

GOD'S RENEWAL FOR HOUSEHOLDS
"Part I: The Core Cause And Cure Of Household Dysfunction"
(Genesis 2:18-4:24; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The American family is in great need. Consider these facts:

- (1) George Barna, head of the Barna Research Group has conducted and written extensive surveys on today's young "Generation Xers." According to his findings, 67% of this generation defines a family as "any and all individuals whom they deeply care for or who deeply care about them." No demand was made by the group for a birth mother and birth father -- that is considered **optional** to the unit!
- (2) It's no wonder. Roughly half of all weddings performed this year will end in divorce. True, many of those are **remarriages**, but the divorce rate is at crisis proportions -- America's **children** know that!
- (3) In a **kindergarten** class this year in a Torrington elementary school, only **one** boy out of his **whole class** has both his birth mom and birth father living in the house or apartment where he goes after school!
- (4) Tom Brokaw of the NBC Evening News, focusing on "The American Family" in the February 10, 1997 broadcast, showed the clear dearth of fathers in American families. According to his findings, (a) the vast majority of male prisoners in American were not raised around a father figure. (b) Also, the dividing line between the "haves" and the "have nots" is being drawn by the factor of fatherhood: those with fathers tend to end up being in the "haves" group where those without them end up in the "have nots" group.
- (5) The plague afflicts the **Church** as well: Dr. James Dobson reported in his November 1996 Focus on the Family newsletter about a letter he received from a girl: she wrote that she had found a porno movie in her father's room, and her father is a **pastor**! She added that she had just discovered that her boyfriend was gay. She finished, saying, "Sometimes I feel like dying. If someone does kill themselves, do they go to hell for it? My friend hung himself. And my other friends want to or tried to . . . how do I get suicidal thoughts out of my head?"
- (6) After one of her afternoon television talk shows last month, Sally Jesse Raphael noted that comedians today can get a quick laugh by joking about "family values". However, in her opinion, Sally said that the nation's families are in "desperate need" of some kind of values.

In view of the crisis, where do we BEGIN to solve the many problems in our FAMILIES at the national and local levels today?!

(We turn to the sermon's "Need" section . . .)

Need: "It's no secret that many households are dysfunctional -- I have faced enough family problems myself! We need ANSWERS, so where does one start to find SOLUTIONS for a needy household?!"

- I. **To understand where to BEGIN for SOLUTIONS to household dysfunction, we isolate the CAUSE from the Bible as follows:**
 - A. When God created the first household, it was very wholesome!
 1. Genesis 1:26-27 records the creation of the first family unit, a husband and wife named Adam and Eve, cf. Gen. 2:7; 3:20.
 2. That family unit was a very wholesome one, Genesis 1:31a.
 - B. However, when **sin** against **GOD** entered, all of the household crises we now face arose as a result as we can show from Genesis 3-4:
 1. **Marital** problems arose out of **sin** against **God**:
 - a. Spousal gender **roles** turned **stressful**: (a) Men were **created** to **lead** and women to **help** them, (Adam's **naming** Eve and ANE culture, Gen. 2:20-23). (b) Yet, **Satan** tempted **Eve** via the **world's lusts** (the body, the eyes and pride) to **lead Adam** to **disobey** God, and Adam **yielded** to her (3:1-6, 17). (c) As this **role inversion** opposed God's healthy **order**, and with sin came a **sin nature** making this role inversion **habitual** for couples (Rom. 5:12-14), God caused women to have an **insatiable NEED** for their husbands, **enforcing** their **created** gender roles, 3:16d! (d) Now, if men take **advantage** of this insatiability or women **repress** it defensively, the proverbial "battle of the sexes" **rages**!
 - b. The **functions** of spouses soured: (a) God created Eve from Adam's rib, and brought her to him when both were naked; this showed that marital fulfillment was to be found by functioning in monogamous, heterosexual, permanent, sexually intimate unions, Gen. 2:20-25. (b) Yet, **sin** distorted man's **outlook** on marital functions, leading either to relationship inhibitions (Gn. 3:6-7) or spousal abuse, 4:1, 17-18, 23. (c) Then divorce, remarriage (Dt. 24:1-4) and finally deviant sexual unions arose, Gen. 19:4-9.
 2. **Household** Problems arose out of **sin** against **God**:
 - a. In **resisting** God's **outlook**, Adam's son, Cain let his **sin nature** grow hate toward his brother until he killed him, Gn. 4:1-5, 6-8.
 - b. Because of this **murder**, Cain was parted from his parents, starting tensions between groups of families, Gen. 4:11-12, 16.
 3. The progress of **sin** against **God** undermined man's entire **society**:
 - a. Adult males were created by God with a drive to equip them to **thrust out in travel** to develop earth's resources, Gen. 2:8-15!

