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Families vs Individuals (Part 2)



Toward a Radically Christian Counterculture - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the importance of the family unit and how society's focus on individualism has caused a war against the institution of the family. He argues that God created man first, then the family, and that it is through families that blessings can be passed down for generations. Gregg believes that the role of the state, according to scripture, is limited when it comes to institutions ordained by God, such as marriage and family. He also critiques the feminist movement's impact on the traditional family structure and argues that women were duped into thinking they didn't need men.

Transcript

Tonight we're going to continue talking about that which was on the sheet I gave you last time. I don't know if you brought it with you again, if you remember to or not. If not, I'm afraid I don't have extra copies to give out.

But the title of that lecture was The Culture of Families Confronts the Culture of Individuals. And that's a long title. Actually, the titles to all these lectures have been pretty long because so far most of them have been titled things like The Culture of This Confronts the Culture of That.

And The Culture of This is what the Bible says is normative for Christians. And The Culture of That is generally what our present dominant culture is. And that culture that Jesus has called us to manifest by our corporate life is expected to confront the dominant culture.

Now, when I say confront, I didn't say convert because we may not be successful in that. We might be, we might not be. There's no guarantees as I read the scripture that the culture that we live in will see the light and follow the light.

Now, Jesus did say that we should let our light shine before men and men should see our good deeds and so forth. It does not guarantee anywhere in scripture that they will like what they see, that they will follow what they see. As a matter of fact, in many cases, because men love darkness rather than light, if we are faithful enough, we might even get ourselves persecuted more.

And this is how eventually Moses had to be hidden because the family was under attack in that way. But in our own time, the dominant culture in which we live is probably the most anti-family culture that has ever existed. Now, I'm not such an expert historian to know whether that statement is entirely true.

There may have been some cultures before that have attacked the family as vigorously as the modern culture does. But I just don't remember reading about them. Even in the Bible, attacks on the families were more like attacks on individual families of certain people or on individual members of certain families.

But I don't know that Pharaoh ever set out to abolish the institution of family altogether. But that is what our dominant culture wants to do. That is what Satan definitely desires to do.

If he can do that, he has destroyed one of the most potent witnesses that God intended to exist in the world, as well as destroying that continuity of the passing along of godliness that God intended from parent to child to grandchild and so forth. And certainly Satan would love to do that. Now, our culture is a culture that has embraced Satan's agenda very naively.

I could have said, you know, something to make it sound more like our culture is directly wanting to be in league with Satan. There certainly are people who do want to be in league with Satan, but I think they're in the minority. I think the average person that plays into Satan's hands does so without a clue of what's going on.

They don't have any idea of what's going on. They don't even know there is a devil, much less do they know they're playing into his hands. They're just sheep, and they're going astray.

Now, we are sheep who were going astray, Peter said, but we've now returned to the shepherd and bishop of our souls. And therefore, we are supposed to go in a different direction than the culture. Last time, I began to talk about some of the ways in which the dominant culture is raging war with the institution of the family.

And that was after we spent most of our time last time talking about what the Bible indicates, that God deals with people, not only as individuals, but also as families. We don't want to throw out the whole idea of the importance of the individual, because the Bible also gives us that. The Bible makes it very clear that you might be part of a family that's utterly corrupt, but you might be the one person that God calls and saves, and that you stand out uniquely from that family, and God deals with you in the area of redemption and salvation, and the rest of the family goes to hell.

God doesn't just select families, that family's going to hell, and that family's going to heaven. That's not the way God deals with families. But in terms of God's structure of

society, God does, in fact, deal with families.

And families have a great deal to do with the health of a culture, the health of the society. It all depends on the health of the families. And we saw last time that God actually will allow there to be curses on whole households.

Some of them go for many generations. He also allows there to be blessings on households that go for generations. But these curses and blessings don't have to do with individual salvation.

When it comes to individual salvation, Jesus made it very clear that He came to set families at variance with each other in some cases. Now, He didn't indicate that that was really what He preferred to see happen. That's just letting the disciples know that's what's going to happen.

Because some individuals will turn to Christ, and other individuals in their families will not. There will be families that break up. And Jesus made it very clear that the primary loyalty of the Christian is to his Christian family, to the Christian brothers and sisters.

Jesus Himself wouldn't even grant His mother and brothers an audience when they were not on God's mission. When they came to take Him into their custody, He said, well, and He was told, your mother and brothers out here to see you, He says, who are they? Who are my mother and brothers? Those who do the will of my Father in heaven, they're my mothers and my brothers. So we don't want to go overboard one way or the other on this matter of family.

God instituted the family. It's a sacred institution. God intends for societies to prosper as their families, as units are strong and godly.

