

Raising Your Family in Sodom

Scripture: Genesis 13:12–13; 2 Peter 2:7–8

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Although we've noticed the steady, pebble-by-pebble crumbling of the family for decades, we're now watching the landslide. We live in an age where society is no longer content to simply ignore the sanctity of marriage and the family—it attacks it with a vengeance. God's established order for life has become a threat to this culture's pursuit of sexual freedom.

Consider the global range of attacks on the family within the last decade. Back in 2000, Dutch parliament passed the first legislation in history that granted same-sex couples the right to marry. Following the Netherlands' lead were Belgium (2003), Spain (2005), Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), and Norway (2008). Although traditional marriage was challenged much earlier in the U.S. (1993), social conservatives and moral majority leaders quickly enacted protective measures, prompting Congress to adopt same-sex marriage bans nationwide. The bans didn't last long. Conservative "victories" were short-lived as judges began lifting bans and pushing Congress to amend the constitution. Since 2008, opposition against marriage and the family has intensified in America, taking many unsuspecting Christians by surprise.

The most recent example happened in California last week. On August 4, elected U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker, himself a homosexual, carried out his own attack against the family. He used his judicial powers to overturn the will of California's voters regarding Proposition 8, which proposed an amendment to California's constitution, defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Judge Walker declared Proposition 8 unconstitutional. Period. At this point, Judge Walker has won a temporary victory for the pro-homosexual agenda to *redefine* the fundamental concept of marriage according to their preferred sin.

Brace yourself, believer. You're going to keep seeing this fire-storm of opposition against the family. Soon, many people will consign Christians who uphold a biblical view of marriage and family to the same moral category as white supremacy groups, and they'll consider any effort to oppose homosexuality as a hate crime. In fact, it won't be long before this blog post becomes a violation of law, under "hate speech" legislation.

Take another example: Carrie Prejean, one of the contestants in the 2009 Miss USA pageant, made public statements against same-sex marriage. The media demanded her head on a platter. One of the judges, a homosexual, asked whether she believed every state should legalize same-sex marriage. Prejean responded, "I believe that marriage should be between a man and a woman." Officials of the pageant immediately expressed outrage and open hostility toward her convictions. Prejean is no model of biblical Christianity, but the hostile reactions to her simple confession is a sample of what's to come.

With mounting intensity, society continues to wage war on the traditional, biblical view of the family. Another key player in this war is Hollywood. Whenever Hollywood portrays families in modern films, television dramas, and sitcoms, they nearly always caricature them as a grossly dysfunctional unit.

Not only is there a noted absence of any male leadership in most instances, but oftentimes there's no authority figure present at all, creating a scenario where anything goes. But not only is dad absent, so is mom. She's either working outside the home, or working on an adulterous relationship. Even the titles of many mainline television programs betray their outrageous content. Programs such as 'Sex in the City' and 'Desperate Housewives' have turned marital infidelity into a laughing matter. It's prime-time "entertainment," and Americans eat it up.

Such portrayals of the American family were once rare for Hollywood, but now they literally dominate the big-screen. And here's why: they are accurate reflections of our fallen culture, a culture that systematically undermines love, order, authority, and righteousness. Commenting on the epidemic absence of morality within society, John MacArthur writes:

Casual sex is expected. Divorce is epidemic. Marriage itself is in decline, as multitudes of men and women have decided it's preferable to live together without making a covenant or formally constituting a family. Abortion is a worldwide plague. Juvenile delinquency is rampant, and many parents have deliberately abandoned their roles of authority in the family. On the other hand, child abuse in many forms is escalating.

All those elements prevail in our society and resonate with our fallen flesh. Therefore, they dominate the entertainment industry. It's the law of supply and demand in action. Hollywood gives people what they want—corruption.

Trying to find a traditional, structured family anywhere on television is nearly impossible. While lamenting Hollywood's sick portrayal of families, someone made the following observation:

The only television "family" who regularly attend church together are the Simpsons—and they are cartoon exaggerations deliberately saddled with the worst imaginable traits, designed mainly to mock and malign both church and family. It's no joke, though. A relentless parade of similarly dysfunctional assortments of people assaults us on television and in the movies. Hollywood has given a broad new meaning to the word *family*. Meanwhile, traditional nuclear families with a strong, reliable father and a mother whose priorities are in the home have been banished from popular culture, made to feel as if *they* were the caricature.

Such examples may seem subtle and harmless to some Christians. But over time, like water erosion on the face of rock, these secular ideas at first influence then control the thinking of many unsuspecting Christians who expose their families to such corrupting ideas.

Take Lot, for example. Lot "pitched his tent as far as Sodom." Why is that significant? Because "the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord." The next time we find Lot in the inspired record, he is no longer a stranger to the wicked inhabitants of Sodom—he's one of their leading citizens. Further, he calls them his "brothers," chooses one of their citizens as his wife, and raises his two daughters in a pagan environment. Apparently, Lot acclimatized himself to the wicked lifestyle of the Sodomites. When God sent two angels to rescue His family, the entire male population of Sodom sought to assault the angelic visitors sexually, who had lodged with Lot's family for the night. What was Lot's solution to the problem? He quickly offered his two virgin daughters to satisfy their sexual cravings. During the angelic rescue, Lot was reluctant to abandon his residence in Sodom, and when he finally realized the danger he and his family were in, his sons-in-law mocked his warnings to flee. Apparently, the citizens of Sodom didn't take Lot too seriously when it came to

discussions about God.

In the New Testament, Peter uses the story of Lot as an example of how God can rescue His people from the jaws of temptation. In the process, he sheds additional light on the severity of Sodom's corrupting influence when he writes that God, "delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)." After God rescued Lot's family and sent judgment upon Sodom, Lot's wife, longing to return to her sinful pattern of life was turned into a pillar of salt. Following that tragedy, Lot's two daughters got their father drunk and committed sexual incest with him in order to preserve their family lineage. The record of Lot closes on a bitter note—he was a tormented soul who jeopardized himself and his family with a compromised way of life. For his legacy, he spawned two cursed people groups—the Ammorites and the Moabites.

If God hadn't told us Lot was "righteous" (2 Peter 2:7, 8), it would be very difficult to identify Him as a citizen of God's kingdom. The story of Lot is a classic example of how easily the world is able to pollute and corrupt a righteous mind.

Christian, how close have you pitched your tent to Sodom? Have you taken a close look at your family lately?

Think about this: How are today's Christians indifferent or asleep in the cultural battle for the family? How is the enemy infiltrating Christian homes (e.g., immersion in modern technology, exposure to secular entertainment)? Enjoy the thread.

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