- b. Now, Cain was pressed by God to need others to raise his food to hold his *murderous* aggression in check by *humility*, 4:11-16.
- c. Yet, Cain's sons built enclosed cities **away from** open farms; then they could protect themselves and make and trade goods and services for food **without** interrelating *humbly*, 4:17-22.
- d. Well, living in cramped cities with **arrogant** attitudes & lacking good **parenting** (i.e., Cain who sired them) to direct their male drives well, Cain's sons became **brutal** toward others, 4:23-24.
- e. As it was then so it is now: unbridled male brutality in growing, congested cities led to **violence** that **ruined** the *world*, 6:1-13!

II. **Thus, man's SIN against GOD must be addressed for household renewal, and by grace, God HIMSELF has made provision for this!**

- A. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross as man's sin bearer to absorb God's punishment against his sin, John 3:16; 1 Peter 2:24.
- B. God then pronounces righteous and makes spiritually anew anyone who believes on Christ for salvation, Rom. 3:23-26; 2 Cor. 5:17!
- C. Thus made anew, one is **outfitted** by God to live constructively in his household role in place of his former harmful manner as follows:
 1. First, God has given the believer His Holy Spirit to make him *want* and *do* what is helpful in his domestic role opposite the harmful *will* and *do* lures of Satan (1 Jn. 2:14), worldly lusts (1 Jn. 2:15-17) and his own sin nature (Ro. 7:15-8:4), Gal. 5:16-23; Phil. 2:12-13.
 2. Second, if the believer sins, that sin **blocks** the Spirit's empowering, so he must confess his sin to God for cleansing for the Spirit to **RESUME living out** righteousness in him, Gal. 5:16-23; 1 Jn. 1:9.
 3. Third, 2 Tim. 3:16-4:2a instructs that the Bible has **all** the **insight** the believer needs to keep his outlook correct so he can acquire household renewal! In the coming 29 Bible lessons, we will show in detail God's outlook useful for acquiring a renewed household.

Application: Since SIN is the ROOT of dysfunction in a household, start to address household problems by (1) believing on Christ for salvation from sin to be made ANEW by God, John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17. (2) Then, (a) if we sin, confess it to God for cleansing, 1 John 1:9, and (b) depend upon God's indwelling Spirit for the will and the power to function well in a household, Gal. 5:16-23. (c) Then apply the Bible's correct outlook on functioning well for household renewal! (We will teach this Bible outlook in the next 29 sermons!)

Lesson: Since SIN is the core of all household dysfunction, to BEGIN the renewal of a household, its INHABITANTS must get right with GOD!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Judge Charles D. Gill, writing an article in the October 31, 1994 issue of the Torrington Register-Citizen, downplayed the significance of the 30.2 billion-dollar Crime Bill of 1994. Judge Gill wrote: "I can safely predict that this bill will have little or no effect upon crime or violence in America . . . The truth is that the fear of punishment does not even really deter you and me from committing crimes. Our **values** do. Those **without** values are deterred by **nothing**."

We couldn't agree more with Judge Charles D. Gill.

We offer the only way that those values can truly change -- faith in Christ. Here's evidence (McDowell, A Ready Defense, p. 449ff):

By 1970, B. J. Thomas had made 13 million dollars as a singer. By 1976, despite selling 32 million records including "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head," used in the hit movie "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," he was in debt to the tune of \$800,000! His \$3,000 a week cocaine habit had robbed his money, ruined his marriage to Gloria and had almost cost him his life. In fact, he barely recalls recording the famous song, "Raindrops" due to being so spaced out on drugs.

Finally, at the end of his rope where he was so saturated with drugs that he couldn't sleep anymore, B. J. called Gloria, thinking that maybe he could get a little sleep if she would let him come home. Recently, Gloria had changed and often called him, saying, "There's help here," without explaining what help was meant.

When he arrived he discovered Gloria had made a personal commitment to Christ as her Savior -- the last subject that B. J. wanted to discuss! However, being introduced to Jim Reeves who had led Gloria to Christ, and visiting with his family, B. J. noticed their great peace. He was attracted to it, and prayed to receive Christ.

B. J. Thomas raised his head from praying and saw Jim Reeves and his wife crying for joy, and he was himself so relieved that he started jumping around the room! He stopped taking all of his drugs, expecting to suffer withdrawal symptoms. There were none!

That was January 29, 1976, the start of the **new** B. J. Thomas.

Family-saving values? They come by Christ. The change in B. J. Thomas proclaims it. Every member of every household in America needs the gift he received -- salvation by faith in Christ!