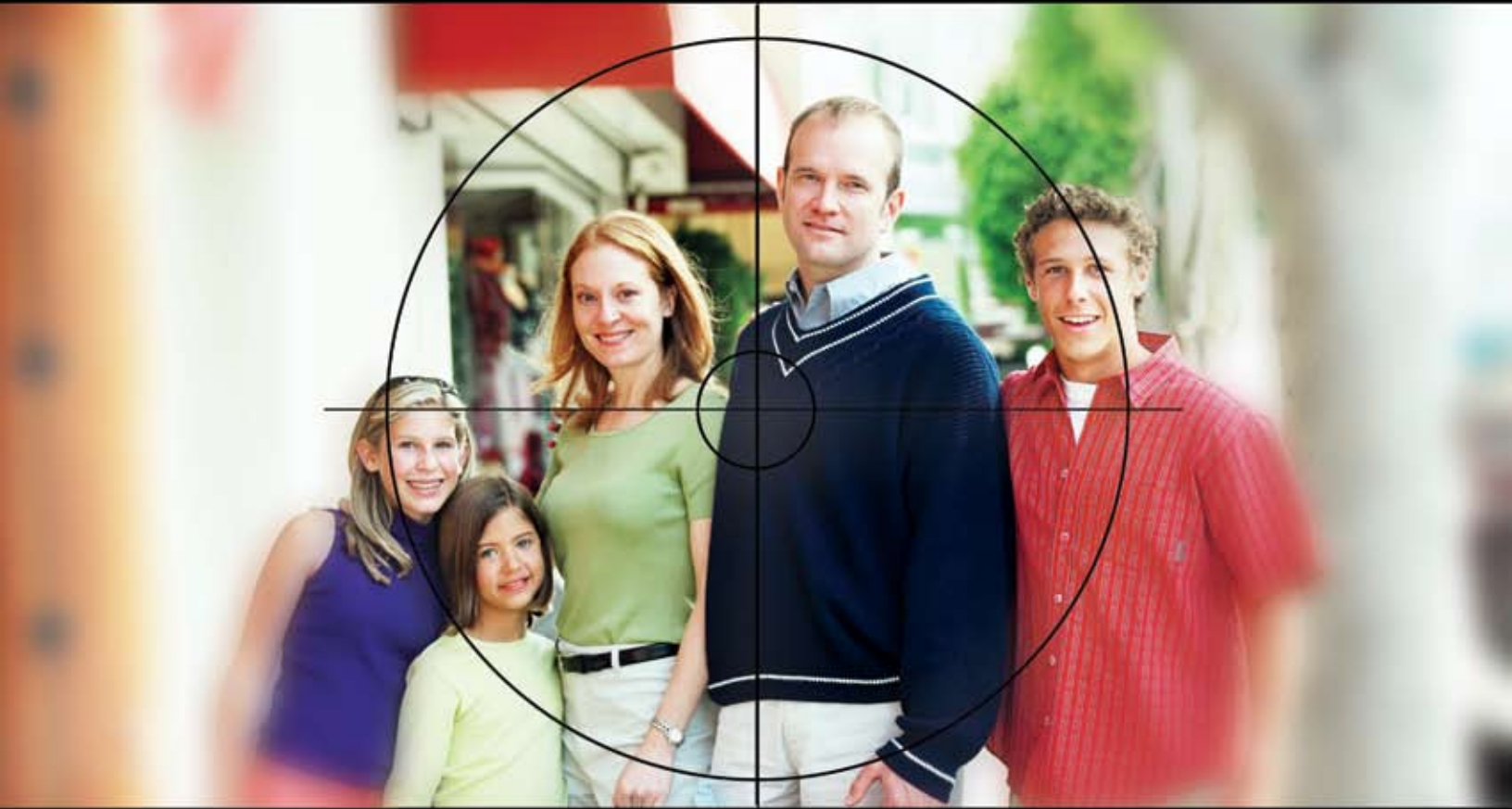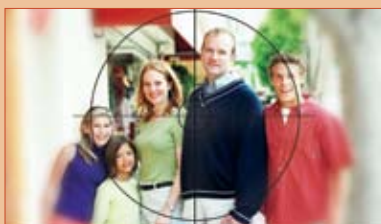# Assault on the FAMILY

ABOUT THE COVER
The family unit is under continuous assault by the pulls and pressure of modern society—but your family need not fall victim.

Why the PROPHETIC CONDITIONS Series?

Knowledge and technology are exploding, yet the world is drowning in a sea of problems! *Alcohol abuse* is on the rise. Vast regions of farmland are "dying of thirst" due to droughts and erratic *weather* patterns. The allure of *drugs* is fast seducing a younger generation that no longer knows how to be kids. *Crime* is more violent, more entrenched, more widespread than ever. *Immorality* is robbing families and youth of their innocence by "entertaining" sick, perverted, carnal desires. And the earth is choking in the *pollution* produced by humanity.

Why?

The *Prophetic Trends and Conditions Series* will report global trends and problems. It explains why humanity is deluged with such overwhelming—and insoluble—problems.

And points to mankind's *only solution!*

The PROPHETIC CONDITIONS Series

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Contact The Restored Church of God

P.O. Box 23295
Wadsworth, OH 44282
(330) 334-2266

P.O. Box 4064
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3
Canada

www.TheRCG.org
info@TheRCG.org

ASSAULT ON THE
FAMILY

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, the foundation of every thriving, productive society, nation, kingdom and empire has been the family unit. When the family fails, nations collapse. Today, the foundation of the traditional family is being torn apart, radically redefined—and rebuilt!—into something very different! Families are squarely in the crosshairs of today's social-engineering "sharpshooters."

The world has changed. True values have been exchanged for "situation ethics" and "political correctness." Fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, have forgotten the true nature of their roles within the family, and how to perform them. This is made worse because God's laws and teachings are routinely lampooned and sneered at as hopelessly out of date. In the modern "progressive" world, office supply stores now offer do-it-yourself divorce kits.

Gone are the days when wholesome-looking families were presented on television and in movies. These have been replaced by loud, coarse, sarcastic, disrespectful—and outright ugly—family circumstances. When understood, housewives are made to seem "desperate" because they have become so unhappy with their lives as they are.

Now, sex permeates almost every facet of society. No longer can one watch television or go to the movies without being exposed to sexual undertones and blatant messages. From cover to cover, magazines are filled with photos, stories and features that would shock even the most liberal-minded of generations past. The sheer emphasis on the number of magazine articles about sex is overwhelming.

Then, consider that adultery is rampant—and why is anyone surprised?—in all Western nations, afflicting up to 83% of U.S. households, in which either one or both mates cheat. There is a devastating connection to the affected children, who often go on to copy what they see.

Both parents must often work outside the home—or so many seem to think—to make ends meet. In reality, much of this is merely to "keep up with the Joneses." This means that proper and effective childrearing and quality family time often go begging. The price to the family of this material pursuit has been staggering.

Children are rarely disciplined for their misconduct or taught the difference between right and wrong. Instead, they are encouraged to rely upon their feelings and to "reason" their way through situations—to do what they *feel* is right. Building character and integrity has been replaced with teaching young minds to make choices based on "no absolutes." And parents who dare to follow God's Way in disciplining their children are immediately viewed with suspicion and disdain.

Militant thinkers and social radicals have forced the mainstream to embrace "political correctness." This mindset permits anyone to live whatever lifestyle—including "alternative" ones—that he chooses, as long as it can be rationalized "it doesn't hurt anyone else." Virtually everything people do is now tolerated with little or no question.

The Internet, despite the countless productive uses it offers, is being used as a private window to every sexual perversion and titillation imaginable! Never before could someone who was "curious" about same-sex relationships (or any other kind of sexual practice) find a partner to explore that curiosity in such an open and encouraged forum—and almost instantly. Through the Internet, children are exposed, often without their parents' knowledge, to predators of every kind—who could be across the world or just next door!

The family is running amuck and out of control. Stunned authorities—sociologists, educators, family planners and police forces—do not know what to do, where to turn.

Serious questions must be asked: *What* is happening to the family?—and how bad is it? *Why* is this happening?—what are the causes? *Where* to from here?—what are the SOLUTIONS to problems facing YOUR FAMILY?

This report addresses the mounting pulls, pressures, influences and trends that society is unleashing upon the family unit. It offers solutions to how you, as a father, mother, son or daughter, can help build, strengthen and protect your family. Each article has been included for a reason. No section stands alone, but rather all must be viewed as part of an integrated picture. □

A GENERATION CORRUPTED

Youth today stand together in twisted unity. Their morals, attitudes and aspirations are very similar. What are they? How did they come to be? And what does this generation mean for the present—and the near future?

I T IS 8 A.M. and class begins. The idle chatter dampens with the arrival of the instructor. This is what happened at the beginning of class decades ago. But today, it is *very* different. Many students do not arrive on time or have forgotten such things as paper or pencils. Others hold open conversations while the teacher, often unsuccessfully, tries to gain control over the class.

Such is the scene that takes place each weekday in America. Whether the students are in kindergarten or finishing their last year of college, the scenario is quite similar. Are these children and young adults actually being prepared for the world ahead of them, ready to take on responsibility?

The education of youth, and the society around them, particularly in the Western World, has produced a new generation— one vastly different from those of past decades. As a generation that appears—at least in their own eyes—to have figured out all the issues and problems in the world, they are "self-aware" and believe that they can do whatever they please, as long as it "doesn't hurt anyone else."

Where did such thinking originate? How did the concepts of character, morality and sacrifice fade from this darkening generation? There is but one answer: They were essentially taught this way!

And amazingly, they have been taught with such lockstep conformity that by the time they are young adults, this outlook is second nature—their basic character. Of course, students are not *actively* taught to give themselves over to their baser instincts. However, it is what is *not* taught that allows such thinking to run rampant.

Rarely are children disciplined for their misconduct or even taught that such actions are wrong. Improper conduct is

"winked at"—or even encouraged. Children are taught from a very young age that their *feelings* should be their moral compass. They are taught to reason their way through a situation with feelings—do what they *feel* is right.

Sexual limitations have also been lifted. Gone are the days when children were reprimanded for being too loud on field trips. Today, these same school trips are interrupted by children performing sexual acts at the back of the school bus. Because such is not disciplined, these same youth may turn to pornography to pay their way through college. Truly, all such acts are accepted and even considered healthy exploration of oneself.

A wise man, when speaking of the present world, said that there will exist a generation that sees itself as pure, yet is involved in all sorts of vile activities; a generation that curses its father and mother and whose speech is full of hateful things. Simply scanning the world around you quickly reveals that such a generation exists today.

The problem is not limited to youth; the deeper problem is that these corrupted youth are becoming adults. They are replacing the "old guard," who based choices on *character* and *integrity*. Today, choices are based on *situation ethics* and acceptance of whatever "feels" right.

Can anything be done to turn the tide? Is there any hope left?

Yes! There is a solution. These children and young adults are not without hope. The conformity of corruption that exists can be reversed. But before we can look at a solution, and the hope it inspires, we must look at how far and to what degree this generation has slid.

Ruling Their Parents

People are influenced the most when they are young. This is why it is so important for parents to instill in children, at a very early age, the proper focus and framework on which to base right and wrong. Today, parents often fall short of this standard.

The next time you are walking through a supermarket, listen to parents talking to their children. Watch how they interact. Often, you will witness children commanding their parents. While this may not be obvious at first, you will notice that it is the *child* who is getting what he wants and the parent who is bowing to his whim.

For instance, a toddler may grab for cookies while his mother is pushing the cart down the supermarket isle. When his mother takes the cookies and puts them back on the shelf, the child bursts into a wild tantrum. Frustrated, the mother attempts to *reason* the child back to calmness, explaining that this is not the right environment to "express himself."

This may be followed by a series of attempts to verbally placate the child, ultimately failing. Finally, out of embarrassment and desperation, those same cookies are placed back into the cart, quickly calming the child, teaching him a devastating lesson.

Instead of being told "no," the child learns how to manipulate his parents to get what he wants—satisfying *his* wants or desires. He is shown to do, feel and think what is "right in his own eyes" (Prov. 12:15), with no regard for those around him.

(Interestingly, parents have fallen back on the modern idea of reasoning with their children. They assume that strict punishment harms the child's self-esteem or development. Such reasoning has been *proven* unsound. Studies show that children are actually *incapable* of reasoning until they are age seven or eight.)

Even at a very early age, children are given more power than they can possibly understand. They are taught that what they *feel* is right *is* right! The seeds of self-importance are already deeply planted.

And these seeds are fertilized and nurtured when they enter the school system.

Mis-Education

The last several decades have seen some major changes in how and what children are taught. There have even been extreme shifts in what the students are *not* taught!

Children are no longer taught that honesty and respect are essential attributes for success. In their place, strong-arming and intimidation are the standard. A recent incident reinforced this thinking: A high school teacher caught some of her students cheating on a test, and issued them a failing grade. Because the test constituted most of their *final* grade, the students failed the course and their parents were notified. This would have taught the students that cheating does not pay and that their actions carry serious consequences. But, in the end, a very different lesson was learned.

Upset by their children's failing marks, some parents filed a lawsuit against the school board and teacher involved. They claimed that the failing mark, and the stigma involved, ruined their children's chance at college and would ultimately adversely affect their lives. Amazingly, the school board buckled!

Not only were the failing marks overturned, but the teacher, who had lost all authority in her class, was forced to resign. While the parents hold the greater share of the blame, the weak school board ensured that these children would learn that consequences can be dictated (often with the help of legal counsel), regardless of the original action!

What sort of far-reaching lesson is this for children?

Once children are legally adults, schools no longer can hide behind the excuse of bad parenting—as was the case above. Most universities turn a blind eye to immoral conduct under their own roof. Others are more than happy to become active participants in such acts—sometimes with university funding.

Such was the case at Harvard University. At the request of some students, Harvard funded a student-run sex magazine. Their only stipulation (which was dictated after the magazine received national media attention) was that the publication could not contain pornographic *images*. Articles could be as illicit and graphic as desired, but no actual photographs of sexual acts

could be included. The *written word* was considered to be protected by the constitution and could not be censored. Imagine the shock the founding fathers of the United States would feel if they knew that the constitution was being used to protect pornographers.

There are other times when the students are able to fund themselves. A new trend is emerging in schools around the country. Gone are the days when students took summer jobs or student loans to fund their education. Why "waste" all your time working when you can run adult websites from your dorm room?

Young women have found that they can make thousands of dollars by filming themselves in sexual acts, or by simply romping around their dorm room nude and then posting it on the Internet. When asked, many participants state that it is just another job to get them through school! With the tuition paid, many schools are noticeably missing from the debate.

Society has sunk so low that being in the porn industry is "just another job."

But immoral sex is not the only result of this characterless generation. After college sporting events, fans turn to rioting and violence. Overturning cars, breaking windows and lighting fires are just a few of the post-game recreations. Absolute and uncontrolled violence reigns supreme, often with police unable to do anything other than wait until the unruly mob sobers. And these are the fans of the *winning* team!

From kindergarten to college, schools have dropped the ball in properly educating our children. While lessons about character are notably absent, schools actually *teach* students to be shallow. (To learn more about the state of today's education system, you may read our prophetic conditions report *The Education Crisis*.)

The product of such a system should come as no surprise.

Lessons Learned—Lessons Applied

Children who are taught that they are not responsible for their actions carry such lessons into adulthood. The news is filled with stories of ridiculous litigation: fast food industry responsible for making one overweight or the tobacco industry responsible for people choosing to smoke. People do not want to take responsibility for their actions. It *feels* better to blame someone else—and all the more when courts reward you for your own lack of character. The tables have been completely turned!

But is this really surprising?

Children are taught by schools, parents and peers that it is much easier to blame someone else for their actions than to take responsibility for them. Such conduct would continue into adulthood. As the Bible states, what you are taught as a child will continue with you as an adult (Prov. 22:6). Are you beginning to see why the corrupt, yet uniform, education that children receive is completely destroying almost an entire generation?

Power Without Character

Recently, there has been much news coverage about abuses committed by American and British soldiers against Iraqi prisoners. Such reports are often followed by these questions: "Why did this happen? How could anyone do this?"

