

SESSION #19

JOURNEYMEN: A MAN AND HIS DAUGHTERS

I. OUR DAUGHTERS

- A. Natural Strengths: Daughters are more stable than sons.

- B. Personal Strengths: Daughters are more personally secure than sons in their identity.

II. CHALLENGES THAT UNDERMINE NATURAL FEMININITY AND THE “NEW WOMANHOOD”

- A. The Challenge of a New Supreme Pursuit: equality, career, independence.
 - 1. Some perspective:

 - 2. A lesson from history:
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What caused the Roman family system to collapse? The answer to that is simple: the same things that are causing the American family system to fall apart. Divorce, relaxed standards, adultery, promiscuity, loss of respect for children and child-rearing, the decline in status of parenthood, all accompanied the weakening of the Roman family. But it was sex role problems that precipitated this decline. All of a sudden, in just a few years, Roman sex role patterns departed from the law of complementarity. And when that happened, the Roman family system came tumbling down.

Rome's sex role disruptions were caused by the Punic Wars. These wars were fought with Carthage, Rome's long-term enemy. They lasted about thirty years. During this thirty-year period of warfare, most of the young, able-bodied Roman men were required to leave their homes and fight on foreign soil. While they were gone, the management of their estates, their households, and their businesses devolved upon their wives. This borrowed power tended to create in Roman women a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency. In *A History of Marriage and the Family*, the author, William Goodsell, describes the effect that the Punic Wars had upon the psychology of the Roman women:

“As the men diminished in numbers, and as the authority of the absent husbands passed to their wives, the social status of women was steadily elevated. Their power, to be sure, was a delegated one, and was promptly withdrawn on the return of the family head from foreign campaigns, if he did return. But this did not in the least prevent its inevitable result – the growth within the women, thus raised to positions of responsibility and power, of a sense of their own personal worth and sturdy desire for greater freedom, broader opportunity and influence.”

“Such women”, professor Goodsell goes on to say, “would submit with an ill grace to the restrictions upon their daily lives and interests imposed by their husband on his return from the war.” And yet, as the Bible points out repeatedly, it is precisely this willingness of wives to submit to their husband’s authority that is one of the crucial prerequisites for sound marriages and happy homes. Never again was the Roman home to be a place of contentment and commitment once Roman women lost this willingness to submit. And in no other country or culture has the emancipation of women led to a better family system. In every case – without a single exception – it’s been associated with family weakness and unhappiness.

But all blame for the decline of the Roman family system cannot be placed upon Roman women. The fathers of Rome lost their high standards of fidelity, commitment, and responsibility within the marital bond. Beginning with the senatorial and intellectual classes, “men and women alike were infected with the dry-rot of selfishness and a frenzied pleasure-seeking; in consequence, they looked upon the earlier almost religious conceptions of family duties and responsibilities as troublesome and outgrown ... Concubinage and prostitution grew by leaps and bounds as men sought to satisfy their passions without assuming the cares of married life.” Together, the independence of women and the dissolution of men sent the Roman family system into a state of spiritual and moral degeneracy from which it never recovered.

So in studying the Romans, we can observe two types of family systems: the best and the worst. At best, the Roman family system adhered to the same principles of family relationships given in the Bible. At its worst, the Roman family was buffeted by the same philosophies and practices that we are currently hearing about and observing in this country. It’s obvious to see which family system worked the best.

-- W. Peter Blitchington, Ph.D.
Sex Roles & The Christian Family

B. The Decline of Feminine Values Training

C. The Rise of the Absent Mom

III. WHAT DADS CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR DAUGHTERS

A. If he’s there:

1.

2.

3.

B. If he's not:

1.

2.

IV. WHAT DADS CAN DO

A. Establish, with my wife, a firm commitment of what it means to be a real woman.

A Real Woman IS ONE WHO:

- Rejects worldly temptations for significance.
- Accepts God's design for relationships.
- Nurtures the next generation.
- Expects the greater reward; God's reward.

B. Helps mom stay home with the children, especially in the critical, formative years.

C. Supports, honors and cheers for true feminine values in his wife and daughters.

D. Dates his daughters and stays involved in their lives on a personal level.

E. Encourages and participates in ceremonies celebrating true femininity.

1. Puberty

2. Leaving home

3. Graduation from college

4. Marriage

DIRECTIONS FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What was the single most important thing communicated to you today about men and their daughters? Why?
2. React to the definition of womanhood given today.
3. What is the one thing you could share with your wife from today's session?
4. What is the one action step you can take now as a dad with your daughter?
5. Come next week prepared to discuss your Manhood Plan.

** I am greatly indebted to Robert Lewis of Fellowship Bible Church for the basic ideas and outline in this study.*