The family is a very important institution. On the other side of that balance, though, of course, God does deal with people as individuals, but not necessarily in the sense that our culture wants to do so. So many things in our culture are off kilter because the culture, at least at one time, was based very much on biblical light.

The founders of the country, even the ones that were not Christians themselves, were very much influenced by Christian morality and Christian truth. And they may not have lived up to it in their personal lives, but they knew it was right, and they said good things about it, and it colored their opinions about how society should be. And the Bible does have some emphasis on the personal responsibility of individuals.

And our society was set up in such a way as to really give a lot of freedom to individuals. But the trend has been to take that biblical reality and take it out of balance, to twist it, and make individualism a god in itself or something to pursue in itself. Rather than pursuing God and rather than realizing that all individuals have responsibility to follow God, rather, our society is taking the course that every individual has the right to be an

individual and to do whatever they want to individually without any interference from anyone else.

And this has intruded even into the idea of families because through feminism and other things, you know, a woman, she's got to be an individual. She shouldn't be inhibited by what her husband wants her to do. Children, they've got to find themselves.

They can't find their identity in what their parents did. They're individuals. So that individualism becomes the idol of a culture that was once enlightened by biblical concepts of the importance of the individual and which has put individualism, as it were, in the center of all its reckoning rather than God at the center of all its reckoning.

We need to keep that in perspective. God does deal with us, especially in terms of our personal relationship with him as individuals. But in terms of much of the blessing and cursing that comes upon society and many of the obligations that we have within our earthly lives, our family is very much part of that definition and key.

For example, Paul said, if a man does not provide for those of his own household, he's denied the faith and he's worse than an infidel, worse than an unbeliever. In other words, there could be very little worse than for a man to renege on his family responsibilities. If he does, he's worse than if he wasn't a Christian at all.

He's worse than an unbeliever. He's denied the faith. So it's clear that in terms of our calling in God, our mission, family figures very prominently.

And in terms of defining our obligations and duties, family is a very important central issue. But our society is aiming at destroying that foundation and that understanding. And one of the things we talked about last time, in fact, the only thing we talked about last time that was one of the ways in which our modern culture is making war against the family.

I talked about industrialism and urbanization. With the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, people began less and less to make their living farming and more and more to make their living in factories. And since factories weren't out on the farms, factories were in places where there was concentrated labor workforce.

Those places called cities. Lots of people finding it an easier way to find financial security than they have to go out and trust God to provide crops every year, some of which didn't materialize some years, to just go out and get a guaranteed paycheck. That was viewed as more desirable by a lot of people.

And so they moved into the cities and I don't remember the statistics. I read them years ago, but, you know, a hundred years ago or so, it was a relatively small percentage of the American population lived in cities, relative to what the percentage is now. Right now, there's something upwards of 90%, not only of Americans, but of people the world

over.

Something upwards of 90% live in cities, in urban situations. This is because the cities became the highest concentration of factories originally and businesses eventually, and therefore employment eventually. One thing I have to tell you, this has been on my heart, I've heard in the last few days from maybe three or four different people here who are having financial hard times in this area, how that they're feeling forced to look at other areas possibly as places to get work.

And I'm somewhat, I mean, I can't be unsympathetic. I mean, if I couldn't feed my family, I would be maybe looking that way myself, but I would sure not want to have to do that, because that's where the cities suck the families in. It's when we decide, well, we can't make it without the city.

We can't make it without the concentration of business and clientele and factory work and so forth. And when in fact we can, in many cases, we just can't make it the same standard of living that we could do it at the city. Paul said having food and clothing, we should therewith be content.

And I'm not saying that I'd be real glad to have my lifestyle reduced to just food and clothing and nothing more. But I'll tell you, if the decisions I had to make for the well-being of my family were on the one hand, I could do something that's good for my family and be poor or do something that I don't think would be good, but it could be well off. The choice would be an easy one for me.

I mean, the family is more important than the money and then the luxuries. I actually, in fact, in moving here myself, I left city life. We actually had left the city because we lived on a homestead outside the city for seven years before I moved here, right? But I was within a short drive of the city, and that's where most of my ministry was.

And, you know, to a person who's in full time ministry, there's a strong attraction to places where you can draw large crowds. And my living has come, as it were, from being in the ministry, too. And larger crowds, when you think in the natural, would mean more potential of income and things like that.

It's a funny thing how God has defied conventional thinking on that, because actually in the year I've been here, I believe the income to our family that has come from unsolicited, unpredictable sources, as all our income always has, has, if anything, I think it's been up. I think the Lord's provided more for us in the past year than in previous years generally. It doesn't come from this area mostly, but the fact is people in this area are pretty poor.