The answer is simple. When you put young people (like those described above) in a situation where they have ultimate power, problems will ALWAYS ensue. How can a generation that knows no limits, sees no boundaries and yields to no rules of ethics be expected to make right, moral judgments?

One would not put just anyone in front of a ticking bomb in the hope they could defuse it. That person would have to be taught, and properly educated to understand how to avoid a potentially dangerous situation. This world has put an untrained generation in front of a ticking bomb—with no education, training or hope of defusing it.

And the resulting explosion is the product of such misguided thinking.

"There is a Generation…"

With example after example, there seems to be very little hope left. We have reached the time that God's Word describes in the following way: "*There is a generation* that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness*" (Prov. 30:12). Other parts of this passage describe this generation in even more detail: "*There is a generation* that curses their father, and does not bless their mother…O how lofty [Hebrew: proud] are their eyes!… whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives…" (vs. 11, 13-14).

In 1920, famous lecturer and business forecaster Roger Babson said, "I looked to the SOURCE which determines future conditions. I have found that the source may be defined in terms of 'RIGHTEOUSNESS.' When 51% or more of the whole people are reasonably 'righteous' in their dealings with one another, we are heading into increasing prosperity. When 51% of the people become 'unrighteous' in their business dealings with their fellows, then we are headed for BAD TIMES…"

God states this in a much more succinct manner: "Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach [wicked thing] to any people [nation]" (Prov. 14:34).

With over 80% of marriages today experiencing adultery (not to mention the sexual relationships existing between unmarried individuals), the 51% of "unrighteousness" that started the collapse of our modern society seems like a distant memory.

A Generation Punished

Years ago, the term "Generation X" was coined. Since then, there has been "Generation Y." It seems fitting that youth today receive the label "Generation Z." This is the alphabet's last letter! The Bible shows that when a generation has become as corrupted as the youth of today, the country, empire or civilization of which it is part collapses!

There is nothing man can do to

PARENTS

Missing in Action!

Where are today's parents? Is society evolving to a higher standard of parenting? Here is an in-depth look into parenting today!

ON A COLD February morning, little Sally fights for her life. Swaddled in a blanket, lying in a shoebox beside a dumpster, she tries to stay warm. Only three days old, she cries for help, but no one hears. Sally is alone. Her parents are nowhere to be seen.

Stories like this hit headlines periodically. You certainly have heard of these terrible horror stories of abandonment. At the peak of their desperation, some parents do the unthinkable—they leave their own children to die. Those who hear these stories are shocked—outraged—and rightfully so. Questions are asked: "How could someone possibly commit such a horrendous act? Why? What could a child have done to deserve such appalling treatment?"

Questions and emotions swim through our heads when we hear of these events, but everyone agrees it is a terrible tragedy.

Often, the only solace is that these types of sad situations rarely happen. However, when they do occur, the media almost always picks up the story and follows it until some sort of justice is served. Inevitably, though, these terrible stories fade in society's memory—until it happens again.

There is another form of abandonment that is much more widespread yet receives considerably less media attention.

Public outrage is nearly nonexistent. The outcry by society can barely be heard.

In the "fight" for one's rights for alternative lifestyles, every type of opinion and preference is being supported—except that of the traditional family. The family is facing attacks from every side, with practically no defense.

Perhaps the fiercest attack is the growing lack of concerned and proper parenting. For varying reasons, parents are "lying down on the job"—actually, they are not even *showing up* for the job. Children are growing up without the proper guidance they need to become productive members of society.

This all-encompassing trend is affecting almost every family in western society. As you read this article, prepare to be saddened and sobered at how parents do their job today. They are truly "missing in action" and here is how.

Divorce

There was a time, not too long ago, when parents would endure a less-than-perfect marriage for the sake of their children. The well-being of their offspring was one of their top priorities. Realizing that a split household would directly and adversely affect their children's development, parents made a conscious decision to stay together—sometimes despite their personal feelings toward one another.

However, times have changed. The already high divorce rate is increasing and many children are feeling the effects. Consider the following statistics:

■ Divorced status is the fastest growing marital category. The number of divorcees more than quadrupled from 4.3 million in 1970 to 18.3 million in 1996.

■ Divorces per 1,000 marriages: 1969—140; 1990—380 (up 171%); 2001—485 (up 246% since 1969).

■ Sixty-one percent of couples who are divorcing for the first time have children under the age of 18.

In other words, nearly half of mar-riages end in divorce and more than half of those marriages have children! These children do not have any say in these divorces, although their lives are directly affected.

As one author on the family, Maggie Gallagher, stated, "We now live in a society where it is legally easier and less risky to dump a wife than to fire an employee." And this is often done due to no more than "irreconcilable differences."

All of these parents who divorced have one very important thing in common: At their marriage ceremony, they shared some sort of vow, promising each other that they would stay together until death parted them. In time, they had children. Sadly, couples often have children in an attempt to solve a marital problem. However, children do not solve problems. Only the husband and wife can do this, by addressing the CAUSE. In time, however, if the problems are not addressed, the marriage falters permanently and children are torn between two parents whom they deeply love.

The above statistics show that all too often, marriages with children end in divorce—therefore suffering the greatest loss. Divorce is a tragic result that no one wants or expects. When it happens, the couple and all who are close to them are hurt to one degree or another. But often, people do not stop and consider the short- and long-term effects that their actions have on the children involved.

Due to *selfish* actions, when parents are not willing to work out their differences (often because of the need to "discover one's self"), the children are neglected—split between two homes. No longer will they grow up in a traditional household, with two loving parents working hard to rear their children *together*.

Numerous studies show that children of divorce suffer because of it. On average, children who go through divorce experience "more conduct problems, more symptoms of psychological maladjustment, lower academic achievement, more social difficulties, poorer self-concepts [and] more prob-lematic relationships with both mothers and fathers" (*Institute for Children, Youth, and Families*).

The end result? Due to the parents' wrong choices before and during their marriage, they deal their own children a "bad hand" for the rest of their lives. Through no fault of their own, these children now face a fractured family relationship, without the benefit of both mother and father working together in a happy, two-parent home.

Out-of-Wedlock Births

Then there are those who do not get married, but still have children. Consider: In 2000, 33% of babies were born to unmarried women, compared to only 3.8% in 1940. A full one-third of children born are to unmarried women! From the beginning, these children enter a world in which they will *not* experience a healthy two-parent home and all the benefits that come from this.

Consider one example: The vast majority of children who are reared entirely in a two-parent home will never be poor during childhood. By contrast, the vast majority of children who grow up in a single-parent home will experience poverty. Almost 75% of American children living in single-parent families experience poverty before they are 11 years old!

One would certainly say that Sally, the newborn baby described earlier, did not deserve to be brought into this world and immediately abandoned. But also, which child affected by divorce or an illegitimate birth deserves a life without both parents, a life with more economic hardships and more social problems? The reality is that many receive this life sentence.

But there are additional factors that cause absentee parenting.

In Search of Careers

The concept of one parent working and the other staying at home to look after the children is termed "old-fashioned" and seems foreign to many today. The idea of a stay-at-home mom or a housewife is figuratively

spat upon by the intelligentsia of society. "We have moved beyond and evolved!" they claim.

But have we? Is there anything at stake with both parents working all the time?

These days, to stay home as a housewife is to live in a "prehistoric world," so to speak. Society has forgotten that rearing happy, healthy children is in many ways the most rewarding job on the planet. However, this way of life is belittled and mocked. Consider a statement from *Glamour* magazine warning mothers about the "dangers" of not returning to work quickly after having a child: "Babies are hard to resist once they're at this stage, and mothers can sometimes find it difficult to 'break away' if they delay too long" (Andrea Boroff Eagan, "Long vs. Short Maternity Leaves").

Shocking! This speaks volumes about a mother's natural inclination to stay with her child.

Soon after having babies, many mothers leave their homes and their children's upbringing to pursue their careers. But the mother's search is not the only one affecting children. Many fathers, in pursuing personal advancement on the job—climbing the corporate ladder—work too many hours. They allow their jobs to swallow their lives—to *become* their lives. Arriving home after a long day at work, nearly exhausted, they do not have the energy or the ability to spend quality time with their children. The job—the pursuit of a successful career—absorbs the parent's ability to function properly!

Of course, as children grow up, there may arise a need for both parents to work, and, if done in a balanced way, with children still viewed as a top priority, it may be the only way to make ends meet. However, again, it is a matter of *priority*. Many parents focus on the fulfillment of their career dreams, rather than creating the best environment possible to support their children.

And, as both parents find success (at least financially), their children are left in daycare and, as they become older, at home—as "latchkey kids."

Daycare

In 2001, 61% of children from birth through age six (and not in kindergarten) spent time in non-parental child care. At such a young age, children are handed over to institutions to be reared, rather than being reared at home.

In the book *The Broken Hearth*, William J. Bennett writes, "The writer Karl Zinsmeister puts it this way, and I agree, 'A child and a parent are bound eternally…A day-care worker is doing a job.'"

How true. The differences between the care and guidance a parent can give and what a childcare worker can give are vast!

Of course, the quality of childcare varies, but even the very best daycare center cannot compare to the love, care and concern that nurturing parents have for their children. Even at very young ages—one, two, three months old!—parents often decide to send their children to daycare. All the time and effort that these parents could put into rearing their children is forfeited so that they can achieve "success" in their career. Often, parents who seek a successful career ultimately lose their ability to properly parent, because all the money in the world—"success"—cannot "buy" good parenting.

While at work, co-workers may look at a father or a mother and say, "Wow, he (or she) is such a hard worker." But how many of those same fathers and mothers go home and work hard at rearing their children? Or, instead, do they just ask the standard question of "How was school?" and then turn to read the newspaper or watch their favorite television program?

The other side of the coin is that some parents seemingly cannot afford not to have two jobs. But the question is: Are they living a life of overextending themselves, buying large houses, multiple cars, etc., and then turning around and saying that they cannot afford not to work?

Society largely does not under-stand the difference between *wants* and *needs*. Those in Western society, in particular, have been given so much and now *expect* to "have it all." They do not understand that many around the world do not have even a fraction of what is taken for granted here. And, in the end, parents claim they have no choice but to work, which can be translated as they have no choice but to allow others to rear their children.

As children get older and pass the daycare stage, parents seem to work even more. Often, children are left alone for a few hours each day after school. This is where the term "latchkey kids" originated—as children would wear the house key around their neck.

In time, these latchkey kids begin to get into things they should not. Without correct parental supervision, they fall into trouble—they watch inappropriate television shows; they get involved in premarital sex, as well as drug and alcohol use, and other dangerous and damaging misconduct.

Yet, the abandonment of children does not end here. Even *with* a two-parent home and *with* both parents having a proper focus on their jobs, there are other dangers that pull fathers and mothers away from their primary job of parenting.

The Technology Drain

The Daily Telegraph, a British newspaper, in an article titled, "Keep out: TV, DVD and computers rule," plainly states the effect of technology on parenting today:

"Technology is destroying traditional family life as young adolescents increasingly spend more time in their bedrooms playing computer games, surfing the Internet or watching television, videos and DVDs, a study released today claims.

"Whereas the living room used to be the hub of the home, now more and more 11- to 14-year-olds prefer to be alone in their technology-filled bedrooms, communicating with friends via mobile phone texting or e-mail.

"And, as Britons become more obsessed with technology, the strong

sense of family is likely to diminish further, says the consumer report from Mintel."

This article goes on to state that 75% of children ages 11 to 14 have a television in their room, 64% have a DVD or VCR player, and one-fourth have a computer in their room.

Continuing: "This wealth of technology means that a significant number of children are not experiencing family life. Three out of five 11- to 14-year-olds say that everyone at home is free to get on with their lives and interests, and 53% say that as long as they do well at school, they can do what they like. A similar proportion—51%—say they prefer spending time on their own."

How tragic! Modern-day parenting has been turned over to television, movies and computers! This could very possibly have an even greater effect on children than the other problems we have discussed. In effect, with both parents in the home, together under one roof, children are still growing up without proper parenting.

Due to all the stresses of today's fast-paced life, parents turn to television to help keep their children occupied. In an effort to have some quiet time, and to not have to work hard at training their children, parents essentially hand their children over to Hollywood screenwriters, computer programmers, etc.—people who become the children's most dedicated mentors!

On the surface, this simply seems to give parents "a break." But they do not stop to consider all the long-term effects of watching too much television or playing too many video games. Studies show that there are many adverse affects of overusing these mediums.

There are toddlers who can operate a computer better than many adults. Of course, there are certain computer games that may help in a child's education. But the majority of the time spent in front of the television or playing video games is *not* educational. Any parent would freely admit this.

As children grow up, programs or games have to be more tantalizing to keep their attention. Ask a child to play *Tetris*, an early-stage, simple computer game, and he will most likely blurt out in disgust, "That's boring!" These reactions cause the video game and television industries to always provide "more action." The end result is that children and teenagers are constantly exposed to sex, violence, corruption, lies, hate, etc.

This all begins when the TV or computer is used as a babysitter. Why do parents ultimately resort to this? Why do so many children find themselves growing up in front of television and computer screens?

The answer: It takes hard work to be a parent! It is a full-time job that requires substantial, ongoing effort. Parents today seemingly have no time for their children! Without correct priorities, they do not make the time to teach!

Gone are the days when families would spend time together discussing things. Gone are the times when children would read book after book, learning about the world around them. Now, their minds are drained by technology, and parents willingly give up their responsibility to teach their children how to live, how to think and how to become productive, successful adults.

Wrong Priorities

The bigger question needs to be asked: Why is all of this happening? What is the CAUSE behind all of these effects?

The answer is very simple. All of the actions in the world can be described as either GIVE or GET. God's way of life is the way of *give*. The world, deceived by Satan (Rev. 12:9) for the last 6,000 years, has been living the *get* way of life. This spirit permeates every facet of society. Every action is governed by this desire.

Parents, probably unwittingly, are making most choices based on GET. Marriages are dissolved because "I" am not happy. Out-of-wedlock children are born because "I" want that pleasure for an instant. Children are sent off to daycare at an early age because "I" need to fulfill "my" career aspirations. Latchkey kids make unwise decisions while raising themselves because "I" have to work long hours. Children are given over to television and computers because "I" need some quiet time.

Again, the basic cause is an attitude of personal advancement and focusing on personal priorities—the way of getting, accumulating for self.

Starting Where You Are

The family institution is failing. One of the fundamental reasons is that parents are either unable or unwilling to properly parent—in other words, to put their own personal priorities beneath those of their marriages, their families and, ultimately, their children.

If you are a parent, make sure that you have the right priorities. When you get married and decide to have children, you have made the decision—whether you have consciously realized and admitted it or not—to rear them as best as you can. *You* have brought them into the world, and properly rearing them is *your* responsibility. All the physical possessions you gain in your life, the riches and the material things, are not permanent. But your children will live on, and they, in turn, will also have children, who will have children, and so on. The parenting decisions you make will affect generations to come.

Some of the above-mentioned problems plaguing parenting may describe circumstances in your life. Some, of course, may not be able to be changed at this point. However, determine to start where you are and do all that is within your capabilities to teach your children everything they need to know. Understand that your children have an AWESOME POTENTIAL just as you do, and that you are directly responsible in helping them build and achieve it within themselves.

Be resolute in living a life of giving—of outgoing concern for others—and for your children. Make it a goal to never abandon *your* child in *any* way!

To learn more about childrearing, read our book *Train Your CHILDREN God's Way*. □

THE WAY WE WERE
...AND NOW

Why are strong, balanced, principled men so rare today—even viewed as oddities? Why are there so few men of the same stature and uncompromising strength as in past generations? Likewise, traditional, virtuous femininity in women is as scarce as precious jewels. What has happened?

TODAY'S SOCIAL landscape is being turned upside down. Gender roles are being blurred and marriages redefined. Traditional roles and values once considered normal are now being dismantled and reshaped.

In an article written for the *Trentonian*, a columnist writes, "Women are the new men…And I have no earthly idea what the men are, now…By, 'women are the new men,' I mean that women are strong, efficient, and can balance work and family. We can open doors and jars for ourselves, kill bugs, install electronic equipment without help, even put in our window air conditioning unit after work on a 90-degree day. Or, women can do anything men can do."

