

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## God's Family Plan

Barry O'Dell

In an April 2016 survey conducted by the Barna Research Group ([www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org)), 1,097 interviews were conducted on the topic of cohabitation. Of those interviewed, 65% either strongly or somewhat agreed that it is a good idea to live with a “significant other” before getting married. 35% either strongly or somewhat disagreed. It is rather obvious that societal norms are shifting in regard to cohabitation and marriage. According to the same survey, 57% were currently or had previously lived with their boyfriend/girlfriend. According to the Barna website, “Older, conservative, and more religious Americans are the least likely to have ever cohabited . . . On the other side, younger, less religious, and more liberal Americans are more likely to have lived with a significant other before marriage.” One of the

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conclusions reached from this survey is stated here: “The institution of marriage has undergone significant shifts in the last century.”

While it is interesting to notice trends in society and statistics, it is important for the child of God to know why God designed the family the way He did. I also realize that there are thousands who are reading this who are not living in the United States of America. The current trends in this country may not be comparable to what is going on in other parts of the world. What we must all understand, however, is that God's design and desire for the home is universal. There is not one nation, race, or individual who is not accountable to God (Acts 17:30-31). So, what is God's design and intent for marriage and the home?

One stated purpose for marriage is found in Genesis 2:18: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet (suitable) for him.” God saw that man, being by himself, was not a good thing and so He created the woman to correspond to the man. In this special act of creation by God, the institution of marriage was born. With this institution God gave man companionship: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).

Although Adam and Eve did not have physical parents, their heavenly Father stated His intent for a man and a woman who love each other – marriage. Jesus reiterated this as the will of His Father as recorded in Matthew 19:4-6. It is not God's will that a man and woman live together outside of the holy bond of marriage (Heb. 13:4).

A second stated purpose of marriage is found in Genesis 1:28 – procreation. God created man and woman in such a way as to make reproduction possible. From the very beginning of Scripture one finds that God's design is that children be brought into this world by a husband and wife. The wisdom of God is clearly seen in this design. When a man and a woman commit their lives to one another they are establishing a place of support and security for any children they may bring into the world. There are things that children need from fathers that they cannot get from mothers. There are things that children need from mothers that they cannot get from fathers. A godly marriage provides everything a child needs because that is God's intent for both parents and children. Study after study has shown the adverse effects of having children outside of marriage. Statistically speaking, crime rates are higher, school drop-out rates are higher, and poverty is higher when children are not brought into the God-designed environment of marriage. Children are gifts from God and they need a safe, secure home that provides both physical and spiritual instruction from mom and dad (Ps. 127:3-5).

A third stated purpose of marriage is mentioned by Paul in First Corinthians 7:9: “But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.” Paul plainly commanded the Corinthians to, “Flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18). Fornication is a work of the flesh that will keep people out of the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8). The physical relationship between a man and a woman is to be fulfilled only within the bond of marriage.

Life would be so much easier if we would follow God's revelation on marriage and the home. Single-parent homes, divorce, fornication, adultery – these things occur when people are ignorant of God's will or ignore God's will. Society is made up of homes. The church is made up of homes. Both society and the church suffer when men and women do not abide within God's teaching on the home.

## The Bible and Fatherhood

Charles Box

I have heard it and I think it must be true, “A boy loves his mother, but he follows his father.” Tremendous responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the fathers. God’s word says, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). “Father” is a word that is in the Bible many times. It is in 977 verses in our Kings James Version of the Bible.

***“Godly fathers make a difference in their families through their service to God.”***

The plural “fathers” is in 515 verses in our King James Bible. Godly fathers make a difference in their families through their service to God.

**The first time the word “father” is mentioned in the Bible it had to do with marriage.** The first use of the word “father” in the Bible was when, “Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:23-24). Godly and scriptural marriages are beautiful. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). When God joins a man and woman in matrimony, neither the man nor the woman has the right to dissolve this marriage. Jesus said, “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6). There must be leaving and cleaving. God’s will concerning marriage is for one man and one woman to be married until either the man or the woman dies. God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16).

**The first time the word “fathers” is mentioned in the Bible it had to do with death.** God said to Abraham, “And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age” (Gen. 15:15). God wanted Abraham to know that his body was mortal. He would die a physical death and be buried after a long earthly life (Gen. 25:7-8). Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body (Gen. 35:18;

Ecc. 12:7). Abraham’s body died and he was buried with his fathers. His soul went into the spiritual world to be among other patriarchs who had died faithful to God.

**The most beautiful times the term “Father” is in the Bible is when it refers to God.** In giving the “model” prayer Jesus said, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matt. 6:9-15). God is called Father by Jesus no fewer than one-hundred and sixty times. What a beautiful expression, “Our Father in Heaven.” Because God is Father and has a great love for mankind He has provided forgiveness of sins through Christ’s death. “In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7). Our allegiance must be to God and to Him alone. God is the Most High God, our Father in heaven.

