

obedient to him or her as a parent when the parent is not obedient to the very structure that God established for the family?

While we must recognize that individuals have absolutely no control over certain circumstances such as the death of one's spouse, God's *intended* plan for raising children is clear. That is — a child born to (or adopted by) parents who are married to each other where the wife is subject to her husband "as the church is subject unto Christ" (Eph. 5:24) and Christ to God (I Cor. 11:3). Other "family arrangements" including children are beyond Biblical teaching.

Many congregations of today's church are "buying into" the argument that "there are *so many* dysfunctional and broken home families that Biblical Truths concerning families can no longer be taught because it is too painful for those who are not in family units consistent with God's design." There is certainly a great deal of truth to the statement that there are many families that do not "fit" the God ordained pattern but we must ask ourselves how bad will society become if we in the Church do not share what the Bible teaches on this important subject? While those Biblical teachings are no doubt heartbreaking for those who have had the misfortune of not being able to maintain the God ordained pattern, wouldn't those same individuals want their children to not suffer the pain and heartache they have had to endure? To help them accomplish that goal, they need the help of the Church and the strength it has to offer through honest teaching of the Word. If they *can't* teach it, the Church *must* teach it.

Christians can have great power in society when they follow God's Word for the structure of their families. Ignoring those basic instructions however, reduces their influence on society and the resulting void is replaced with the worldly view of the family causing Christian homes to no longer be unique in a troubled society. We live in an imperfect world and many dysfunctional and broken families exist. Each one of us can offer guidance if we will do so. Having a desire to help others become aligned with God's Word is not judgmental — it is kind and loving.

Too often, when society fails to turn to God for His love and direction, it is left with chaos. Now, more than at any other time, many family units exist in a state of constant chaos. Perhaps, at some point in time society will recognize that chaos has become the norm and realize an intense need to be rescued from that way of life to a better way — God's way. That doesn't have to be the case in our own families. Each family can determine *today* to follow *God's* plan for their family from this day forward? It is a great challenge to raise children today. This challenge can only be met when we follow God's Word concerning the family unit.

*"Diligence" is a privately funded publication of:
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DILIGENCE

"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure." — Hebrews 6:11

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

Volume 5

November 1, 2006

Issue 18

Chaos to the Rescue

In the last several issues of Diligence, we have discussed a variety of Biblical principles. This particular article is basically an editorial comment prompted by those previous discussions.

Each generation — as it matures — leaves marks on society. Many of those marks come about as a direct result of the impact that the family itself has had on that society. For instance — in what way if any, did the core structure of the family change during that generation? We are convinced that the family unit itself has more to do with societal changes than any other grouping of people. The family is where morals should be taught. The unfortunate reality is that many parents today do not accept the responsibility for teaching their children even basic moral principles — let alone truths concerning God and His plan for mankind.

By some accounts, our country is showing a steady increase in moral decay. As this happens, there is a corresponding effort to appease our conscience by reflecting on prior generations and claiming it's not as bad as it seems. After all, hasn't *every* "older" generation believed that the younger generation was "going to pot?" With that rationalization, moral decay is accepted as a normal part of an aging society and is dismissed as not worthy of serious concern or discussion.

The gradual shifting of attitudes and belief systems is so subtle that it goes nearly unnoticed. It's easy for society to dismiss this shift and focus on topics that seem much more relevant to our well being at the moment. Our current society has now crept to a position that demands Christians tolerate all types of evil and immoral acts under the guise of political correctness and inclusiveness. Such inclusiveness requires respect for *all* beliefs — *until* a Christian believer expresses a moral view different from the prevailing worldly view. Then — that view is considered to be intolerant and judgmental and the speaker of the view is chastised and told that it is not an acceptable statement.

Consider the following social and behavioral factors listed below in relation to 50 years ago and judge for yourself. Has a very slow but yet major shift occurred?