A marketing and style strategist from Fashion Group International also notes a shift in gender roles: "The masculine ideal is being completely modified. All the traditional male values of authority, infallibility, virility and strength are being completely overturned…[he] no longer wants to be the family superhero" (Ibid). The *Associated Press* article that originally published this quote contained a picture of a man with "punk rock," fire-engine red hair, backwards suspenders and a striped green and red sweater.

Many parents still teach traditional gender roles to their children. However, their efforts are being thwarted by an increasing number of teachers who are instructing young children and teenagers that they must recognize "the various ways in which gender categories are tied to an oppres-

sive binary structure for organizing the social and cultural practices of adolescent boys and girls" (*ON LINE opinion*).

One result is that traditional literature is coming under assault for promoting heterosexual relationships, and fairytales such as *Jack and the Beanstalk* are being ridiculed for portraying boys as physically assertive. A classroom resource titled *Fracturing Fairytales* argues that traditional stories "present powerful images of gender-specific roles, and, in particular, negative female roles and the attitudes, beliefs and values inherent in them need to be critically examined and challenged" (Ibid).

Those promoting the redefining of gender roles understand that, in order to bring about acceptance of this idea, cultural perception must first be adjusted. And they realize that such an adjustment is best introduced in schools, where they can indoctrinate young teachable minds.

If this new way of thought becomes accepted, does this automatically mean that it is *correct*? What are the implications of a society in which males and females are no longer distinguishable?

One Extreme to Another

This "new" way of thinking is not new at all. History demonstrates that, prior to total economic and military collapse, prosperous and dominant cultures always produced a final generation of weakened and softer men. Feminine qualities among men such as compromise, tolerance and submissiveness—each a great virtue when complemented with the strength and guidance of a masculine leading partner—became the norm.

Prior to the 20th century, relationships between men and women were governed by tradition and somewhat by biblical instruction, with roots extending back for centuries. While men and women had unity of purpose in forging ahead with their lives, the roles of each were very different, yet still complementary.

The natural differences between

the sexes were emphasized throughout the formative years of childhood. Fathers taught their boys to be courageous and daring, to be out in front, to provide, to be tough and to sacrifice. Mothers instructed their daughters to be meek, unassuming, respectful and supportive. Men taught their boys to hunt and to perform heavy, physical work at an early age, while girls were assigned duties around the house, assisting with cooking, sewing, cleaning and nurturing. The typical family worked as a team, with each member having an important role to play.

When of age, the young brides would willingly offer the words "love, honor and obey" in marriage ceremonies. Young men would commit to protect and provide for the woman with whom they had agreed to spend the rest of their lives. Nuptial vows were viewed as commitments to be kept despite all obstacles. Marriage was considered a lifelong partnership and mates worked together as a team.

However, it should be noted that the hallmark of human nature is to be given to extremes. The Victorian Age, during the 1800s and early 1900s, established and shaped a society of sexual repression and rigidly-defined roles of masculinity and femininity. While the roles were predominantly correct, there was some misuse, as will always be the case when human nature is involved.

Later generations gave way to the social backlash of the liberal and "free love" oriented 1960s and 70s, and, as a result, Western civilization has been radically different ever since—as have the traditional roles of men and women, husbands and wives.

The prominent advertising agency Leo Burnett did a study to learn how men viewed their roles in society and how these compared with the way that men are portrayed in advertising:

"Half of the men surveyed in most parts of the world said they didn't know what society expected of them. Three-quarters feel the imaging in advertising is out of touch with reality.

"Most male-targeted advertising places men in one of two camps. The

latest incarnation of man is referred to as the 'metrosexual,' a guy who loves shoes, pink shirts, man-purses, and conversations over General Foods International Coffee. They're refined, sensitive, in touch with their feminine sides and can screech like a 13-year-old girl at an American Idol concert…" (*WebProNews*).

A metrosexual has been defined as a "straight man who embraces the homosexual lifestyle, i.e. refined tastes in clothing, excessive use of designer hygiene products, etc." (a user entry from *Urban Dictionary*).

Obsessed with his appearance and self-image, the typical metrosexual maintains an urbane lifestyle of frequenting the finest clothing stores, nightclubs, gyms and hairdressers.

"According to Leo Burnett, though, the world is shifting toward more feminine attributes and the advertising world should adjust accordingly.

"'As the world is drifting toward a more feminine perspective, many of the social constructs men have taken for granted are undergoing significant shifts or being outright dismantled,' said Tom Bernardin, chairman and chief executive of Leo Burnett Worldwide" (Ibid.).

The other group that advertisers are targeting is called "retrosexuals." The antithesis of the metrosexual, the retrosexual is a man who does not obsess over his physical appearance, such as plucking his eyebrows. Some view him as a man who rejects casual sex as mindless and immoral.

In its early years, Hollywood portrayed such men as having strength of character. They were seen as tough, hardworking and self-sacrificing. For these heroic cinema characters, family and country always came first. And yet, because human nature shifts to the extreme, Hollywood often portrayed such characters as stoic, the "strong and silent" types; tenderness and gentleness were generally seen as weakness. A generation of young moviegoers grew up to emulate this Hollywood-made image of masculinity. Many became husbands, fathers and leaders who were strong, dedicat-

ed and uncompromising—yet without much emotion. This helped set the stage for the "sexual revolution" and "women's lib" movement years later.

Accepting Divorce as an Option

Although it was not entirely absent, divorce was almost unheard of before the 20th century, with separation usually occurring only at death.

Prior to this time, the husband was recognized and accepted as the head of the household. Practically, as well as legally, the authority to make the final decision resided with him. The wife was obliged to accept her husband's decisions—even if she did not believe those decisions to be wise. (Of course, a wise husband would seek and listen to his wife's counsel.) There was government in the family. Disagreements did not automatically lead to separation and divorce.

But today, the state of marriage and divorce is radically different.

Let's look at a few startling numbers: In 1886, there were 25,000 divorces *for all causes*. The number rose to over 72,000 by 1906, hit nearly 500,000 by 1965 and passed the one million mark per year by 1975. The number has leveled off at about 1.2 million per year over the past decade. Put another way, taking into account increases in population, the divorce rate increased more than 700% in the 20th century! It should also be noted that subsequent remarriages fail 60-75% of the time.

Marching Toward Moral Decay

One of the perplexing ironies of history is that many difficulties accompany the material prosperity and power of a dominant culture. People, governed by human nature, have typically become much more selfish and self-centered. Associated with this change in human behavior are all forms of corruption and evil.

Consider. As the industrial revolution moved toward its climax in the 20th century, many began to view the guarded traditions of culture as impediments to their "self-fulfillment." Increasing numbers of men fell

into the age-old snare of infidelity, while women sought economic independence from men. As the 19th century faded into history, a growing number of discontented men and women pursued "liberation" from the established and traditional "old" ways.

Note that before the ratification of the nineteenth amendment, allowing women the right to vote, each household had one vote, which was cast by the husband. (Naturally, the wife had, to a certain degree, influence upon the husband's decision.) A woman running for office and assuming political power was unthinkable until the early 20th century.

Following the passage of the nineteenth amendment by Congress, and its ratification into law, the political landscape shifted dramatically. With the codification of "women's suffrage," a wife could politically divide the household by casting her vote for a different candidate, effectively canceling her husband's vote.

The "feminist movement" derived its beginnings from an alliance between discontented women and affluent male politicians who saw the political benefit of independent women, who they viewed as a voting block to which to cater.

The Effects of World War I

Along with the above watershed movement, the contribution of World War I to cultural change must be discussed. Men had marched off to a new type of mechanized war, a conflict more terrible and costly than ever before in history.

The idyllic and chivalrous perception of wars prior to WWI, however erroneous, had encouraged such masculine qualities as courage and self-

The tight-knit family unit of generations past is being redefined and restructured—resulting in confusion and constant strife within the modern family.

sacrifice. Traditional warfare, horrific in its own right, truly separated the men from the women. Men marched off to fight for their country, an idea, religion or their children's future. Both men and women celebrated courage and this ultimate sacrifice. While the act of war is wrong, boys at least looked up to the brave men of their culture, and women desired to marry such protectors and heroes.

The impersonal, automated, and brutal nature of modern warfare began to change the way men reflected upon armed conflict. An unseen enemy from hundreds of yards, or even miles away could now deliver mass death and destruction. The true senselessness of warfare became more evident to growing numbers, igniting anti-war sentiment. But, as is so often the case when *man* attempts to solve his *own* problems, desirable marital qualities such as courage, fortitude and resolve were also de-emphasized, and even discouraged in men.

America had tipped the balance of the war and Germany was defeated,

thus supplying a two-decade respite in hostilities. Sandwiched between the two world conflicts was a decade of euphoric frivolity called the "Roaring Twenties"—characterized by liberation from established moral guidelines.

While the culture of the American heartland continued as it had for generations, people living in the cities led lives of pleasure, becoming ever more unrestrained. Secular hedonism and anti-religious sentiment became a growing part of American culture. Among the many traditions that were being cast aside were the biblically-defined roles of men, women and family.

World War II and the Family

In 1939, world war came once again. The demands upon a nation to conduct total war now required the near complete mobilization of national resources to field a modern army and navy. Prohibited from joining the military, except for nursing and office work, women entered the production workforce by the millions.

"Rosie the Riveter" moved from tending the home to the industrial environment previously occupied only by men. Her children went off to school, and Rosie drove rivets—all in the name of national security and necessity. While this may have been necessary for the war effort, it also had the unintended effect of fueling the pursuit of self-independence.

When the war ended, men returned home hardened by the battlefront, in many cases saturated with terrible memories of violence and atrocity, finding all forms of violence repugnant. Many women returned home from the factories, but others remained to claim their newly found economic independence. The results included changes to the thinking of both men and women—what they thought was important in life, their attitude toward patriotism and the definition of masculinity and femininity.

In spite of this shift in thought, throughout the 1950s, men with firm determination and conviction were considered best suited for positions of authority in government and industry. However, another way of thinking was slowly emerging from the fringes of academia into mainstream America. The universal violence of World War II, followed by a more localized conflict in Korea, along with the prospect of total annihilation from nuclear weapons, further removed an already jaded population from their past.

The expected chivalry and gallantry once encouraged in American men gave way to an expectation of a more pliable, less assertive male. The masculine tendency to fight it out had brought the human race to the brink of annihilation, so the reasoning went. Many reasoned that there had to be another way.

The evolving, "push button" culture envisioned by so-called luminaries also seemed to reduce the need for the strong, stalwart and somewhat stoic man. The change that many men and women came to believe necessary was made possible by the perceived

The typical metrosexual, obsessed with his appearance and self-image, maintains an urbane lifestyle of frequenting the finest clothing stores, nightclubs, gyms and hairdressers.

reduced need for human strength and courage. What was necessary for mankind to survive, they reasoned, was a softer, more "sensitive" man, and a more assertive and vigorous woman.

Thus, male and female roles were merged and mixed up. The word "Unisex"—defying nature and promoting sameness and likeness between men and women—was one of many new terms coined to further encourage the process. Those seeking social change, with the intent to eliminate differences between the sexes, created words such as this. Many advocated "unisex" restrooms—allowing admittance for all. Unisex clothing, not distinguishing between male and female form and function, came into vogue. The differences between men and women were thus further de-emphasized. This contributed to the acceptance of homosexuality.

Media Assaults the Family Unit

Hollywood contributed greatly to this merging of the roles of men and women. Television sitcoms and films of the 1960s subtly introduced new thoughts and ideas, intending to generate feelings of injustice toward the established norms. From that time through the 70s and 80s, more and more radical thought was introduced. Today, TV "comedies" celebrate loose sexual behavior, homosexuality, aggressive women, and silly, self-centered, weak, effeminate husbands—if the couples are married at all!

Larger-than-life heroines introduced in the mid-1970s (shows such as *Wonder Woman*, *Police Woman* and *Charley's Angels*) continued the process of changing the way the sexes viewed each other. While the characters in these programs retained some femininity, within 20 years they were cast as ridiculous, semi-masculine women such as *GI Jane*, *Xena*, *Dark Angel* and others.

Modern programming not only tosses out common sense and practicality, but basic physics as well. How often does one see a small-framed woman easily pulverize a

large-framed man? Yet, if life were as Hollywood frequently portrays it, this would happen on a regular basis!

The media, with its tentacles in nearly every home through television, radio, music and the all-pervasive Internet, has assisted in cultural change. Here is a general description of the method used: Desired change from established tradition is achieved by first using the media to shock the public, and push the proverbial moral envelope a bit further toward the desired outcome. Controversy is drummed up by other elements of the media in a debate about traditional values. Then, the previously shocking idea is repeated in other situations until it no longer shocks, but is debated and finally accepted. The media then pounces on the next tradition to corrupt and destroy.

Consider that "homosexual marriage" was *not* in the minds of most people 20 years ago. There was no need to define marriage, as religion, tradition and nature helped establish its meaning.

Enter the homosexual movement, whose objective is to redefine the basic bulwarks of society. The news media shocked most of the public by televising controversial homosexual couples engaging in mock wedding ceremonies, including the kissing of the "brides." These illegal unions were presented to engage the public in philosophical debate over their validity. Suddenly, what was once unthinkable became debatable, with news commentators, Internet "bloggers" and politicians asking, "Does anyone have the right to legally define marriage?"—"Why should we deny them the right to 'love' one another?"—"Are nuclear families really normal?"—"Shouldn't all citizens have the same rights as heterosexual couples?"

The Role of Sexuality in Constitutional Change

America's strongly-held democratic tradition has given birth to a society that is ever more tolerant of various "alternate lifestyles." Long-held stigmas that were once discouraged—and a new language of euphemisms developed to excuse, and even justify, every form of vile behavior—have become socially acceptable and, in some cases, applauded.

For example, prior to the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s and 70s, a woman's self-interest caused her to be prudent in her sexual conduct. She knew that bearing a child out of wedlock brought certain social stigmas upon her and her illegitimate child, assigning them to disgrace and poverty. Because of these pressures, as well as basic religious morality, the average woman guarded her reputation and went on to preserve the traditional family unit. By keeping herself from engaging in extramarital affairs, she served to strengthen American families and helped to rear and educate the next generation.

And then came the emergence of the birth control pill and certain other contraceptive devices. These became tools of convenience for those engaged in behavior outside social norms. Adultery and fornication could be practiced in secrecy, with less fear of unwanted pregnancies coming to light.

However, this was not enough. Men and women wanted *complete* freedom from the natural, inevitable consequences of sex outside marriage. To satisfy them, the early termination of an unwanted pregnancy needed to become lawful.

First, to remove the guilt naturally experienced by those who would choose to end an unborn human life, the status of unborn *baby* had to be redefined and dehumanized to *fetus*.

In the 1965 case of Griswold v. Connecticut, an outdated state law prohibited the use of contraceptives. Although not rigorously enforced, the law existed to prevent distribution of contraceptives from birth control clinics. The potential, but unlikely, event of the law being used against married couples was used as justification for the court to create a new "constitutional right of privacy."

In the case, the U.S. Supreme Court was asked to decide whether the Constitution protected the right of marital privacy against state restrictions on a couple's ability to be counseled in the use of contraceptives.

The court concluded, "Though the Constitution does not explicitly protect a general right to privacy, the various guarantees within the Bill of Rights create penumbras, or zones, that establish a right to privacy. Together, the First, Third, Fourth, and Ninth Amendments create a new constitutional right, the right to privacy in marital relations. The Connecticut statute conflicts with the exercise of this right and is therefore null and void" (*The Oyez Project: U.S. Supreme Court Multimedia*).

In summary, the assumed "right of privacy" was created out of thin air. This decision led to the "right of privacy" being later applied in the landmark case of Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion across the United States: "The Court held that a woman's right to an abortion fell within the right to privacy (recognized in Griswold v. Connecticut) protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. The decision gave a woman total autonomy over the pregnancy during the first trimester and defined different levels of state interest for the second and third trimesters. As a result, the laws of 46 states were affected by the Court's ruling" (Ibid.).