And if we have to be poor to live among them, that's what we're going to do. You know, for us to go take our family back to the city would be the wrong direction for us to go.

And I'd much rather face a great reduction in standard of living than go there again.

It's like Abraham, once he came out of Haran, and he needed a wife for Isaac. And the servant said, well, you know, if we can't find a... if the woman in Haran isn't willing to come here, shall I take your son there to marry her? And Abraham says, no, God forbid that you would take my son back there. We left that city.

We're not going back into that city. You know, Lot is a good example of a guy who was sucked in by urbanization, although long before the industrial times. But he was a rancher.

He was a rural kind of a guy with Abraham. But there was a lot of opportunity for trade in a nearby city called Sodom. A lot more population and, you know, a lot more convenience for customers and so forth.

So he took his trade there. And initially we find him just parking his flock outside the city walls. He cast his tent towards Sodom.

He didn't... if anyone said, you know, you're going to end up in that city, Lot, he'd probably say, oh no, no, I'm not going to go in there. I just want to be close enough by. After all, I need some opportunity for outreach to these people, you know.

But before long, the guy is living in the city. He's got a house in the city. He's taking his family in there.

And when it comes time he has to leave because the city is under judgment, he can't get them out. He had two married daughters who didn't go with him when he left. They were burned, two or more.

We only know they had sons-in-law, plural. Could have been more than two. He had some daughters who didn't leave.

He had two daughters who did. And he had a wife who almost did. She didn't quite make it either.

He took a family of at least four kids and a wife into Sodom. He got out with two kids. And although he got his kids out of Sodom, he didn't get Sodom out of his kids.

Because the last thing we read of them is of a very ignoble, immoral thing that his daughters were involved in, which probably reflect the kind of values they picked up in Sodom. And you can take your kids in there. You may not be able to get them out again.

Now, I'm not saying that people who live in cities don't love their kids. I'm sure a lot of people don't see the issues this way. But I dare say that people who care about the spiritual well-being of their families more than they care about the material things are not likely to find too many incentives to move their family to the city.

There might be some. I can't think of very many. I'm not going to judge those who do go that direction.

But I don't think it's a wise... I don't think it's been good for society. Because once you're in the city, the city is simply a high concentration of sinners. Now, some might say there's a high concentration of Christians there too.

Yeah, but you know what? In all the years I lived in the city, I was in churches. I didn't have any better fellowship than I have right here. And there's not a very high concentration of sinners here.

You know, they're not concentrated. But there's sure a high concentration of the kind of Christians I like. I'm not saying people would find that in every rural environment.

But I'm saying that a lot of times our conventional thinking would say, well, you know, you get a lot better fellowship, a lot more choice of churches and so forth if you go to the city. But that's very rarely the real reason people go. When Christians go there, that direction, that's a lot of times what they'll say.

Well, you know, got to do outreach. Well, some people do have to do outreach. But most of the Christians I know who live in the city aren't doing an awful lot of outreach.

They're doing, in fact, all their time is taken up just trying to pay bills. But when you move them all to the city, the devil knows, it's easier to round them up when you want to. It's easier to keep them all under surveillance.

It's easier to control the masses when they're all in one place. And that has been a problem historically. The Christians in Rome suffered terrible persecution that Christians outside of that city were more or less exempt from because Nero and others largely confined their persecution to the city.

Now, I'm not saying that'll always be the case. There have been some persecutions that have gone out to find everyone they can find anywhere. And I'm not trying to state something is always going to be the same way.

But I do believe that the whole move from rural society to an urban society and a suburban society has not been healthy for families. But it is, I think, although it may have been the first move of this war against families, it has not been the most serious. There have been worse ones.

Another aspect of our culture, increasingly so in our country, that is part of the war against families, is statism. Statism, of course, is making the state the center of all things and the final authority in all things. I'm sure that all of you know, I don't expect to find too many in this crowd who disagree with this, though there might be some who listen to tapes who would not see it this way.

The role of the state, according to scripture, is extremely limited. The Bible says God ordained the state for essentially one thing, and that is to uphold justice, basically as a policing agency to keep criminals off the streets, to punish criminals and to praise those who do well. The Bible doesn't indicate that the state really has any other obligations that God has ordained, although in most countries the government tries to take on a great deal more than what God has ordained them to do.

Now, we live in a country, of course, where the Constitution tried to limit the power of the state and even stated that if there isn't some duty that's given to the government in the Constitution, they don't have any right to it. I mean, basically, only those things that the Constitution says the government can do are supposed to be legitimate for it to do, and everything else is illegitimate abuse of power. But we know very well that the state is getting the approval of the culture in general, of society in general, to take more and more of the domain that used to be that of the family or of the church or of other institutions.