- Rate of divorce
- Number of single parent households
- Abortions per year — or day
- Our countries attitude and inclusion of God in events and ceremonies
- Drug usage — both prescribed and illegal

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- Frequency of sexual molestation of children
- Number of children born out of wedlock
- Murder rate — per capita
- Sexually transmitted disease — frequency and type
- Lack of respect for authority in general

As we consider the change in just these few behaviors alone during the past half-century, it is obvious that to one degree or another each of them has had a great impact on the family unit. It might be easy to rationalize the impact of this decline and return to the comfort of our delusion that all is well — it's nothing more than a generational gap. We might also however, project the decline to the future and imagine how it will be two generations from now if there is no correction made to alter the course.

It's obvious that none of us alone have the ability to impact enough people to cause a ground swell large enough to alter these changing trends or to provide a significant societal improvement. But each and every person reading this *does* have impact on his or her *own* family and its members. As parents, and grandparents we *can* exercise our God given responsibility to guide, to teach and to encourage those in our own families to make any needed course corrections in order to be aligned with God's way for mankind.

If we choose to believe and trust in the prevailing psychobabble in the public square today, we cannot hope to bring about an improvement in society since that thought process encourages *everyone* to believe that they have the right to do pretty much as they please — or do whatever it might be that fits *their* lifestyle. However, if we place our trust in God and His Truth about mankind there is hope.

We recently wrote several *Diligence* articles relating to God's expectations for male leadership in the home and in the church. Some who read those articles shrugged them off as not relevant for our times. Others may see God's instructions as outlined in those articles as impossible and impractical in our present day culture. Yet for still others, those articles provided them with the structure behind the Biblical teachings concerning God's requirement for men to lead.

Those who reject that God expects and commands men to lead in the home and in the assembly of the church, have to be relying on sources *other* than God's Word for their guidance since they have arrived at a conclusion that is in line with the world in general rather than God's design. God's Word and His plan for the family will therefore have no impact on their every day life as parents or as family members. Proper male leadership is an essential building block of the family and the local congregation of the Lord's church. Replacing male leadership in the home and in the Church with anything else introduces chaos in one form or another.

God is a God of all — and all are subject to Him. Rejecting His involvement in our lives or His directions and instructions for our lives inevitability brings into

our lives tendencies and actions that may not be evil in themselves, but certainly will not lead to the place God wants mankind to go. God teaches submission — Jesus was submissive to God (I Cor. 11:3) and therefore taught that submission is necessary if we want to obey His commands. We must likewise be submissive to all teachings of Scripture.

For the most part, our culture of the twenty-first century outright rejects and rebels at the very mention of being submissive to *anyone*. As we noted earlier, the public square psychobabble encourages *everyone* to believe that they have the right to do pretty much as they please. *No* one has a right to tell *any* one *any* thing. In modern society, it's all about mankind and whatever it is that pleases *him*, not about God and what pleases *Him*. The paradox of this is that God's will *is* all about mankind and his *eternal* well being.

Godly women *expect* Godly men to lead. Women who have felt the harsh treatment of ungodly men often reject male leadership in their home and in the Church and pursue the path of leadership themselves, or follow other women who will lead. The unfortunate outcome of women choosing to reject male leadership leads society down paths that reject God as a loving Father and may even go to the extreme of redefining God as a female.

Submission to God is learned as mothers nurture their young children. However, the corruption of the family unit in many households has seriously confused this issue. Many family units are ill equipped to offer a healthy environment in which to raise children and teach them the principles of Godly submission. The question nowadays is — from whom does a child learn about submission?

Consider these various situations that may make it very difficult to teach the proper God ordained family structure to children.

- A single parent or an unwed mother — children are subject to her as head of the home. God's structure would have a *father* be the head of the home.
- A father who has divorced and remarried — if the child goes to the ex-wife's house for the weekend, from whom does the child learn Godly submission? Obviously, the mother is no longer submissive to a man to whom she is no longer married — yet that man is the child's father — to whom the *child* is supposed to be subject. How is it then that the child's mother just *decided* *she* no longer *had* to be in submission to her husband but yet the child — from his or her perspective has not been granted such an option. And must the child be subject to the mother's *new* husband (as a parent) whom perhaps he or she hardly even *knows*. Think about this a minute now. Can we *really* expect that child to learn *anything* about God's plan for family structure — especially when the *parents* apparently had no respect for God's way?
- A man or woman simply living with another person without the benefit of marriage — how can a parent possibly expect to teach a child to be