard to sexual immorality. Among its causes are the diminished influence of religion, the absence of religious and moral training in the schools, and the seemingly feebler emphasis laid upon the heinousness of the sin of unchastity by those whose moral training has not been under Catholic auspices. Its chief effects are disinclination to marry, marital infidelity, and the contraction of diseases, which produce domestic unhappiness and sterile families.

The **idle and frivolous lives** of the women, both wives and daughters, in many wealthy families is also a menace. In the position, which they hold, the mode of life, which they lead, and the ideals which they cherish, many of these women remind us somewhat of the *hetaræ* of classical Athens. For they enjoy great freedom, and exercise great influence over the husband and father, and their chief function seems to be to entertain him, to enhance his social prestige, to minister to his vanity, to dress well, and to reign as social queens. They have emancipated themselves from any serious self-sacrifice on behalf of the husband or the family, while the husband has likewise declared his independence of any strict construction of the duty of conjugal fidelity. The bond between them is not sufficiently moral and spiritual, and is excessively sensual, social, and aesthetic. And the evil example of this conception of family life extends far beyond those who are able to put it into practice. Still another danger is the decline of family authority among all classes, the diminished obedience and respect imposed upon and exhibited by children. Its consequences are imperfect discipline in the family, defective moral character in the children, and manifold unhappiness among all.

Finally, there is the danger, physical and moral, threatening the family owing to the widespread and steadily increasing presence of **women in industry**. In 1900 the number of females sixteen years of age and over engaged in gainful occupations in the United States, was 4,833,630, which was more than double the number so occupied in 1880, and which constituted 20 per cent of the whole number of females above sixteen years in the country, whereas the number at work in 1880 formed only 16 percent of the same division of the female population. In the cities of America two women out of every seven are bread-winners. This condition implies an increased proportion of married women at work as wage earners, an increased proportion of women who are less capable physically of undertaking the burdens of family life, a smaller proportion of marriages, an increase in the proportion of women who, owing to a delusive idea of independence, are disinclined to marry, and a weakening of family bonds and domestic authority. "In 1890, 1 married woman in 22 was a bread-winner; in 1900, 1 in 18" (ibid.). Perhaps the most striking evil result of married women in industry is the high death-rate among infants. For infants under one year the rate in 1900 over the whole United States, was 165 per 1000, but it was 305 in Fall River, where the proportion of married women at work is greatest. As the supreme causes of all these dangers to the family are the decay of religion and the growth of materialistic views of life, so the future of the family will depend upon the extent to which these forces can be checked. And experience seems to show that there can be no permanent middle ground between the materialistic ideal of divorce, so easy that the marital

union will be terminable at the will of the parties, and the Catholic ideal of marriage absolutely indissoluble.

The Marginalization of Marriage in Middle America

(W. Bradford Wilcox and Andrew J. Cherlin)

from Center on Children and Families at Brookings) CCF Brief #46

The Problem: Marriage and family stability have been in decline in the kinds of neighborhoods that we used to call working-class—homes. Couples are cohabiting, having children out of wedlock, and separating. This leaves children alone without the stable support they need for healthy development. On average, the institution of marriage conveys important benefits to adults and children. This advantage may be due to the greater stability of the marriage bond, or to the kinds of people who choose to marry and to stay married, or to qualities associated with the institution of marriage (such as a greater degree of commitment and investment in family life).

The Causes: The roots of the retreat from marriage in Middle America over the last four decades are both economic and cultural. First, on the economic front, the transformation of the U.S. economy—the globalization of production, the increase in automation—has resulted in the loss of many decent jobs that require a moderate amount of education and skill. Moderately-educated young adults view cohabitation as a living arrangement that requires less economic stability, presumably because neither partner makes a long-term commitment to it.

But recent changes in the economy cannot fully explain the marginalization of marriage in Middle America. Recall, for instance, that there was no dramatic increase in nonmarital childbearing or cohabitation during the Great Depression, when millions of Americans experienced unemployment or underemployment. The reason is that American cultural beliefs about marriage and childbearing were much different then. Today's retreat from marriage, therefore, has several important cultural causes:

- changes in norms about sexual activity, births, and marriage;
- declines in religious participation among the non-college educated;
- and changes in the law that emphasize parenthood and individual rights rather than marriage.

Policy Responses: Here are six ideas that we think are worth considering in any effort to strengthen marriage and family life in Middle America. Several of them might also increase the stability of cohabiting unions with children present.

1. Increase training for middle-skill jobs.
2. Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for childless workers and reduce the marriage penalty.
3. Start a social marketing campaign for return to stable marriage commitments.
4. Expand the Child Tax Credit.
5. Invest in preschool children's development.
6. Reform divorce law so that divorce is not so easy.