Robert Bork, a Supreme Court Justice nominee, explained the court's agenda in deciding such cases: "It is almost a matter for regret that Connecticut had not threatened the institution of marriage, or even attempted to prevent anyone from using contraceptives, since that left some admirable sentiments, expressed with rhetorical fervor [by the court], dangling irrelevantly in midair. But the protection of marriage was not the point of *Griswold*. The creation of a new device for *judicial power to remake the Constitution* was the point" (*The Tempting of America*).

In addition to being a watershed decision, Roe v. Wade illustrates how a document's meaning and intent can

be twisted and subverted. A Pandora's Box of fabricated legal precedents is now spreading corruption and confusion across the social landscape.

Today, there are many powerful influences in America pulling at its institutions and tugging at its foundation. The traditional meaning and status of the family unit is under attack. Marriage—which previous generations understood as *only* a man and woman in holy wedlock—is being redefined to be all-inclusive.

The homosexual community contends that the Constitution affords it the *right* to openly practice "alternative lifestyles," *and* with guaranteed equality of the benefits provided to heterosexuals. The terms "right of privacy" and "equal protection" are regularly used to demand what was once unthinkable only a few short years ago: the right to marry.

Radical environmental movements have been successful in working against the document that plainly guarantees personal liberty, private property rights and freedom of commerce.

Texas congressman Ron Paul gave this warning: "Once it becomes acceptable to change the rules by majority vote, there are no longer any limits on the power of government. When the Constitution can be subverted by mere legislative votes, executive orders or judicial decrees, constitutional restraints on the government are eliminated. This process was rare in the early days of our history, but is now routine" ("Sorry, Mr. Franklin, We're All Democrats Now,'" Jan. 29, 2003).

Family Redefinition

In his book *The Abolition of Britain*, Peter Hichens wrote, "The greatest fortress of human liberty, proof against all earthly powers, is the family. In its small private space, it can defy the will of authority and the might of wealth. It is without doubt the most effective means of passing lore, culture, manners, and traditions down through the generations. Its loyalties are stronger than those of the state, more powerful even than patriotism. All serious tyrannies have sought to undermine or infiltrate it, socialist tyrannies most of all."

Those who wish to change the roles of men and women in society must first redefine the family and indoctrinate the minds of the next generation. The family, the bedrock of civilization, must be altered into something more amorphous and general. Hence, the new definition of a family includes *any* group of people. To some, even a person and his pet are considered a family! Incredible!

The husband's role as the central protector and provider has been replaced by a more sensitive, docile, submissive character. And the wife's critical function as a source of counsel, a nurturer and supportive partner has changed; she is now expected to be forceful (or even aggressive), "all wise" and dominant. The result is the universal breakdown of the biblically defined family unit.

Some years ago, the late Herbert W. Armstrong, editor and publisher of *The Plain Truth* magazine, taught that a "50/50 partnership" in marriage does not work, because *someone* will end up in charge. No organization, business, corporation, government agency or sports team can effectively operate and reach its full potential with two or more "co-leaders." One person must take the lead. And so it is with marriage. Yet, because we live in a time when traditions and values are being overturned, many would view the previous statement as "harsh."

The Bible has much to say about the condition of our age. Notice: "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and *women rule over them*. O My people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths" (Isa. 3:12).

Our loving Creator has clearly established boundaries for the different roles of men and women: "The woman shall not wear that which pertains unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD your God" (Deut. 22:5). Ignoring this command will prove deadly to civilization. Men are to be men and women are to be women, as God had created and ordained them to flourish in His intended roles for them.

The family unit—defined as a husband, wife and children—critical to the survival of a nation with a government ensuring personal liberty, is failing. In a hostile, blood-soaked world cut off from the true God, the result is national collapse.

The Final Generation?

Across the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and other westernized nations, the traditional roles and functions of men and women are fading into the past. They are quickly being replaced by the modern definitions of a society in which true masculinity and femininity are no longer taught nor understood.

How long can a nation last without a generation possessing strength, principle, values and character steering its helm? What does the future hold for Western civilization when—in an age that requires tough-mindedness and determination in the face of all the world's problems—young males are being groomed to be "softer," more in tune with their "feelings," and young females are being molded and shaped into wives and mothers who see no need for—and even *disdain*—the leadership role of husbands and fathers?

The world is changing. Society has taken a new path, and God's Word sheds light onto the peril to which this path leads. It reveals that humanity's problems and ills will increasingly get worse.

Yet, the Bible also reveals that the ultimate "new way" of thinking—actually an "old" way, established millennia ago—will be established on earth. At that time, all men, women and children will be taught the true purpose of why they were born. True masculinity and femininity—instead of the extremes that man takes from generation to generation—will be widely understood and appreciated. □

The Television Addiction

In today's world, television is the main source of entertainment. What effect is this having on society, especially for children and young people? And what will it mean when they become adults?

IF YOU HAVE EVER driven through a neighborhood at night, you have probably noticed a familiar blue glow emanating from the windows of houses.

You can picture the scene inside: As the centerpiece of the room, the television has captured the complete attention of those assembled before it. Whether it is an individual, a couple or an entire family, all eyes are fixed on this modern invention with its endless barrage of images.

The Radio Corporation of America started manufacturing color television sets on March 25, 1954, at its Bloomington, Indiana plant, helping to usher in "the wonderful world of color." Since that time, the number of households with TVs has steadily risen. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of homes with television sets increased from 87% in 1960 to over 98% in 2001.

Most homes have more than one (2.4 per home on average), totaling 248 million in the U.S. alone—and most today do not remember a time without television.

The Plug-in Drug

For some, watching television consumes their entire day. This is especially true of older Americans, who watch more TV (97%) than any other age group. Those living alone or who are shut-ins often find this activity the only way to endure long lonely days.

In fact, in 2004, it was projected that the average adult will spend 1,669 hours watching television. That is the equivalent of 70 days a year—well over 4,900 days in the average lifespan! Put another way, over 13 years of the average person's life will be spent in front of the television. No wonder it is often referred to as the "plug-in drug."

Is "TV addiction" a real phenomenon? It may well be. Notice this February 23, 2002 article published by the *Scientific American*: "Among life's more embarrassing moments have been countless occasions when I am engaged in conversation in a room while a TV set is on, and I cannot for the life of me stop from periodically glancing over to the screen. This occurs not only during dull conversations but during reasonably interesting ones just as well" ("Television Addiction Is No Mere Metaphor").

According to the same article, "The term 'TV addiction' is imprecise and laden with value judgments, but it captures the essence of a very real phenomenon. Psychologists and psychiatrists formally define substance dependence as a disorder characterized by criteria that include spending a great deal of time using the substance; using it more often than one intends; thinking about reducing use or making repeated unsuccessful efforts to reduce use; giving up important social, family or occupational activities to use it; and reporting withdrawal symptoms when one stops using it.

"All these criteria can apply to people who watch a lot of television. That does not mean that watching television, per se, is problematic. Television can teach and amuse; it can reach aesthetic heights; it can provide much needed distraction and escape. The difficulty arises when people strongly sense that they ought not to watch as much as they do and yet find themselves strangely unable to reduce their viewing. Some knowledge of how the medium exerts its pull may help heavy viewers gain better control over their lives."

But does this really mean that people are addicted to television? The article continues: "To some researchers, the most convincing parallel between TV and addictive drugs is that people experience withdrawal symptoms when they cut back on viewing. Nearly 40 years ago, Gary A. Steiner of the University of Chicago collected fascinating individual accounts of families whose set had broken—this back in the days when households generally had only one set: 'The family walked around like a chicken without a head.' 'It was terrible. We did nothing… Children bothered me, and my nerves were on edge. Tried to interest them in games, but impossible. TV is part of them.'"

For some, life without television is truly unbearable. How important is it? A story out of the southwestern Florida city of Fort Myers relates how a 17-year-old boy was charged by police with soliciting to commit murder. The boy was willing to pay $2,000 to have his mother killed, but with one stipulation: "Make it look like a robbery, but don't damage the TV!"

The Babysitter

In this hectic world, in which it seems there are always a million things that need to be done, many desperate parents resort to television as a babysitter. After all, it's always available any time of the day or night. It never complains and never needs to be paid. And best of all, it keeps the child amused and completely engrossed.

REVEALING TV STATISTICS

■ Americans watch an average of more than 4 hours of television a day, or 2 full months of TV a year. By age 65, the average American will have spent nearly 9 years glued to television.

■ 40% of families always or often watch television while eating dinner.

■ Only 14% of 12th-graders who watch TV six hours a day or more achieve proficiency on reading tests, whereas 52% of students who watch an hour or less do.

■ Virtually all 3,500 research studies of more than 40 years show a link between watching media violence and committing acts of real violence.

■ Since 1980, the proportion of overweight children has doubled due, in part, to inactive leisure time activities, such as watching TV.

‣ U.S. households with at least one television:	**98%**
‣ Americans who regularly watch TV while eating dinner:	**66%**
‣ Hours per day television is on in an average U.S. home:	**7 hours, 12 min.**
‣ Videos rented daily in the U.S.:	**6 million**
‣ Number of public library items checked out daily:	**3 million**
‣ Average minutes per week American children ages 2-11 watch TV:	**1,197**
‣ Average minutes per week parents spend in meaningful conversation with their children:	**38.5**
‣ 4- to 6-year-olds who, when asked to choose between watching TV and spending time with their fathers, preferred TV:	**54%**
‣ Children ages 5-17 who have a TV in their bedroom:	**52%**
‣ Children ages 2-5 who have a TV in their bedroom:	**25%**
‣ 4th graders who watch more than 14 hours of television per week:	**81%**
‣ Hours per year the average American youth watches television:	**1,500**
‣ Hours per year the average American youth spends in school:	**900**

But is this "babysitter" a harmless electronic device? What effect does it have on children? And what kind of patterns are developing in them?

A recently released study holds some answers. *Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*, published by the *Kaiser Family foundation*, provides a look into the use of media among the very young and their parents. Some of its findings include:

80% of children use screen media, whether TV, movies or video games.

■ 77% turn the television on by themselves.

■ Two-thirds request a particular program or surf channels using a remote.

■ 65% live in homes in which the TV is on half the time or more.

■ 36% live in homes in which the TV is *always* on (considered a "heavy" TV household).

■ In "heavy" TV households, 77% of children watch it every day.

■ They are also less likely to read (59% vs. 68%).

■ They are less likely to be able to read at all (34% of children ages 4-6 from heavy TV households can read, compared to 56% of others the same age).

■ The majority of parents (59%) say their 4- to 6-year-old boys imitate aggressive behavior seen on TV.

Remember, these statistics are merely for infants to 6-year-olds!

The effects on kids

There is much debate on whether and how viewing television influences children in their formative years. but the mounting evidence from numerous studies indicates that there are real adverse affects. For example: There is a direct correlation between time in front of a TV and the rise of obesity in children. This sedentary time, often accompanied with consuming high-calorie and high-fat junk foods, replaces time that could have been spent engaging in energy-burning activities.

Consider the following:

■ Number of medical studies since 1985 linking excessive television watching to increasing rates of obesity: 12

■ Percentage of American children ages 6 to 11 who were seriously overweight in 1963: 4.5; in 1993: 14

■ Number of ads aired for "junk-food" during four hours of Saturday morning cartoons: 202 (Source: *TV STATISTICS* compiled by TV Free America.)

One study, published in the June 2002 issue of *Pediatrics*, stated, "Almost 40% of children had a TV set in their bedroom; [and] they were more likely to be overweight and spent more time (4.6 hours per week) watching TV/video than children without a TV in their bedroom."

It concluded, "This study extends the association between TV viewing and risk of being overweight to younger, preschool-aged children. A TV in the child's bedroom is an even stronger marker of increased risk of being overweight. Because most children watch TV by age 2, educational efforts about limiting child TV/video viewing and keeping the TV out of the child's bedroom need to begin before then."

There is also evidence suggesting that early exposure to this media can perhaps "rewire" a child's developing brain patterns. With commercials interrupting programming approximately every seven minutes, it can produce the same seven-minute attention span. this seems to be confirmed in the experiences of Odds Bodkin, a professional storyteller, who reads mostly to children. He observed that children began to be restless after about seven minutes, in anticipation of a commercial break.

An article titled "Toddler TV Time May Shorten attention" points to a link between time spent watching TV and attention problems in children. It states, "Experts know too much TV is bad for older kids, but it may also harm the attention spans of children as young as 1 year old, a new study suggests" (*healthDay Reporter*).

"We found that watching television before the age of 3 increases the chances that children will develop

attentional problems at age 7," said study author Dr. Dimitri Christakis, of the University of Washington, Seattle.

In their study, Dr. Christakis and his team examined data on nearly 1,300 children from a major government survey of children and youth. They compared rates of TV watching during the first three years of life to the development of attention problems at age 7.

The researchers found that "for each additional daily hour of television that young children watched on average, the risk of subsequently having attentional problems [by age 7] was increased by almost 10." This means that 1- to 3-year-olds who watched eight hours of television a day "would have an 80% higher risk of attentional problems compared to a child who watched zero hours."

Even a cursory look at the world reveals that society has become increasingly violent. Incidences of "adult crimes," up to and including murder committed by adolescents, have become common in the news. It has long been known that the viewing of violent programs increases the number of violent acts committed— starting at an early age and continuing into adulthood.

In 1972, a U.S. Surgeon General's committee released a six-volume *Scientific Advisory Report on Television and Social Behavior*, which concluded that viewing TV violence has serious consequences for children. They become more willing to respond with aggression in a conflict situation, more willing to harm others, and more aggressive when playing. Appendix III of the report, "Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence," concludes with the following: "The relation of third-grade television habits to later behavior now appears even more impressive. Not only is the violence of programs preferred in third grade related to peer-rated aggression in the third grade and ten years later, but it is also related positively to self-discipline and anti-social behavior ten years later on."

Drastic Changes

The content of television programs has changed dramatically from its early days. This was once a much more wholesome form of entertainment. Series such as *Father Knows Best*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave It To Beaver*, *Captain Kangaroo*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *The Big Valley*, *The Lawrence Welk Show*, *The Red Skelton Show* and *Lassie* come to mind.

No ratings needed here! There was a clear portrayal of what was right vs. what was wrong. The majority of programs taught and promoted good manners, proper respect, values and morals. Many times, a particular episode would teach a helpful, valuable lesson about life. They tended to show the negative effects of wrong behavior.

Foul language was non-existent. There was no gratuitous, graphic violence or sex. The comedy shows were clean. TV shows pictured traditional families with a husband, wife and children. The father was portrayed as the breadwinner, head of the home, capable, wise, intelligent and able to lead his family. The wife was shown in her proper role, following and supporting her husband's lead, caring for the children and the home. Children were obedient and well-behaved, and they honored and respected their parents. Proper correction and discipline were evident.

And for the most part, society reflected all of this. Not so today!

Television today is far removed from this type of programming. And society has moved right along with it. The old TV shows have given way in recent years to shows such as *Dark Angel*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Boston Public*, *Home Improvement*, *Seinfeld*, *Will and Grace*, *Like Family*, *Becker*, *Sex and the City*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, and other such programs.

While some of these shows' titles might lead you to think they provide quality entertainment, they do not. The content of seemingly harmless programs is full of coarse, vulgar language, sexual innuendo, scenes of adultery and fornication, homosexual relationships, graphic violence, sarcasm and putdowns. This was rare—if not unheard of—in the early years of television.

Increasing Violence

Recall that, in 1972, the U.S. Surgeon General's office found a link between viewing violence on television and aggressive behavior. In testifying before a U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Communications, Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld said, "It is clear to me that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action…There comes a time when the data [is] sufficient to justify action. That time has come."

It is estimated that the average child will have witnessed 8,000 murders and over 100,000 other acts of violence on television by the time he leaves elementary school. By age 18, that number will increase to 200,000 acts of violence, including 40,000 murders. As viewing continues throughout adulthood, this number will only increase. It is no wonder that so many, having been conditioned from an early age, seek to solve problems and conflicts through violence.

But has anything changed? Are acts of violence shown on TV decreasing?