As physical fathers, we men should love, provide for, and lead our children to heaven. (1 Tim. 5:8). Let us protect our children from Satan and from the confusion of the world (Pro. 22:6). Love your children and love their mother! Fathers must work to be worthy of the love and respect of their families. Men, your children will follow your lead. Your responsibilities are awesome. You need the help of God to be the kind of father you should be. To become a Christian you must hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ (Heb. 11:6), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as Lord (Matt. 10:32), and be baptized to be saved (Mk. 16:16). After baptism, remain faithful to God (Rev. 2:10). The best earthly father is the one who knows God as his Heavenly Father.

*Charles preaches for the Walnut Street church of Christ in Greenville, AL*



## The Bible and Motherhood

Preston Silcox

There exists a cultural tendency to view Biblical motherhood through the make-believe, one-dimensional filter of a postwar era television sitcom. While God's Word sets forth the divine standard of how motherhood is to be fulfilled, it does *not* do so by scripting fictional scenes in which professionally trained actresses wearing belted dresses, pearl necklaces, and high heels heroically save the day by cleaning the house, cooking the dinner, and counseling the children. Instead, the Bible vividly portrays motherhood as it really is: Multi-dimensional and difficult. It is complex! While the Bible declares that motherhood was created by our powerful and holy God (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25), it also acknowledges that this honorable role is lived out by weak and finite beings who reside in a sin-wrecked world. So, motherhood is messy yet beautiful, taxing yet tranquil, under-appreciated yet highly exalted. It is familiar with heartache, but it also knows joy. While it is not immune to problems, it possesses a resolve to overcome. These and other challenging characteristics of motherhood are declared and described by the Bible in raw and real fashion, pushing the participants of motherhood toward the inspired ideal as well as assuring them that God is compassionately aware of the complexities that abound in the role they are fulfilling. Consider the following examples from God's Word.

*“. . . motherhood is messy yet beautiful, taxing yet tranquil, under-appreciated yet highly exalted.”*

### Desperation and Determination

Sometimes, motherhood hurts. And most of the time, the hurt comes from the inability of the mother to shield her children from pain. But motherhood moves its participants to keep looking, digging, and praying for ways to make the hurting stop. It faces desperation with determination. While Jesus was in the region of Tyre and Sidon, a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit approached Him, begging for help (Matt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30). The situation was severe: “My daughter is grievously vexed” (Matt. 15:22). Her child was hurting and helpless; and motherhood drove the woman to do everything in her power to remedy the situation. She went to Jesus! She didn't allow her gender or race to stop her. She didn't allow the initial silence of the Lord to deter

her, nor did she let His faith-testing words discourage her. What a tremendous scene of Biblical motherhood!

### Dreams and Disappointments

Most little girls dream of one day becoming mommies. As they grow a little older, the dreams might fade for a time, but eventually the future that was playfully imagined as a child begins to develop into reality as an adult. At least, this is the case for most. There are others who find themselves unable to participate in motherhood, grieving the loss of children they never had. And this pain, this mourning, is one of the raw realities that the Bible acknowledges. Even though she eventually gave birth to Samuel, Hannah vividly displays the grief and even shame that some experience when their lifelong dreams of motherhood don't come to fruition. While unable to conceive, First Samuel 1:1-15 describes her as weeping, fretting, experiencing affliction, and being of sorrowful spirit. While this kind hurt is understandable, those who are unable to enjoy the God-given blessing of motherhood should remember God is aware of their sorrow and longs for them to find consolation in His Fatherhood.

### Dependence and Devotion

More than a few mothers admit that they decided to have children because they believed doing so would bring them the attention and affection they were not getting otherwise. They depended on motherhood to accomplish something it was never designed to do. Showing again that the Bible deals with the reality of this parental role—even the reality of its abuse—one would do well to consider Genesis 29:32: “And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me” (emp. mine, PS). But Leah was wrong. And she continued to be wrong having several other children under this same false assumption. Being devoted to the God who provides the blessing of motherhood is far better than depending on motherhood to win the devotion of others.

Many other Bible examples could be listed, showing that real-life motherhood, even when done God's way, doesn't always look as pretty as the stereotypes portray. But it's in these very real places that the Bible offers consolation, issues warning, provides encouragement, and inspires steadfastness for those who participate in motherhood, as well as so many more!

*Preston preaches for the Margaret Street church of Christ in Milton, FL*

**SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2016 CONTRIBUTORS**

**CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

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**Service Times for Mammoth Spring church of Christ**

- Sunday AM Class - 10:00
- AM Worship - 10:45
- PM Worship - 6:00
- Wednesday Night Class - 7:00

Church of Christ  
 PO BOX 251  
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- God's Authorized Worship**  
 - *Colossians 3:17* -
1. Lord's Supper - Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24
  2. Prayer - Acts 12:5; Philippians 4:6-7
  3. Singing - Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 13:15
  4. Giving - I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8.
  5. Preaching - Acts 2:42; 20:7
- The Churches of Christ**
1. The Bible is the only guide - Rom. 1:16
  2. A Biblical name - Rom. 16:16
  3. Established in Jerusalem Acts 2:1-4
  4. Established by Christ - 1 Cor. 3:11
  5. Established in 1st century - Acts 2:47
  6. The body of the saved - Eph. 5:23
  7. You can be added to the church of Christ by being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins - Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13

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