

GOD'S DELIGHT IN THE FAMILY --
DESIGN OR DELUSION?

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Every awe-filled, God-fearing, Bible-believing, serious student of God's word relates to the idea of the family. One cannot have even a smattering knowledge of the Bible without understanding that God designed a unit in the society of mankind that is the family.

Those who cry for the "alternate lifestyles" of supposedly enlightened moderns are forced to deny the Biblical account. Perhaps it is too simple for such sophisticated moderns, for indeed the design of God is easy to find.

There is a discernable design.

First of all, God created man ("mankind," since both male and female are specified -- Genesis 1:25-27; 2:7, 18, 21-24). That the man was created first meant something in this design, as mentioned later by Paul (1 Timothy 2:13). The function of leadership was involved.

Second, the man and woman were given to each other as mates and were told to be fruitful and multiply, also to replenish, subdue, and have dominion over the earth and all its creatures (Genesis 1:28).

Third, the man was to be the leader and the woman was to be his helper (Genesis 2:18). One must remember pertinent things about this creation story. Man: (a) was created first, (b) was given authority over creation prior to the creation of the woman, (c) had been given instructions about the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil prior to the woman's creation, (d) was given dominion over the animals and named them prior to woman's creation, (e) and was the one called upon to answer for eating of the tree of knowledge (Genesis 3:9).

It is clear there was an order and design to the relationships within the family, that is, man was to be the head and woman the helper. Man's headship did not come as a result of the woman's sin, it was a part of the basic design of creation. God simply reminded both Adam and Eve of this when He spoke of their penalties. Since they both had stepped out of the position and responsibility to which God had designed for them, they were reminded of the original order of things.

The apostle Paul validated this arrangement when he declared man "is the image and glory of God: but the woman

is the glory of man" (1 Corinthians 11:7). Further, Paul states woman is of the man and created for the man (1 Corinthians 11:8-9). Adam was not of Eve and was not created for her. Thus there is a difference in their functions.

Again, Paul validates this design by making a comparison of the family, husband and wife relationship, with the relationship of Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Wives are to be in submission, in subjection, while the husband is to be the head, the leader (vv. 22-24, 33). The husband is to love and be devoted to his wife, giving himself for her happiness and welfare (v. 25). He is to love her as he loves his own body, his own self, nourishing and cherishing her (vv. 28-29, 33). He is to cleave to her as the first of all his familial loyalties (v. 31).

It should be noted here that it would not be difficult for a woman to submit and follow a man who loved her as devotedly and sacrificially as Christ loved His church!

Paul further validates this leader-helper relationship in instructions about worship (1 Timothy 2:8-15). Since man was created first, and woman second, it follows he was created to be the leader. Since woman sinned first, and man second, it also shows that woman is to be the follower. Eve stepped out of her place and took the lead, but Adam listened instead of leading. Do you suppose he even knew what fruit he was eating? Remember the record says he was deceived!

Fourth, the bounds of these relationships were begun at creation and continue throughout all time. Paul speaks of the "law of the husband" (Romans 7:2), clearly teaching a woman joined to two men at once is an adulteress. This "law of the husband" cannot be the Law of Moses, neither can it be the law of Christ, rather, it refers to the laws regarding the family begun by God at creation and which continue through both Moses and Christ. Jesus alluded to such a law when He asked if they had read about "the beginning" (Matthew 19:4).

Jesus indicated these laws were relaxed during Moses' time "for your hardness of heart" (Matthew 19:8), but he was most specific that such had "not been so" even "from the beginning."

The clear implication of the Lord was that the original bounds of marriage and family relations were restored, or again were "so," for those who would serve Him under His new covenant.

Fifth, the family was designed by God for the birth, preservation, and rearing of children. God never designed any other unit in society that was for this purpose. "Single parenthood," as practiced by rebellious-hearted men and women today is not within the scope of God's design. "Proxy parenting," when both mother and father leave the direction and training of their children in the hands of day-care centers, grandparents, or hired help, was never in God's design.

How sad that many follow the dictates easily observed in our modern society: "How can we expect a keen, intelligent girl, after four years of college life, to take up chores that are wearing on the nerves and fatiguing to the muscles?...Any high-grade moron can do housework." (a quote used by Ray E. Baber, *Marriage and the Family*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, New York, 1939, p. 392)

The moderns of this world may speak of "morons" but God put delicate, resourceful, and beautiful womanhood in every nursery; only self-centered and careless women would change God's design.