Not according to a study conducted by the Parents Teachers Council, published in a report titled *TV Bloodbath: Violence on Prime Time Broadcast TV, A PTC State of the Television Industry Report*. It stated that "PTC analysts examined all prime time entertainment series on the major television networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, UPN and the WB) from the first two weeks of the 1998, 2000, and 2002 November sweeps periods…A total of 400 program hours were analyzed. Television broadcasts of movies, news, and sports programs were not included in this analysis. PTC analysts reviewed the programs for all instances of violence. Mild forms included threats

of violence, mayhem or pyrotechnics (fires, explosions, car crashes), deaths implied, and fist fights or martial arts fights. More extreme examples of violence included use of guns or other weapons, depiction of blood, graphic depictions (e.g., a dismembered body), deaths depicted, and torture."

Some of its findings (from *www. parentstv.org*):

■ On all the networks combined, violence was 41% more frequent during the 8:00 p.m. (ET/PT) Family Hour in 2002 than in 1998.

■ During the second hour of prime time (9-10:00 p.m. ET/PT), violence was 134.4% more frequent in 2002 than in 1998.

■ In 1998, the most common form of TV violence during all hours of prime time was fist fights or martial arts combat (in which no one was killed). By 2002, these relatively mild fight sequences became less frequent and were supplanted by more frequent use of guns or other weapons. In 1998, 44% of all violent scenes during the Family Hour were mild fight sequences compared to 32% in 2002. In 1998, 29% of all violent sequences included the use of guns or other weapons. By 2002, that number increased to 38%.

Foul Language

Language that was once unacceptable is now common in a wide variety of shows. Another study the PTC conducted during the same time period as mentioned above reviewed programs for all instances of foul language, including curses, offensive epithets, sexually suggestive or indecent and censored language. Among other things, the study found:

■ During the Family Hour, foul language increased by 94.8% between 1998 and 2002 and by 109.1% during the 9:00 p.m. ET/PT time slot.

VIDEO GAMES *Feeding an Addiction*

The video game industry is exploding. Around the world, millions of people of all ages spend their time enjoying them, whether on a computer or game console.

But consider these news headlines: "Top Activity for National Goof-Off Day: Playing Video Games!"—"Video games, not TV responsible for obesity in kids…"—"Video Games Approved For Teens Often Contain Sex And Violence, Study Concludes"—"Violent video games are training children to kill"—"Video games 'increase aggression'"—"Electronic Nightmares: Sex and Violence Invade Your Game Console"—"Boy grabs knife after dad unplugs video game."

Young minds are spending countless hours being exposed to computerized violence and illicit sex—often under the noses of unsuspecting parents! As a result, a generation is coming of age trained to be cold, compassionless and unfeeling toward the plight of others.

Practicing Skills

Recently, the U.S. Army and Navy have employed video games to train their recruits. They have found that the large simulators once used were much too expensive. Since there is a whole generation already raised on video games, training today's recruits through video games is considered an obvious solution. Instructors are able to spend far less time explaining how to use a complex simulation; this allows them to spend far more time training soldiers in battlefield tactics.

There is evidence that "gamers" (those who play video and computer games with such intensity that they call themselves "hardcore") have faster reaction times and more accurate hand-eye coordination than "non-gamers." Like the military, certain corporations have seen positive results from using video games to train workers who engage in intense mental activities, such as stock market trading.

In Search of Social Lives

Compare today's video games with the board games of previous generations. Played as a form of social interaction, board games were generally a way of learning about and getting closer to family, friends or even dates. They offered a chance to socialize, to stimulate the mind and enjoy interesting conversation. Human beings need this type of innocent social interaction. People were designed to engage with—talk to—each other.

Many believe they can gain a social life from playing computer and video games. Yet, when people play video games with each other, the conversation is far from engrossing. It will usually consist of meaningless comments and exclamations like "ha-ha!", "ooh…", "oh no!", and "duh!"

Commonly, the conversation will simply degrade into cursing and swearing.

And then there are online games, in which players do talk to each other and participate in group activities within virtual worlds such as *World of Warcraft* and *Everquest*. Many gamers claim that since they are not good at dealing with other people, they turn to their "online friends" to find the camaraderie they lack in reality. However, is the "virtual social life" that these people engage in truly as beneficial as real life?

If you are hit with financial trouble, or need help with moving your furniture or building a house—or if you just need someone to talk to for hours on end, someone you can confide in and trust—a friend is somebody to whom you can turn. You cannot get this kind of friendship from "virtual friends" on online computer games.

The Bible is clear that human beings were intended to work with, confide in and rely upon each other: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up" (Ecc. 4:9-10).

A vast number of people participate in online relationships—now considered a normal part of the "gaming experience." People even go so far as to get "married" in these games to

Ironically, the smallest increase (38.7%) occurred during the last hour of prime time—the hour when young children are least likely to be in the viewing audience.

■ One teen-targeted network had a 188% increase in foul language during the Family Hour between 1998 and 2002. Such language increased by 308.5% during the second hour of prime time.

This use of foul language has carried over into everyday conversations. *American Demographics* recently published a survey indicating that 55% of women and 72% of men say they swear in public. It is even more prevalent among younger generations, with 74% of 18- to 34-year-olds swearing in public as opposed to 48% of 55-year-olds who responded to the survey. The use of curse words is also slowly creeping into the vocabulary of younger and younger children.

Attack on Fathers and Families

Today, there is a trend in TV programming geared toward degrading and undermining the roles of husbands and fathers in the family.

Husbands are constantly depicted as bumbling, ignorant, insensitive dunderheads. They are the brunt of jokes and always in trouble in their relationships with family and friends. They just can't seem to get it right. If it were not for the advice of their wives, they would be totally inept at managing their lives, marriages and families.

Wives are shown as wiser, smarter, better educated and more level-headed, always knowing what to do, no matter the situation. The woman is portrayed as the guiding, stabilizing force in the marriage and family. If it were not for her, everything would fall to pieces.

How about children? Are they respectful to parents and one another?

show their supposed love and devotion for each other. Nonetheless, people are actually substituting real relationships with false ones—which, in the end, will be terribly unfulfilling. The reality is that when it comes to romance and marriage, man was designed to have a partner in his life—a real, living, breathing, human being whom he can enjoy and share life with face-to-face (Gen. 2:18-25).

Gamers who devote virtually all their spare time to playing video games do not allow themselves to develop the social skills that would lead to real-life relationships. They do not have a social life because they have not allowed themselves the opportunity to develop one!

To be good at anything takes practice—and this includes developing an active, healthy ability to interact with all kinds of human beings.

Children Are Practicing Violence

Practicing an activity makes one better at it. Apply this understanding to the video games that children play—games in which kids practice fighting, murder, taking drugs and even sexual activity. As a result, children are becoming good at being deplorable!

Additionally, the scientific community has known for several years, proving through numerous studies, that violence in games directly correlates to aggressive behavior. It is inferred that sexual acts, drug use and the constant barrage of swearing in modern video games have similar effects on children. The evidence shows that video and computer games are making children worse, not better.

Consider all the acts of violence that have become commonplace among youth: fights, stabbings and shootings. There is a growing trend involving children murdering their siblings and even their parents; and shockingly, young children have carried out large-scale planned attacks. Yet, video game marketers claim that they and their products are not to blame.

Many parents are unaware of the level of violence to which they are exposing their kids in giving them such games. Sadly, most parents simply do not take the time to know what their children are really doing. Often, the few who try are met with the violence or cursing that their kids have been learning from video games.

Some parents trust stores and corporations to tell them what is good for their children, yet these are often unreliable. For example, the "kids and family" section on Amazon.com offered *Grand Theft Auto III*—a game that graphically depicts especially violent beatings, thefts, and murders—as number three on its list of "family games"!

Parents need to be diligent and cautious in buying video games for children, or else they risk exposing them to violence and sexually explicit material.

Addictive Behavior

Recently, researchers have recognized that video games have another destructive quality: They are addictive. Many video games are so engrossing that players feel they absolutely must finish the tasks in the games—even going so far as to neglect their own personal lives. This has been further compounded in online games, in which players who "take time off" in order to live their normal lives feel as though they are letting down their online friends.

The effects of this have been tragic. In 2002, a gamer was so addicted to *Everquest* that he actually took his own life, most likely because of problems he was having solely within the game.

The implications of addictions have been demonstrated even more profoundly throughout the world in cases in which people have actually died while playing video games. In 2002, a man in South Korea died after playing games non-stop for 86 hours. Ten days later, another man died in Taiwan after playing for 32 hours. Just recently, a 12-year-old collapsed from exhaustion after playing in a computer club for 12 straight hours. Doctors said that his death was the result of emotional stress due to being obsessed with games.

Of Lasting Value

The current state of video games reveals a world that is progressing further into self-deceit, confusion, violence and ignorance. Parents must teach their children which pursuits truly have long lasting value; how to form correct relationships; and how to react, respond to and deal with stress. Children must learn not to turn to vain pursuits in the hope of finding social lives, or to waste the day away. □

Hardly! Sarcasm and putdowns flow freely from their mouths to parents and each other in a never-ending game of one-up-man-ship.

As with everything else on TV, families begin to emulate these actions, thinking this is how they are supposed to act.

Television also attacks families in other ways. In the place of traditional families, it promotes homosexual life-styles. Each season brings more of this programming content. One-quarter of movie ads aired during the so-called "family hour" are for R-rated films. Time spent watching television (over 4 hours per day for the average American) leaves little time for meaningful conversation with children (38.5 minutes per week). In fact, 54% of 4- to 6-year-olds would rather spend time watching TV than spend time with their fathers.

Sex

As it has with every other standard of decency, television is constantly pushing the boundaries in regard to sex. What was once unmentioned and left in the bedroom is now standard fare. Not content with innuendo, virtually every prime time show has explicit scenes of fornication or adultery. Little is left to the imagination. Partial nudity is becoming more prevalent during prime time, even among the major networks, as they strive to compete with cable and satellite television. It is almost impossible to watch any show without being subjected to sex.

How much sex is on the tube? A study, *Sex on TV 3: Content and Context*, by the Kaiser Family Foundation, holds some answers.

Among its findings:

■ Almost two-thirds of all shows (64%) have some sexual content, including one in three (32%) with sexual behaviors (the rest include sexual references in conversation). This rate of sexual content is similar to that found two years ago (68%), up from about half of all shows (56%) four years ago.

■ One in seven shows (14%) now includes sexual intercourse, either depicted or strongly implied, an increase from 10% of shows two years ago, and 7% four years ago.

■ In the top 20 shows among teen viewers, eight in ten episodes include some sexual content (83%), including one in five (20%) with sexual intercourse.

■ Overall, 15% of all shows with any sexual content—including those with more modest content such as talk about sex, kissing or touching—included a safer sex reference, up from 10% two years ago and 9% four years ago. The rates for certain programs with more advanced portrayals were much higher, as noted above (for example, in shows with sexual intercourse, where the rate was 26%).

What God Says

While society in general may see nothing wrong with the content of television, the Creator God feels differently. Through the prophet Isaiah, He declares, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (55:8-9).

God describes this present society and television programming in the following way: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness. None calls for justice, nor any pleads for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity…

"Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace" (Isa. 59:2-8).

What Should You Do?

Is *all* TV bad? No. Is it okay to watch some programs? Yes. There are *some* good, wholesome programs. Some are helpful and educational. Others are historical and informative. Some are clean entertainment. But sadly, these are becoming fewer and farther between. It will take work and effort to find them. But this *can* be done!

Jesus Christ told His disciples to "watch" and be aware of world events in order to be ready for His Return (Matt. 24:44; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36). Watching the news to keep abreast of world events, trends and conditions will mean that seeing acts of violence or evil is unavoidable.

Yet, these things should not consume an unreasonable amount of our time. A balanced approach should be taken. There are many alternatives to spending endless hours in front of a television, viewing programs with no redeeming value.

Read a good book, talk with your family, play board games together, visit the zoo, library or museums. Take a walk. Get some exercise. Almost anything burns more calories than watching TV. Learn to use your mind, instead of allowing TV to numb it. Find a hobby, such as music or arts and crafts. The alternatives are endless!

King David said, "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psa. 101:3). He strove to avoid seeking after, or purposely setting before him, anything contrary to God's Law.

The Bible tells us to "flee fornication" (I Cor. 6:18) and to "put away from you a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from you" (Prov. 4:24). This ought to be done no matter what form these things take!

When Christ returns to set up the kingdom of God, every evil, wicked and wrong way will be done away. The time is coming when "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). □

RAISING THE BAR

How Corporations Are Competing for the Homosexual Market

With more money, and the willingness to spend it, homosexuals are being courted by America's traditionally conservative corporations. What does the future hold for this marketing shift?

IN AN ATTEMPT to boost their share in an increasingly fragmented and crowded consumer market, a growing number of *Fortune 500* companies are targeting the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender (GLBT) demographic.

According to most promotion experts, the GLBT community stands at four to five percent of the total U.S. population. When compared to the niche markets of racial minorities, the GLBT market segment ranks third at $485 billion annual buying power, behind African-Americans and Hispanics, respectively. (See informational graphic.)

Numerous studies reveal that…

■ More than 60% of homosexuals in the U.S. are college graduates. They are twice as likely as heterosexuals to hold managerial positions, and are twice as likely to earn household incomes of more than $250,000 annually (*@Plan*).

■ Homosexuals tend to have fewer dependents, leaving them with more money to spend.

■ Inclined to indulge in certain luxuries, 79% are willing to pay a premium for quality products and services; 94% go out of their way to purchase from those who advertise specifically to them, via GLBT media (*@Plan*; *Simmons*; *Greenfield*).

America's leaders are concluding that they can no longer ignore a $485 billion market of 15 million consumers willing to pay more for the best.

Rewarding Brand Loyalty

American Airlines, Viacom, Proctor & Gamble, Chase and IBM are among a growing number of *Fortune 500* corporations competing for the brand loyalty of this emerging niche market. However, they are learning that simply running mainstream ads in homosexual magazines is not enough. Advertisers are finding that they have to "raise the bar" and produce ads that specifically appeal to the particular cares and desires of the GLBT demographic.

Though Ford, Chrysler, Honda, Toyota and other automakers are targeting the GLBT community, Subaru was among the first to do so. When it began to court the homosexual market in 1993, only 89,607 Subarus were sold in America. Ten years later, Subaru sold 186,819. To attract same-sex couples, the car manufacturer used the advertising slogan, "Different drivers, different roads, one car."

Volkswagen of America, Inc. has perfected "gay vague" ads, in which the men appearing in them may or may not be a couple.

GMC—which has traditionally positioned its products as "tough" and "rugged"—uses product-placement to advertise its Yukon Denali on the popular television show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

Avis Rent A Car promotes its "A Card," which offers incentives that appeal to the GLBT demographic, such as 20% off homosexual-oriented magazine subscriptions. The car rental agency also supports homosexual film festivals throughout the United States, listing them on a webpage for frequent travelers.

In one of its magazine ads, Avis portrays two middle-aged men in skiing outfits, embracing each other, with one man smiling as he receives a kiss on the cheek from the other man. The headline reads, "You're A-list to us." The copy announces that

Avis has automatically included domestic partners as additional drivers for more than a decade—"No extra fees charged, no questions asked."

The American Automobile Association (AAA) published a magazine ad that showed two couples driving in a convertible, with their arms raised, under the headline, "We're out there with you." The ad copy reads, "We have a long and proud tradition of supporting the LGBT community. AAA offers a wide range of products created especially with you in mind. AAA Travel's 58 dedicated Vacation Specialists are committed to serving your interests and can plan lesbian- and gay-friendly vacations, and trips with family and friends. We also offer Insurance products, 24/7 Emergency Road Service and Membership benefits for you and your partner."

In one of its advertisements, Atlantis Cruises showed six muscular young men lying in lawn chairs on the deck of a cruise ship. The headline read, "Our kind of family vacation." Below, the ad announced that its "new all-gay cruises for 2006 are just what you and your friends are looking for…More gay and lesbian guests traveled for Atlantis in 2005 than any other company in the world. Isn't it time you became a part of our family?"

