

THE SOWER

ARTHUR (IL) CHURCH OF CHRIST
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WHERE HAVE ALL THE FATHERS GONE?

Where have all the fathers gone? Unless you have been out of the country the last few years you will probably agree with me when I say that the traditional and biblical standard for the “nuclear family” is being attacked. As defined by the *Merriam Webster’s Deluxe Dictionary*, such a family is described as “a family group that consists of father, mother and children.” You will have to search a long time to any more find family-shows on TV such as “Father Knows Best,” the “Donna Reed Show,” or—our favorite—“The Beaver,” except on stations that specialize in re-runs of productions of the ‘40s and ‘50s. Small-children’s text books now refrain from depicting such families because such are unfamiliar to many children, especially to those with no father present. The single-parent household is becoming ever more common and acceptable. As Biblical standards are being cast aside, the blessing of two parents in the rearing of children is becoming rarer and rarer. Children are routinely being born into the world to young women who consent to sexual relationships without the security of “holy matrimony.” Divorce statistics continue to mount, leaving mothers to raise children alone, or with little input by the fathers. Feminists maintain that a father is no longer needed, other than to be a sperm-donor, enabling them the freedom to have children without the further need for a male. Lesbian couples are trying to convince us that two women can raise children as effectively as a man and a woman together can. Statistics show that in 1960, 5 percent of America’s children were without two parents—a mother and a father. Twenty years later the number had risen to 18 percent; and by 2000, to 33 percent. I believe that number now stands at 41 percent. While public welfare is a need in a humane society, some women admit that it is monetarily an advantage to remain on welfare as a single parent in preference to taking a low-paying job and hiring baby sitters. Some have discovered that they can “make” even more money by having more children, allowing an automatic raise in benefits. A poll taken by the *Los Angeles Times* in 1985, asking whether poor women often have children to increase benefits, showed that while non-poor residents said “No”, 64 percent of those considered poor said “Yes”. With the redefinition of marriage to include same-sex couples, we can only expect the situation to worsen.

Are fathers needed? Obviously, God's pattern from the beginning was that of a father, mother and children. To depart from it is at our peril. Let Isaac Shakur, a rapper who was killed, possibly in a gang-related murder a few years ago, answer: *"I know for a fact that had I had a father, I'd have some discipline. I'd have more confidence.... Your mother cannot calm you down the way a man can. Your mother can't assure you the way a man can. My mother couldn't show me where my manhood was. You need a man to teach you how to be a man."* He admitted to running with gangs to seek structure and protection. Not surprisingly, the *Journal of Research on Adolescence* revealed from a study that children who have never had a father available are the most likely to end up behind bars. It is predictable that as our nation continues to live in a world of "virtual reality" instead of facing the fact that God knows best, the situation will continue to deteriorate. And as the family-structure is destroyed, our blinded nation can only expect a similar fate. One day we will wake up and ask, "Where have all the fathers gone?"

---Ron

LITTLE THINGS

He stopped to pet a small dog's head—

A tiny thing to do:

And yet the dog, remembering,

Was glad the whole day through.

He gave a rose into the hand

Of one who loved it much:

'Twas just a rose—but oh the joy

That lay in its soft touch!

He spoke a word so tenderly—

A word's a wee, small thing:

And yet it stirred a weary heart

To hope again and sing!

--Author unknown

GOD'S WORD—OUR ONE AUTHORITY

The story is told of a man who once bought a new radio, brought it home, and placed it on the refrigerator. He then plugged it in, tuned to WSM in Nashville (home of the Grand Ole Opry) and proceeded to do the most unusual thing. He pulled all the knobs off! He had already tuned in all he ever wanted or expected to hear, and so he chose to limit his radio reception to one station.

Perhaps if more in the world would do this with regard to the word of God we would have a lot less religious confusion in the world. Too many are turning to every “channel” of doctrine. Paul warns, “Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14). We must tune only into God’s channel—His holy word—for our direction. This is why Jeremiah declared, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

--Tom Moore

HAPPY FATHERS' DAY

PERFECTLY CONFUSED

“On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense. The wise lay up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.” (Prov. 10:13-14)

A man of understanding is not a man who seeks to be wise in the ways of the world. That is not the man in view here. A man of understanding is one who seeks to be wise in the ways of God. This man, consequently, will be very wise in the ways of the world and its utter foolishness. This kind of man will try to instill in others what he has. He is loyal to God, obeys His holy will, and has become wise to the ways of righteousness. The fool, on the other hand, has no freedom in the ways of righteousness and with his morass of darkness he walks in this life “perfectly” confused.

—Logansport (IN) Lifelines

“EXODUS—A MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE” will continue as our theme in today’s message, with Exodus 14:21-31 as the reading.

HEALTH UPDATE: My blood pressure and pulse rate remain in a more normal range now, but the tests that were taken in the hospital, and later at my doctor’s, indicate that my heart beat has become somewhat irregular. It is thought that these problems have occurred largely due to a medication I was recently put on. I am to meet with a cardiologist Monday afternoon to see what needs to be done about the situation.