There was to be a father and a mother, both of whom were designed to function properly for the benefit of the children. Juvenile delinquency is not the fault of the children; it is the failure of the father and mother to respect God's design.

Sixth, the family as designed by God will bring about the good order of communities and nations. History tells and retells how nations begin to crumble as the good order of the families within that nation crumbles. Crime and the moral rot of America are not because of guns, drugs, alcohol, poverty, or racism. America's decline today is traceable directly to the decline of the family as God designed it!

Seventh, good congregations find their seeds of strength in the families that follow God's design. Disorder and perversion follow where families reject God's plan. Where one

finds strong congregations one also finds strong families. Where one finds weak congregations one also finds families in disarray. Rebellious, discourteous, disobedient, and self-centered children are windows by which the public may peer into the disarray of a dissolute family denying the design of Deity.

Jesus declared this same design.

When asked about marriage and divorce problems, Jesus reminded the Pharisees about the creation order (Matthew 19:3-6). He specified that male and female were created ("creation" is the word used in Mark 10:6) and this formed a family. It was a joining by God, and man was not to put it asunder.

Though man's hardness of heart prompted God to relax temporarily some parts of this design, Jesus clearly taught such was not pleasing to God from the very beginning (Mark 10:5-9).

The apostles defended this design.

The design could not be invalidated by the fickleness of men or women, rather, such fickleness is corruption and sinful; it is adultery (Romans 7:1-4). Each man and woman is to have his or her own wife or husband, not a plurality of mates, nor mates of the same sex (1 Corinthians 7:2).

Wives and husbands sustain remarkable parallels to Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Wives have a "fitting" place in this family relation and husbands have a fulfilling attitude of love to express (Colossians 3:18-19).

Man is called for sanctification in marriage, not uncleanness, i.e., mixing in other partners in fornication (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8). Aged women are encouraged to teach younger women about marriage relations, that they should love their husbands and children, being workers at home and in subjection to their husbands (Titus 2:3-5).

Peter shows how a godly woman can win her husband by following the precepts of God's design, and he cautions the husbands strongly in their treatment of the more "delicate" mate (*McCord's New Testament Translation of the Everlasting Gospel*) lest prayers be hindered (1 Peter 3:1-7).

Deviations deny Deity's design.

1. When God saw that it was not good that man should be alone, He did not create another man! He created what would complete a man, support and help a man, nurture children and be creation's best caretakers -- woman.

2. "Male and female created He them, and blessed them and called their name Adam in the day when they were created;" it was not male and male or female and female (Genesis 5:2).

3. A man leaves father and mother and does not cleave to his "significant other," but to his wife (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5)!

4. "Because of fornications" each man was to have a wife and each woman a husband, not a "significant other"(1 Corinthians 7:2)! Neither was the man or woman to have plural companions, but each to each, one to one. Sexual expressions are a privilege only within a proper marriage. Outside of a marriage designed by God sexual activity is fornication. Those clamoring for "liberty" in sexual activities only end up with license!

5. Husbands are to "love their wives as Christ loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25). Who is ready to say a man practicing deviant sexual intercourse, sodomy, is to love another man as Christ loved the church?

6. Which man is to "nourish and cherish" the other in an aberrant sexual union (Ephesians 5:29)? Which of the two women in a union of dishonor and vileness is to be "nourished and cherished?"

7. Since male-male or female-female cannot multiply, such deviant behavior does not fit God's design (Genesis 1:28).

Conclusion

Some words, their meanings and their practice, are

fading from view in modern America. Consider the impact of love, honor, duty, responsibility, obedience, unselfishness, devotion, and faithfulness.

Such lofty ideas are not too popular today to those who are "in the loop," those who are supposed to know so much and lead society and the church so well. Yet these ideas are revealed from the mind of God.

God's design of the family is right. It will always be right, it will never be wrong. It is right because God said so. It is right because it is in accord with His Own Nature.

Any base self-centered cry to change what is right will not weigh much when the scales of life and eternity are finally weighed.

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