U.S. CONSUMER NICHE MARKETS (2003)

Demographic	Population	Buying Power
Black	36 million	$688 billion
Hispanic	41 million	$653 billion
Homosexual	15 million	$485 billion
Asian	12 million	$344 billion

Source: Sedig Center; U.S. Census 2003; PlanetOut; Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.; MarketResearch.com

Even politics has followed suit. For example, in 2001, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) published a full page ad listing reasons why homosexuals should vote Democrat. Since then, the DNC continues to court the homosexual vote, advertising in *Advocate* magazine, utilizing messages such as, "One out of three gay couples has children… Republicans believe they should be taken away."

What to Expect Next

Society's growing tolerance for the homosexual lifestyle is apparent. In 1996, only 21 *Fortune 500* companies offered domestic partner health benefits; by 2002, more than 160 did

so. Popular television programs, such as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and *Will & Grace* (now in its eighth season), continue to capture mainstream audiences, with little or no backlash. The California Supreme Court recently ruled that same-sex parents who separated have the same parental rights as heterosexuals. These and other trends are signs that homosexuality is on the road to becoming "the norm."

With homosexual-specific advertising campaigns on the rise, society can expect to see GLBT-oriented television commercials in mainstream venues, such as during what was once called "the family hour."

In a *FoxNews* report, the editor-at-large at *Advertising Age* said that it is smarter and more cost-effective to target a demographic in its specific media. "The logical first step is not to buy 30 seconds on NBC. The logical first step is to put your ad in *The Advocate*. It's a more efficient starting point. If that works, then who knows? Maybe you take things more broadly."

Meanwhile, as mainstream attitudes and opinions succumb to the continuous calls for "tolerance" and "understanding," those who speak against the homosexual lifestyle will be attacked and vilified for "preaching hatred." Such voices are already becoming a shrinking minority. □

"America's leaders are concluding that they can no longer ignore a $485 billion market of 15 million consumers willing to pay more for the best."

T H E

PORNOGRAPHY

OBSESSION

Households across America are becoming further infected by pornography—referred to by some as "harmless entertainment." But is pornography *really* harmless? How does it affect families?

ALMOST AS OLD as written history, pornography, while riding the surge of technology, has reached practically every corner of the globe.

Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia explains, "The ancient Greeks used pornographic themes in songs in Dionysian festivals, and ancient Romans painted pornographic pictures on walls in the ancient city of Pompeii. Pornography was also prevalent in some ancient Eastern cultures, such as those of India, Japan, and China…It was not until the 1800s, however, that pornography began to become a social problem, primarily because the spread of technology—such as printing, photography, and motor vehicles—made it more readily available and because of the growth of democracy and individual freedom."

Once seen as one of America's last taboos, pornography is finding its home in the mainstream—and in the family. Aside from books, magazines, games and music videos (mainly geared toward teenagers) filled with sexual themes, pornography is portrayed on television and in movies as "not that big of a deal."

As society continues to remove its "shackles" of sexual morality and restraint—sexualizing practically everything (clothing, music, jewelry, television, books, comic books, even our children)—it is no surprise that pornography has taken hold of so many en masse.

Sex Sells

Most have heard of the "power of advertising." This power fuels commercialism—driving people to become consumers purchasing everything they can get their hands on. Similarly, it can be said that the "power of pornography"—ranging from partially-nude music videos and fashion shows, to soft-core advertisements, to hard-core pornographic movies—is driving today's *sexualized mentality*.

This new *sexual revolution* has established pornography as a multi-billion dollar industry. This not only applies to companies and business ventures, but it is turning up profits for the "average" citizen as well. Many new websites showcasing "amateur porn"—home videos of people engaging in sex—appear each day, charging subscriptions to access such video "collections."

Incredibly, this pornography craze is also helping to pay the tuition of many college-bound women, who are utilizing webcams to webcast themselves on people's computer screens. Countless new sites appear each day featuring young women parading in front of cameras, charging people to see them in their daily activities (including being naked and engaging in sex). Society nonchalantly dismisses such behavior as a means "to pay for college."

Imagine your children being exposed to this as they innocently browse the Internet! Imagine the effects on your marriage if your spouse engaged in such voyeurism!

In describing the porn industry blazing the trail in finding new, efficient media for their product, *USA Today* reports, "They're among the Web's most innovative and profitable entrepreneurs, but pariahs among mainstream business people. Online pornographers have been among the first to exploit new technology for more than a decade—from video-streaming and fee-based subscriptions to pop-up ads and electronic billing. Their bold experimentation has helped make porn one of the most profitable online industries, and their ideas are staples at Fortune 500 companies" ("Online porn often leads high-tech way").

In the past, pornography was something one had to search out in the "back alley." But today, it is readily available all members of the family *live*, *uncut* and *in your face.* This attests to society's growing obsession and carefree attitude toward the adult film industry, solidifying it as a highly profitable venture.

In business with Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt, Sheraton, Holiday Inn, Comcast, Time Warner and Cablevision (to name just a few), several companies traded on the New York Stock Exchange are now involved in pornography. Even a non-profit medical center (the "Adult Industry Medical HealthCare Foundation") was formed, dedicated to treating the spread of AIDS and HIV among porn stars.

Pornography is big business! And it will continue to bring in its profits regardless of how, where and when it reaches consumers. Frederick Lane wrote that because there is a social stigma still attached to pornography, one can charge a premium for it and earn a higher profit margin. "So, it makes pure economic sense," he concluded.
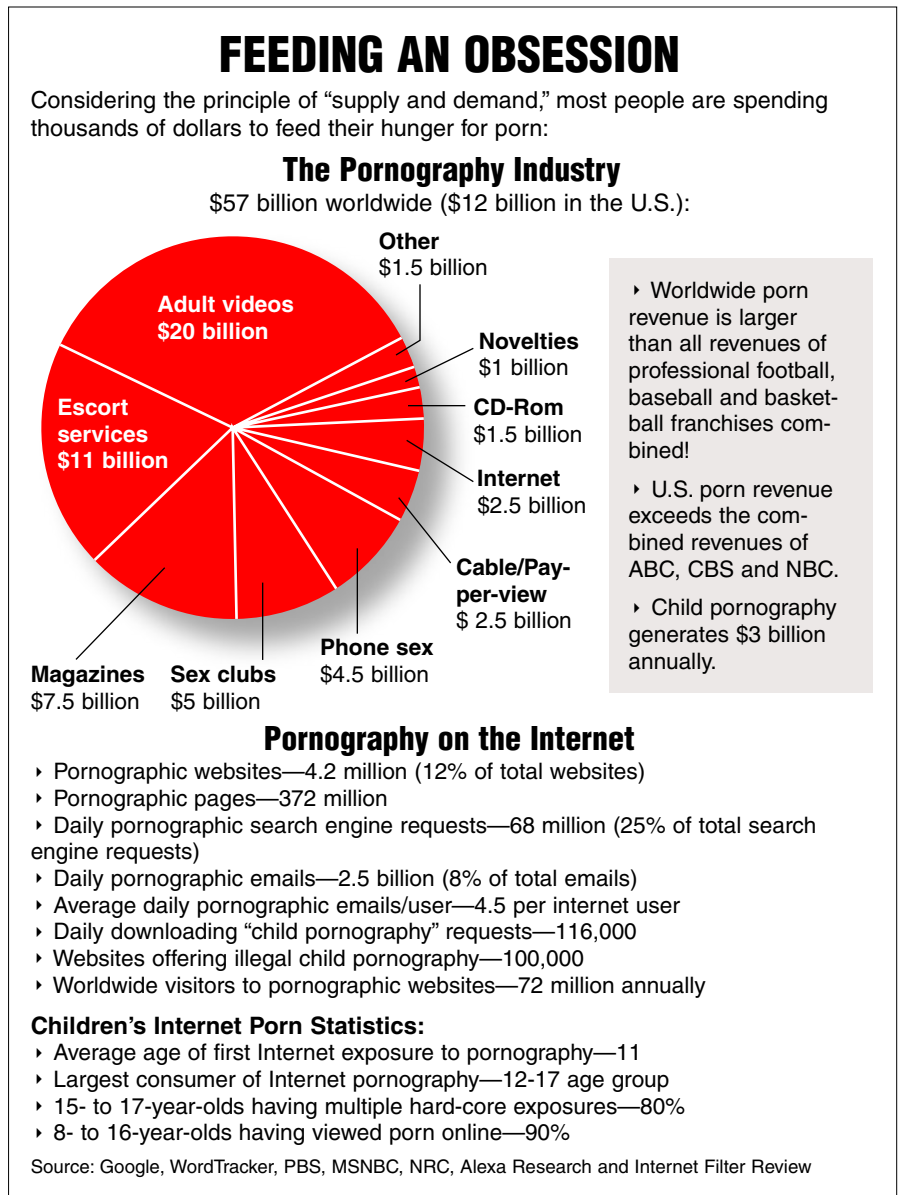
The Effects of Pornography

Sexually explicit material has infected millions, desensitizing people to see it as something "everyone watches." This reasoning has led many to question whether pornography actually harms its viewers.

But consider the following:

■ Pornography is meant to increase sexual excitement, leaving people wanting to fulfill what they viewed. An "I want more" mentality takes hold. This craving for sexual gratification can lead to increased sexual encounters (as well as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and even cervical cancer) and sex-related crimes (child molestation, sexual assault and battery, rape, etc.). Pornography is a clear-cut case of feeding the "lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes" (I John 2:16).

■ It forever warps one's view of sexual relations. It instills in the viewer's mind that contact with the

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FEEDING AN OBSESSION

Considering the principle of "supply and demand," most people are spending thousands of dollars to feed their hunger for porn:

The Pornography Industry

$57 billion worldwide ($12 billion in the U.S.):

Other
$1.5 billion

Adult videos
$20 billion

Novelties
$1 billion

Escort
services
$11 billion

CD-Rom
$1.5 billion

Internet
$2.5 billion

Cable/Pay-
per-view
$ 2.5 billion

Magazines
$7.5 billion

Sex clubs
$5 billion

Phone sex
$4.5 billion

‣ Worldwide porn revenue is larger than all revenues of professional football, baseball and basketball franchises combined!

‣ U.S. porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS and NBC.

‣ Child pornography generates $3 billion annually.

Pornography on the Internet

‣ Pornographic websites—4.2 million (12% of total websites)
‣ Pornographic pages—372 million
‣ Daily pornographic search engine requests—68 million (25% of total search engine requests)
‣ Daily pornographic emails—2.5 billion (8% of total emails)
‣ Average daily pornographic emails/user—4.5 per internet user
‣ Daily downloading "child pornography" requests—116,000
‣ Websites offering illegal child pornography—100,000
‣ Worldwide visitors to pornographic websites—72 million annually

Children's Internet Porn Statistics:
‣ Average age of first Internet exposure to pornography—11
‣ Largest consumer of Internet pornography—12-17 age group
‣ 15- to 17-year-olds having multiple hard-core exposures—80%
‣ 8- to 16-year-olds having viewed porn online—90%

Source: Google, WordTracker, PBS, MSNBC, NRC, Alexa Research and Internet Filter Review

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opposite sex is purely for sexual gratification—not for the sake of having a loving, caring marriage relationship. It corrupts the viewer's understanding of the proper use of sex, turning it into a guilt-ridden act of selfishness; instead of expressing love between a husband and wife, it is twisted into an act of self-fulfillment, regardless of the other person's needs or wants. Not only does this distortion of the God-ordained reasons for sex affect the present generation, it also corrupts the next generation—creating an endless cycle of further perversions.

■ It sexualizes the viewer's mindset, unnaturally elevating sex in the mind. While some married couples

view pornography as a way of enlivening or exciting sexual relations, it actually creates the opposite effect. It causes the viewer to compare his sex life to those on screen—where all things appear much more glamorous and arousing. In effect, he becomes disinterested in his spouse, or is driven to further sexual experimentation to keep up with the scintillations provided by porn.

■ Pornography leads to sexual addictions and further perversions. For example, porn sites often link to other websites depicting every type of sexual perversion: child porn, homosexuality, bestiality, necrophilia, masochism, rape, sadism and other abominations.

■ It often leads to divorce. Oftentimes, married couples who view porn go on to adulterous relationships. A link between porn and cases of incest and child molestation has been made, with police often finding pornography on the offender's computer or in the home. In addition to breaking up present families, it also contributes in destroying *future* families by instilling in young minds that one can forgo marriage in the pursuit of free and easy sex. In all, it creates a lack of human emotion and feelings.

Clearly, pornography is anything but "harmless entertainment." It has many side effects that most simply overlook in pursuit of their own pleasure.

Addicted to Porn

Quite plainly, society has become addicted to pornography and its convenience of always being "one click away." And this addiction applies not only to hardcore pornography, but also to softcore porn and sexually explicit entertainment.

Pornography is no longer just a problem for men; a growing number of *women* are becoming addicted to porn! According to a study by *Nielson NetRatings*, about one in three who visit pornographic websites are women—bringing the number of women who viewed pornography online to 9.3 million ("Pornography: A Woman's Struggle, Too," March 9, 2004). This expansion of the viewing audience is creating a more sexually aggressive society of individuals who have opened themselves up to a new interpretation of what sex should be.

Harmful Entertainment

Pornography is hurting countless children, teens, husbands and wives—families!—and only benefits the pornography industry. It is warping and distorting the purpose of sex—turning it into merely a means of satisfying one's lusts.

However, God designed sex as a beautiful act within marriage, and as a way to draw the couple together. In fact, Genesis 1:28 shows that the first marriage command was for Adam and Eve to "be fruitful, and multiply"—to conceive through sexual relations.

Sadly, as with almost everything man gets his hands on, sexuality has become perverted. Instead of following God's laws and carrying out the sex function in the way *God* designed, people have continually sought to redefine sex—from being a guilt-ridden pleasure in the Victorian age to today's new morality, when practically any and every form of sex is accepted (and new forms are always welcome).

But this is not the way that God—the Creator and Designer of all things, including sex—meant it to be. (To learn more, read our booklet *The Purpose of MARRIAGE – Ever Obsolete?*, and our books *All About DATING and COURTSHIP* and *SEX – Its Unknown Dimension*.) □

GENERATION

save himself from the slippery slope on which he does not realize he is standing. Living lives of self-indulgence and decadence, young adults today have no idea what it means to sacrifice. Very few have even imagined what it would be like to miss a meal.

What has this created? WEAKNESS!

So much pomp and circumstance will mean nothing when the world starts to collapse around them. They will not know how to deal with the coming adversity. God's Word speaks of a time in the very near future when these attitudes and sins will "catch up" with the world.

We are at the end of 6,000 years during which God has allowed man to rule himself. Mankind has walked according to its *feelings* for all of that time. Its end, as we know it, is nearly here. God is going to punish the world for breaking the laws He set forth millennia ago.

How will a generation never punished by their parents handle being punished by their Creator? They will *not* handle it. The weakness that has developed in this generation will rear its ugly head with full force.

Again, there is hope. When a parent punishes a child, it is meant to help the child, to develop him into a better person. So it is with God. After correcting mankind, He will usher in an age of proper education—fully teaching the entire world how to live in happiness and joy.

What does this mean for *you*? Are you worried about the world around you? Do you feel that you are unable to help or affect it?

Your Education of Character

While the world is not going to change by the efforts of men, it will change soon, when Jesus Christ returns. Are *you* preparing for that return? You can, and in doing so, you will be given a chance to *truly* help large numbers of people. When Christ sets up His kingdom on earth, those He has trained will help Him.

This is your potential: You could serve *with* Christ, helping billions of people live a way of true happiness, peace and joy. Gone will be the time of corrupt, rotten attitudes, thoughts and desires. And you can be part of ushering in this age!

Learning about God's purpose in our lives opens the door to change. People can change who they are and how they live. But many in this age will find it too difficult to overcome their societal "training," ignoring the *special* training God is offering them!

Recognize such attitudes at work within yourself. Overcoming them will be difficult, but it *is* possible! Being reared and educated a certain way does not mean that you must remain the same. In fact, realize that, the younger you are, the less time has been spent ingraining such attitudes into your mind. However, *you* must choose to change! Your decision is more important and the reward greater than you yet know! (To learn more about your great human potential, read our book *The AWESOME POTENTIAL of Man*.) □

SURVIVING THE "PERFECT STORM"

The family unit in America is under fierce attack. Hurricane-like forces are tearing at the fabric of the once solid family from all directions. Here's how you can resist the pulls, influences and pressures assaulting your family.

AS SOCIETY continues to grow darker, families must fight "the perfect storm." Like ships tossed about in a raging sea storm, parents must work against all odds—and without a compass, map, working rudder or engine to power their "ship"—to weather the daily pulls, influences and trials assaulting the family. In the face of hurricane-force winds, parents and children must strive—fight—struggle—head-on against society's powerful current of permissiveness and self-indulgence.

The acceptance of divorce in the 1960s; a shift in the law permitting easy "no-fault" divorce; the redefinition of the family as something other than a father, mother and children; the creation of "children's rights" at the expense of parental authority; and, most recently, the homosexual movement's obsession with redefining marriage—all these have worked to place tremendous stress upon the institution of the family.

The Creator God wants all human beings to understand His great purpose for the family. From the Holy Bible, He reveals how we can become better fathers, mothers and children. This involves distancing our thoughts from the ways of this world, and being grounded in the Word of God. Our families *can* be beautiful examples of unity and harmony, as we nurture and teach our children God's Way.

The Right Foundation

When a building contractor begins a large construction project, the first task is to create a solid foundation. After excavation, the builder will manage the erection of forms and the installation of rebar, and order the proper concrete mix for the foundations. The quality of the concrete must meet minimum specifications for strength and consistency, as well as aesthetic quality. For the erected structures to endure, the foundations set in the ground must be right.

Likewise, the foundation of a family is formally set at the marriage ceremony. If a man and a woman do not share the same values and objectives, the foundation will crack

and fracture. If the bride and groom do not take their vows seriously, their marriage will be in trouble as soon as it begins.

Men and women will sometimes recognize too late that they have nothing in common other than they were both at the same place at the same time, with the same thing on their minds—to get married to someone. Human beings must work to reduce such tragic and disastrous occurrences.

The Bible contains the wisdom necessary to assist those who wish to marry—in effect, ensuring a solid foundation for each marriage. For example, God's Word shows that in order for a daughter to be given away in marriage, her father's permission should be obtained. (You will note that Jacob, Abraham's grandson, did not ride into Haran, dictate to his uncle Laban his terms, and then take away Rachel as his wife.) Today, this is still practiced as a formality at traditional marriage ceremonies; the origin of this tradition is biblically-based.

How many today follow the tradition of a man seeking permission from the parents of the daughter he desires to wed? How many would even consider such parental authority? Yet, this long-held custom was established to help prevent potential mismatches and bad marriages—to reduce the chances of a cracked and weak foundation. (Of course, in some circumstances this principle would not apply.)

For a marriage to be blessed by a loving Creator, young people should seek wise counsel from their parents and from ministers who truly represent God's will.

Family History

Few people today are blessed to be born into a loving family with a father and mother who are totally committed to one another for life—never intending to divorce. Such should be the case in all families!

Tragically, however, many people are born into what could best be described as a "biological arrangement," the product of two ships that

passed in the night—a one-night stand. Consider that in 2000, 83.6 out of 1,000 girls in the 15 to 19 age group became pregnant. Sadly, many of these pregnancies end in the murder of the child—an abortion.

Herbert W. Armstrong, former Editor-in-Chief of *The Plain Truth* magazine, once said that a nation is simply a family grown large. Just as nations have certain characteristics, mannerisms, etc., so do families. Families have certain physical characteristics that are passed down from generation to generation. These physical traits include not only those of appearance, but also of the mind.

The Bible is replete with examples of good and bad families. It is also filled with records of good and bad people *within* families. In other words, a good family can produce a bad child, and a virtuous child can sometimes come from a bad family background. The royal line of kings Saul and David are biblical examples of both good and bad people produced within families.

How can parents and children work together to achieve joy and security? Here are seven general points that will help parents and children strengthen the family unit.

Point 1: Parents – Teach Your Children Their Roles

Parents need to teach their boys to be strong—mentally and physically. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 20:29, "The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the gray head."

Today's children are *full* of bad food and more often than not *empty* of good teaching. This is reflected in their health and posture. They may have great hand-eye coordination from video games, but often have bodies withering away from neglect or abuse.

Though the Bible states that the glory of a young man is his strength, this does not mean that our sons should become body builders. Still, young men should maximize their youthful strength to achieve their potential.

Parents must assume responsibility for encouraging them to develop strong, vigorous, healthy bodies.

At the earliest age possible, insist that your sons perform heavy work, such as cutting and hauling wood for burning; helping with landscaping; painting a house; working on automobiles; building projects; or other activities that will cause their heart rates to increase and their pours to sweat! Do not be afraid to push them—expect them to perform. However, be keenly aware of their *real* limits (not just when they might say they are tired). Also, recognize that some boys need more coaxing and supervision than others do.

Along with strength and determination, teach your boys to have a gentle nature—that "gentleness" is a part of godly character (Gal. 5:22-23). Some events and circumstances in life should be met with muscle and a square jaw, but toughness must be tempered with gentleness—especially when interacting with girls and women. Young men should be taught to be out front and strong—a protector, if necessary, for their sister, mother or future wife.

There are distinct differences in the way girls and boys and women and men think. Parents should work to develop and nurture the characteristics and strengths that naturally apply to males and females.

Daughters should not be taught to desire the dominant role. In I Peter 3:7, it is revealed that women are physically weaker: "Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the *weaker vessel*, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

This does not mean that women are inferior to men. This verse shows that boys and young men must never "bully" or man-handle women, but rather be gentle with them, and treat them with respect.

This verse also indicates that the effectiveness of one's prayers is related to his recognition of the proper roles of men and women. It takes a

father *and* a mother to teach both sons and daughters their proper roles.

Many young girls search for a man who is like their father. If the model at home is a wonderful father and husband, a daughter's marriage will likely be happy and secure. (However, sometimes the young woman would do better to find a man much *different* from her father.) If young women are taught what a woman needs in a man and what a woman *is*—what her *role* must be—she will be better equipped to see when God is choosing the right man for her.

Girls must be taught to be emotionally and mentally strong. They need to understand that, though a wife's role is to work under her husband's authority, no wife should allow herself to be violently abused.

In the Song of Solomon, King Solomon was inspired to address the difference between a young girl who is a "wall"—a virgin—and one who is a "door"—sexually promiscuous.

Have you, mom, sat down with your daughter and taught her that she should save herself for the right man? Have you explained what Solomon meant when he talked about a girl who is a "door" and one who is a "wall"? Have you ever instructed her that she should be a wall and *not* a door? Or, do you make the mistake of assuming that she already knows this?

Also, teach your sons the same principle, and that "scoring" is NOT a sign of manhood. Both sons and daughters should be taught to save themselves for marriage. How tragic that we live in a world that views traditional family values as old fashioned and out of date!

Remember the physical things that traditionally and biblically define a woman's role. In Titus 2, the apostle Paul provides guidelines for women teaching younger girls to become "keepers at home." While this is considered out of date in today's culture, it is timeless in its ability to bring happiness and stability to the family.

Teach your daughters to sew, cook, wash dishes, clean the house, decorate, and to look to the needs of her siblings. God created females to *want* to nurture and comfort others. This beautiful trait comes naturally to girls and women. These fantastic qualities bring happiness, not only to others, but to the giver as well. Mothers—especially those blessed with being able to fulfill your role fulltime at home—should pass down to your daughters the diligent care and skill required to make a house into a home. It will prepare them to become wonderful mothers and wives.

A mother should listen to her daughter, and teach her how to fulfill her role as a "virtuous woman," as thoroughly explained in Proverbs 31. When old enough to understand, this is a great chapter to study in depth with your daughter.

Read the Song of Solomon to your girls as they mature. Expect femininity, and do not tolerate rough "tomboy" tendencies. Girls who exhibit such characteristics are often products of couples who wanted a son, but instead were blessed with a daughter. Some parents encourage their girls to develop masculine characteristics under the guise that this is "cute." But that is not how God views this (Deut. 22:5).

Establish an allowance system with your children. It can educate your children in managing money and in learning to be responsible. Although allowances offer positive incentives to children, they should not come to believe that they must be paid for everything they do, or even most of the work performed around the house. Let your children know that they are expected to contribute to the household, and that an allowance is *optional*. If it becomes a problem, quickly suspend or eliminate it. Allowances should not be an excessive amount of money; they should be used as a teaching tool.

Be conscious of diet. Do not allow your children to become overweight! This is not just the mother's job, even though food preparation is part of her role. Mothers, like grandmothers, often have more of a tendency to allow overeating. Fathers must take the lead, along with his wife's support, to ensure that children receive a healthy diet, with proper amounts of food. Do not allow your children to decide for themselves *what* to eat or *how much*.

In this age, it is necessary to mention things that were once considered obvious according to nature (I Cor. 11:14). Encourage your daughters to care for their long hair, and do not allow their hair to be cut too short. Fathers especially should be aware of their daughters appearance and regularly complement them. If properly trained and encouraged, daughters will naturally desire to be beautiful—and will be aware of what *real* beauty is (as opposed to how Hollywood and the fashion industry define it)!

Boys should be taught early to maintain their hair at least above the ears and shirt collar. While encouraging them to keep themselves groomed, discourage them from focusing too much on their personal appearance. Do not allow your boys to become "prissy."

If you teach your children their proper roles and responsibilities in early life, you will save them much grief later.

Point 2: Parents and Children – Be Loyal to Your Family Name

Teach your children that they represent the family name. This simple admonition to children has become

> "Today's children are *full* of bad food and more often than not *empty* of good teaching. This is reflected in their health and posture."

uncommon in the degenerate society in which we live. Many women are even retaining their maiden name instead of assuming the family name of the men they marry. How confusing to the children of such families!

Honoring the family name is part of the Fifth Commandment, which requires everyone, regardless of one's age, to honor his or her father and mother. Proverbs 19:26 further expounds upon this all-important command: "He that wastes his father and chases away his mother is a son that causes shame and brings reproach." A child and young adult can "waste away" his father's name by not being conscientious, diligent and responsible. Likewise, a son or daughter can "chase away" his or her mother by rejecting her counsel and advice.

Children should be taught the history of their families. Tell your children about the things that have been done in your family. Let them understand their ancestry by focusing on good examples of character. Communicate to them the importance of responsibility and honor. Research your genealogy and give your children the gift of knowing their roots.

The oldest son has a special place in the human family, and should set the example in upholding the family name. The oldest son in ancient Israel received a double portion of the family's inheritance (Deut. 21:17; Gen. 48:22; I Chron. 5:1). This special place is *his right*. This is not to say that the older son is more valuable than other sons or daughters, or that the father should show favoritism. Nonetheless, God's Word plainly provides a special position—and *responsibility*—to the eldest son.

Fathers must expect their oldest son to set the pace among the children. They must prepare them to bear responsibility as soon as they are sufficiently mature. Teach them to make right decisions. An older son can have a tremendous positive impact upon a family—or he can cause much harm! Teach them to be protectors of their sisters and younger brothers. Teach them the importance of their role in the family—a role that is in many ways the most difficult. Teach them the importance of honor and upholding a high standard for the family name. His brothers and sisters will *naturally* want to follow him.

God considers true Christians His children (Rom. 8:14-16), and a part of His great family (Eph. 2:18-19; Gal. 6:10). As a Parent, God watches over His children's conduct. Just as no one would want to drag that heavenly name through mire or bring an association of God's family name with evil, neither should one do this with his human family name.

Point 3: Parents – Understand Your Children

Society today is nothing like the society of 30 years ago—or even 10 years ago. The pressures your child faces are more severe than ever before. Ironically, children today are pampered and left to their own devices—without being taught that there are consequences—all the while being pressured to experiment with many "adult" experiences.

Western civilization is saturated with every indulgence of pleasure and illicit sex imaginable. Each year, more and more outrageous behavior and acts are presented as being normal. For example, 70% of all teenagers will engage in oral sex by the time they are 18 years old! Fifty years ago, most teens did not even know what the term meant!

Fathers and mothers—*understand*

hears it, it is folly and shame unto him." Applying these verses will pay immeasurable dividends in your relationships with your children.

A father must understand that he should empathize and feel compassion for his children. Such compassion and empathy usually comes more naturally to the mother, but fathers must strive for these qualities if they are going to connect with their children.

A father's compassion toward his sons should be *genuine*, with care taken not to overreact and pamper them. For example, a good father will feel the pain of his child's cut or skinned knee, and wish in his mind that he could put himself in his son's place. Yet, he should also teach the boy self-control.

Listening to and understanding your children will yield immediate positive results, and will help them build character.

Point 4: Parents and Children – God Always Blesses Obedience and Morality

Youth should strive for high moral standards. Although difficult, God will always bless virtuous behavior, though those blessings may not be immediately evident. Conversely, sin may *seem* "fun" for the moment, but it always leads to pain, misery and death (Prov. 16:25).

Children today battle tremendous pressure that encourages them to take short cuts—to take the "easy way." The idiomatic expression "take it easy" sums up this generation's atti-

> ## "Society today is nothing like society of 30 years ago—or even 10 years ago. The pressures your child faces are more severe than ever before."

your children. Listen to them when they come to you. Be swift to hear, and slow to speak (Jms. 1:19), and heed the lesson of Proverbs 18:13: "He that answers a matter before he

tude toward hard work and honesty.

For example, many students of all ages believe there is nothing immoral about cheating on a homework assignment or test. A 2002 national survey

by Rutgers University's Management Education Center found that 75% of 4,500 high school students surveyed engaged in "serious cheating." More than half have plagiarized work they found on the Internet—and it does not stop there. Incredibly, about 50% of those responding to the survey said they did not think copying questions and answers from a test is cheating.

It has been reported that 87% of college students surveyed in 1993 admitted to cheating on written work, and that 70% cheated on a test at least once (Dr. Donald McCabe's study of 200 colleges and universities). Dr. McCabe stated, "Professors are becoming more intimidated by students, and worry about offending
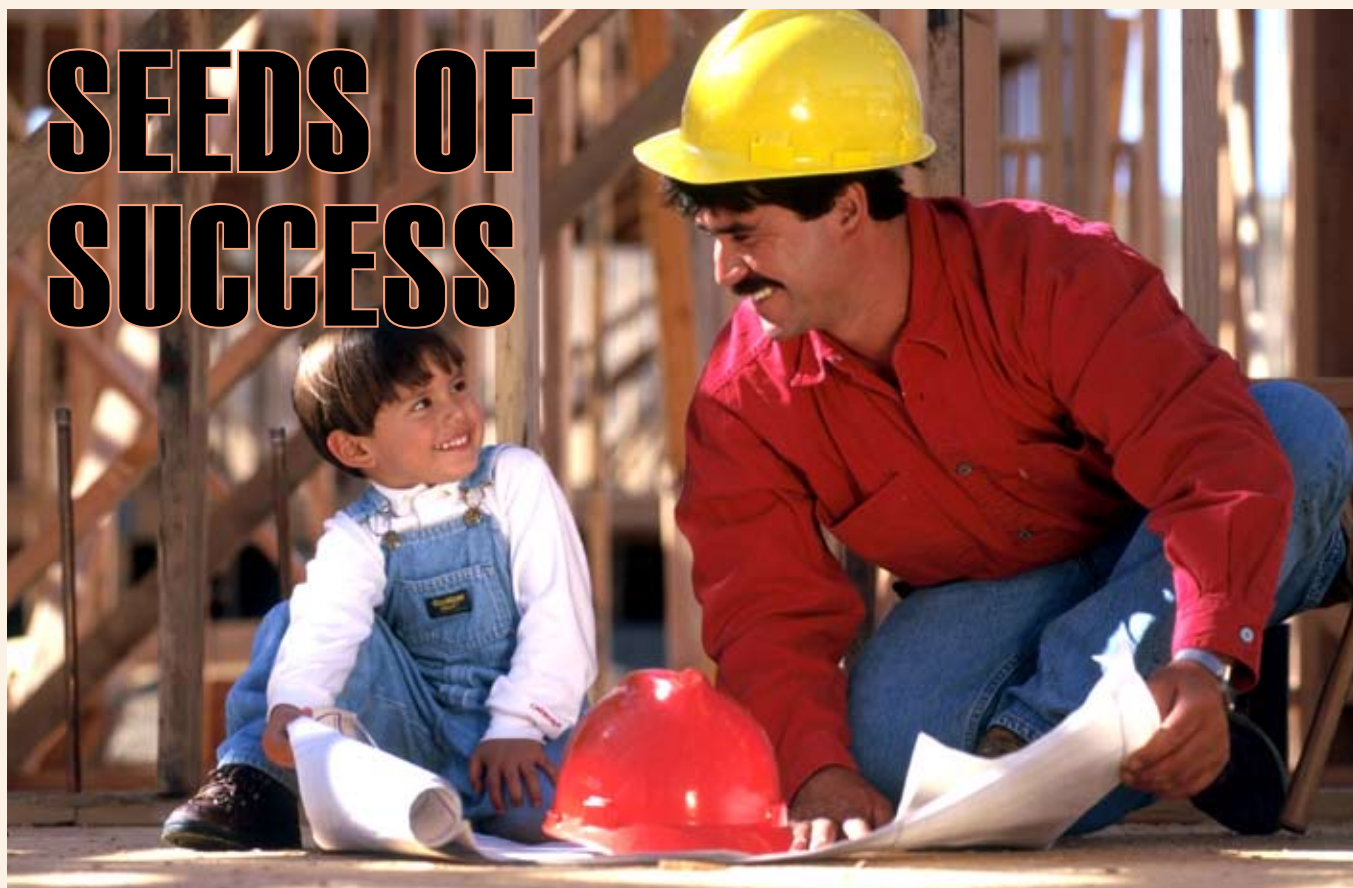
them and making them unhappy."

Notice Isaiah 3:12: "As for My people, *children are their oppressors* and women rule over them." This has been fulfilled before our eyes in the last generation.

Sexual activity among teens today is common, with those abstaining prior to marriage being a shrinking minority. Drug use for "recreation" also characterizes our age, a time when so many young people believe they can find happiness in such destructive behavior.

A recent study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* showed conclusively that teen sex and drug use increased depression. The results were contrary to the

notion that teens become sexually active or engage in drug use to "self-medicate" their own depression. This study confirms God's Word—that sin both CAUSES and SPREADS misery.

Sadly, young people have lost their moral rudder. Most would scoff at the idea that obedience and morality bring great blessings from God. A May 2001 Gallup poll noted that 62% of young adults (ages 18 to 29) consider homosexuality "acceptable." Also, there is a wide generational gap in this acceptance. More than half of all Americans (54%) now say that homosexual relations between consenting adults should be considered legal. As recently as 1986, only 32% thought this way. Even more astounding is the

SEEDS OF SUCCESS

YOU LOOK ACROSS the dinner table and see your child looking back at you. No doubt, he or she has expressed an interest in a certain job or career. Usually, such ideas are fanciful, and are either related to something seen on television or the same job held by you or your spouse.

Your son may want to grow up to be a firefighter, lawyer or doctor. Your daughter may hope to be a teacher, veterinarian or a ballerina. Such youthful dreams will likely change over time, but whatever their aspirations, you naturally want success—and happiness—for your children. You want

them to experience a fulfilling life and a rewarding career.

But have you ever realized that you actually hold the key to their success? You can offer them knowledge that, unlike the suggestions of pop psychology, will lead them to true and lasting success.

65% of 18- to 29-year-olds who think that homosexuality should be legal!

We could conclude that youth today have fallen into the immoral and amoral trap because their teachers and college instructors have sown this type of thinking into their minds. While this is true, the *ultimate* responsibility lies with the parents for not teaching their children right from wrong, good from evil—from infancy, through the formative years, and into adulthood.

Guard your children, especially when they are young, from evil influences. In I Corinthians 15:33, Paul clearly states that association with bad children will corrupt your own: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Teach your sons and daughters to associate with peers who strive for excellence in how they speak and behave.

Make your children aware of the evil around them through life's daily lessons and the news. Instruct them to avoid direct experience with sin. Guide them. Encourage them. Teach them to *think*! Do not fall for the modern psychological tripe that contends that your children should socialize with all kinds of people! If you allow your youths to form friendships with those who practice evil as a way of life, corruption and bad conduct in your own children will be assured.

Parents, also recognize when it is time to begin letting go. Children do grow up to become adults and must eventually make their own decisions. Prepare your children for life, but do not meddle in their affairs when they leave the nest. You can be sure that, if your relationship with them has been a good one, they will want your advice often, and will come to you throughout your old age.

Point 5: Parents – Nurture and Admonition Are Administered by Both Father and Mother

Ephesians 6:4 admonishes fathers to be balanced: "Fathers provoke not your children to wrath but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Some lean toward interpreting this to mean that a father should never be stern or resolute with his children.

If you instill this knowledge deep within them, creating the basis for their thinking, you will have happy and well-developed children!

What Is Success?

People often link success to wealth, power or fame. But is this success? Famous people, who usually have both power and wealth, are often miserable. Their problems, addictions and struggles are covered by television and entertainment magazines. A once popular song said, "Money can't buy me love." And judging by the lives of the rich and famous, neither can it buy happiness.

Such people are not a reflection of TRUE success. One who is truly successful will be fulfilled and happy. So, if the world's concept of success is wrong, then what is success?

The main reason most do not understand success is that they assume it is a quality or trait that one already has—is born with. But success is not a "talent" that one is born with. Rather, it is directly related to a desire to produce, grow, learn and achieve.

If success is not an innate ability, then how does one "get" it? Is there a formula?

Amazingly, there is! There are definite LAWS to achieving—and instilling—success! If you instill a desire—and the LAWS to success—in your children, they will succeed!

Applying these laws, as found in our booklet *The Laws to SUCCESS*, and teaching them to your children will ensure that they will become happy, fulfilled and successful adults.

What Do You Want?

The first great law to success is SETTING THE RIGHT GOAL.

Thousands of self-help books exist describing how to set and reach one's goals. Many times, they discuss different levels of goals—short, medium and long-term—yet often miss the all-important step of setting the correct goal. Even the few books that attempt this never mention the role of morality or the God of the Bible in goal-setting.

You must teach your children about different kinds of goals. Some are harmful to them; others are greatly beneficial. For instance, they would naturally want to "get" things in life. This is human nature, and you must help your children to overcome this attitude.

The goals of human nature must be replaced with right and proper—and godly—goals. Teach your children to set attainable goals. They should want to help those around them. Teach them that God will bless them if their goal is to give! Children do not naturally know this—it must be taught to them! It has been said that the four most important lessons in childrearing are: (1) Teach, (2) teach, (3) teach and (4) teach.

It is important that you do not give your children everything on a "silver platter." This will make them believe that they do not need goals or need to actually work. By having to set goals—and working to achieve them—children will develop a proper work ethic and confidence.

Exercising the Mind

Having first set the right goal, one is then able to focus on how to achieve that goal. And one of the main keys to doing so is embodied in the second law of success: EDUCATION.

Like any muscle in the body, the human mind needs to be exercised. In fact, research shows that those who continue to exercise their mind when they are older are far less likely to develop diseases such as Alzheimer's.

God's Word states, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). If you teach your children when they are young, they will exercise their minds throughout life.

Teaching them to think can be done in a variety of ways. Teach them to reflect on what they say and do. Teach them to analyze questions and thoughtfully respond.

Encourage your children to enjoy learning. Make it fun! If, at a very young age, you seed their minds with a craving for understanding and knowledge, your children will look at any problem and learn how to solve it.

But that is *not* what this verse is referring to at all!

"Admonition" refers to discipline applied, always tempered with mercy; and "nurture" refers to teaching. A father's habitual hostility toward his children can "provoke a child to wrath." A bitter father who continually heaps unreasonable demands and punishment upon his children can be 100% assured that they *will* be provoked to wrath—if not broken in spirit! A father who does not listen to his children and empathize with them is *unwise*. He is sure to bring misery upon his family and himself.

Fathers and mothers must *work together* to rear children. They must *share* the responsibility of teaching, as well as disciplining. A mother should not expect the father to be solely responsible for spanking—nor should the father shirk his responsibility.

Children should never see arguing or intense disagreement between parents. While this is difficult, such disagreements should be handled away from the children. Psalm 133:1 states, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" While this exhortation speaks of unity between Christians, it certainly should be practiced within our family homes.

Point 6: Children – Honor Your Parents

Children and teens—never do anything to hurt your parents or their reputation. Think your actions through. Recognize that what you say and do will either *lift up* your family name or *shame* those that brought you into the world. Also, recognize that honoring your parents carries with it the reward of a long life (Deut. 5:16).

You may not always believe that your parents are worthy of this honor, as they are sure to make mistakes; nevertheless, it is required of you. Remember, it is not for you to evaluate your parents' performance—that belongs to God. Honoring your parents means obeying them, as long as such obedience does not conflict with obeying God (Eph. 6:1).

If you have concerns, bring them to your parents and discuss them. And parents, if your children confide in

It has been said that knowledge is power. By encouraging a desire to learn, you are giving your children the ability to harness that power.

Maintaining the Body

But it is important to realize that knowledge is power only if it is used—and used correctly. And this requires taking care of the body as well as the mind. This introduces the third law of success: GOOD HEALTH.

The role of parents in their children's health is often overlooked. Like instilling a desire to learn, you must also instill the knowledge of how—and what—to eat. No matter what excuses may be put forth, your children's health is YOUR responsibility. You control what they eat and, in turn, their health!

If one has set the correct goal, and even becomes educated about that goal, he is still stopped in his tracks if he becomes sick. If a person is tired, weak or always sick, he cannot accomplish anything. With children, health also directly affects the second law. If they are not healthy, they will not be able to attend school, and will miss out on receiving a full education.

Think about what you feed your children. Do you follow the principle of staying on the outside of the supermarket—raw fruits, vegetables, meats and grains? Or do you often shop in the aisles—where much of the processed, sugary and unhealthy foods are generally located? Do you reward your children with healthy treats—or with sugar? An entire article could be written showing the myriad of childhood health problems relating to a bad diet. Do you want your children to have attention problems or type-2 diabetes? You can prevent such things by monitoring what your children eat.

Remember this principle: Grains sustain, vegetables build, fruits cleanse and herbs help to heal! If your children's diet is not full of grains and vegetables, how are they going to grow and develop?

Pushing the Body and Mind

The fourth law springs from the previous one. When your children are healthy, they have more energy. When properly focused, this energy is DRIVE. Drive is the desire to work and achieve.

Are you beginning to see why teaching your children the right goals builds the framework for success? Having a good work ethic—wanting to work for success—is the basis behind drive.

A world-record-breaking swimmer once stated that the reason he succeeded was not because of natural talent, but because he was willing to work harder than his opponents. This is drive! Train your children to start early (not procrastinate) and to work hard. This will enable them to do things that they would have otherwise viewed as impossible—and they will be thrilled by what they accomplish!

Wise King Solomon once said, "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (Prov. 13:19). Teach this to your children. When they accomplish a goal, they will feel a satisfaction that is "sweet to the soul." Once understood, they will then always be driven to accomplish any task set before them.

All Problems Have Solutions

In working toward any important goal, your children must understand that obstacles and setbacks may arise. RESOURCEFULNESS—the fifth important law to success—keeps one from feeling that there is no solution. He will think—INVESTIGATE—and FIND a solution!

In many situations, one's ability to find not just a solution—but the BEST solution—can determine success or failure. Consider one example from nature: A stream of water, when encountering various obstructions, does not simply stop flowing. It will naturally go around, over or through the barrier. Likewise, when your children face obstacles, resourcefulness will lead them to seek a way around, over or through them. The human mind is designed to learn the most when it is struggling. When setbacks occur, the learning mechanism in the mind kicks in. Teaching your children this will prevent them from getting discouraged. They will come to real-

you—even if there is some criticism in the message—*listen*!

The phrase "I hate you," spoken at any age and directed at any family member, should be dealt with swiftly and absolutely by the parents. Such words should not be allowed in any home. Modern psychology encourages parents to tolerate outbursts from their children, suggesting that they be allowed to hit a pillow to relieve their anger—but God does not!

Honoring your parents is *not* optional.

Point 7: Parents and Children – Draw Together in Crises

Prepare your families to meet and overcome difficulties by practicing the above points. As society continues to tumble into an immoral abyss, all who desire to protect and strengthen their families must maintain God's standards.

While God will bless your efforts, it is up to you to teach your children His Way! Even in this sin-drenched world, harmonious and happy families can still be built and maintained.

Crises outside the family, which are sure to come, should naturally bring parents and children together as one resolute unit.

Notice: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for *adversity*" (Prov. 17:17).

Even if your childhood was filled with bad conduct and unpleasant experiences—determine to make your children's experience better. Rearing children through adulthood can be difficult at times, but it can also bring some of the greatest blessings and rewards in this life.

Parents and children: Determine to be different—to do things God's Way—and the peace of mind that accompanies obedience to God will be yours forever. The world is spinning out of control. Society continues to degenerate into a reflection of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30).

But there is hope—no matter your circumstances. God will *always* help those who seek to obey Him. ☐

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ize that obstacles and problems are not a bad thing, but the best possible chance to learn and grow!

Life Is Not Fair

It can be said that the continued application of resourcefulness is applying the critical sixth law of success: PERSEVERANCE—or STICK-TO-IT-IVENESS. Perseverance is working at a problem even when the solution is not evident. Any goal or thing of worth requires hard work—one must pay the price. However, most today are not willing to pay that price and will settle for second best, or worse.

Teaching your children to persevere will give them the inner strength needed to achieve their goals. This will have implications in not just their goals and desires, but in EVERY aspect of their lives! Teach your children to never give up—even in the face of hardship—and you will virtually ensure their success.

The Source of Success

Although listed last, the seventh law of success—CONTACT WITH, AND GUIDANCE AND CONTINUOUS HELP FROM, GOD—over-arches all previous laws. This law is the FOUNDATION of success! If you teach your children to respect and obey you, you are teaching them to develop a similar relationship with God. As a parent, you must understand that, to your children, you play this vital role.

When you teach your children—when you correct them—when you encourage them—you are creating a basis by which they will respond to their divine Parent.

This also applies to you! Look at yourself. Do you consider the success of your children success for yourself? Is having happy and successful children your goal? Do you have contact with God and continually seek His guidance and help?

The *Real* Purpose

Your children's success is actually far more important than you may realize. Of course, a good job, happy marriage and successful future are critical for them. But there is a greater purpose being worked out in your children, and a great potential that they may be able to reach—to one day become leaders, kings and priests in the kingdom of God!

God has left mankind to work out his own way. This is the reason there is so little true success in the world. But very soon, Jesus Christ will return to earth to establish the kingdom of God—a government that will rule over all nations.
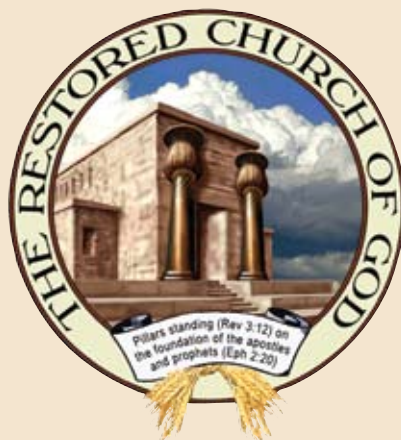
While we have not yet reached this glorious time, you can claim a promise from God now! The Bible states that your obedience to God will place His protection on your children (I Cor. 7:14). With this protection comes an understanding of the proper—successful—way of life. With God's protection and involvement in your life, you too can achieve the role of king and priest—and rule in the kingdom of God. (To learn more about the God-ordained purpose for you and your children, read our book *The AWESOME POTENTIAL of Man*.)

Often-Forgotten Role

Simply learning these laws is only the beginning. There is a vitally important aspect to the development of your children that towers above just knowing about the true God and His laws to success: Your EXAMPLE!

All small children look up to their parents. You are the center of their growing world, and your example affects them deeper than anything you could teach them. Are YOU applying the laws of success in your life? Are you living the way of "give" as taught by the true God of the Bible? The success of your children hinges on your answer!

(To learn more about God's method of childrearing, please read our book *Train Your CHILDREN God's Way*.) ☐