Welfare and other entitlement programs certainly are among those things. But a lot of them are things that Christians just take for granted. For example, especially in a way that statism affects the family, the state has gotten so involved in the whole issue of marriage and divorce that almost all Christians I know assume that the state has the right to determine who is married and license them as such and who can get a divorce.

Where is that in the Bible? You never find anywhere in the Bible where God had any of his people seek permission from the government to enter into an institution that God ordained. It's God's institution. And Christians in ancient times, if they were married, they were married in the church.

The church recognized their vows. Not the state. But of course, we live in a society where some here, there's some people here I'm sure know the history of this.

And I don't. I don't know when this first started, when they started licensing marriages. But I'm sure there's someone here who could tell me.

But the idea that the state licenses marriages was simply a way of granting security or a false security to people who are getting married. The idea was, well, if the state licenses your marriage, then the state can hold the parties to the marriage responsible to keep their vows. And if they don't, and if they abandon, then the state can enforce alimony and child support and things like that, which of course protects the woman and so forth.

And everyone wants the state there to protect these rights. But take a look. Is the state protecting those rights? The state lets people divorce for any reason and no reason at all.

It doesn't protect the rights. It is true that if a man divorces his wife, or even if the wife

runs off with someone else, and the husband's unfaithful, the state's going to make the husband pay for those kids. But they'll make them do that if they were married or not.

If they're just shacked up and have kids, the state will do it. The state is not enforcing the rights of married people. The state is just trying to play God with reference to what people can do and can't do in terms of starting a family.

I'm not... Now, I'll just tell you right now, my wife and I are legally married. We have a license. But we sometimes wish we didn't, because we learned in the state of California where we're married that the state of California, it's in the law books, and probably a lot of other states too, the state licenses your marriage, the state owns the children.

We didn't know that when we got married. I'm not recommending this. I know one Christian couple in Washington State who got a legal divorce, even though they're still faithfully married and live together and raising their children, and they love the Lord and they love each other, but they got a legal divorce just to get out from under that legal, you know, clause in their marriage.

They consider those things are between them, God, and the church, not between them, God, and the state. Now, I have not come to a place yet where I would tell Christians to never get licensed. I mean, maybe I will get to that place.

Maybe I'm just not radical enough yet. But, I mean, we still have a marriage license and all, and I know some Christians who marry without licenses, and frankly, I kind of envy them, because I think that they got married more enlightened than I did. And my wife and I both feel the same way about it.

You know, we feel that we wouldn't be any less faithful than we are now if the state had never given us that. The state doesn't keep us faithful. God keeps us faithful.

The state is not even biblically involved in the thing, but it's just one of those areas where the state moves in and says, now they're the ones who have the right to tell who they're going to regard as married, who they're going to regard as divorced, and yet the state is so morally bankrupt and so morally blind, they don't even know what grounds for divorce. They don't know what a marriage is. There are a whole bunch of senators who want to make homosexual unions a marriage, and these are the people who are letting them decide if they're going to approve of us being married or divorced.

These people don't know anything. They have lost their moral compass. They're not consulting God, and they really have no moral authority at all in the matter.

The only thing they can do is they can give, as I said, a sham protection to marriage by saying, okay, well, we license this. We're going to stand by it, and if Joe Schmoe runs off, well, we're going to hunt him down, and we're going to make him pay child support. Well, like I said, they'll do that even if he never was married to the woman.

That's not supporting marriage. That's just trying to get the guy to pay his dues on the kids, which obviously a man should pay for the kids. I'm not saying he shouldn't, but I'm not sure that the state is the agency that's supposed to be doing that.

Now, of course, we live in such a society that's always, as long as any of us have been alive, the state has been licensing marriages, even to the best people, even the best Christians. In fact, most Christians I know would think it's scandalous even to suggest otherwise because it's one of those areas that the Christians haven't thought through as much as they have some others. Almost all Christians I know believe that abortion is wrong and that the state shouldn't legalize that, and most of them believe that homosexuality is wrong and that homosexual marriages would certainly be wrong to endorse, but most Christians don't think very far beyond that as far as the state's intrusion into defining marriage, defining who can be married, under what conditions.

The church should define those issues for Christians. Now, if the state wants to do that for non-Christians, that's who might have judged those who are outside, Paul said. God judges them.

We have to judge those who are inside. And my position is on this. There are many people in our society that God does not recognize as divorced, but the state does, according to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ said, If a man divorces his wife for any cause other than fornication and marries another, he is committing adultery. That's not a marriage. He's married legally, but he's not married in God's sight.

He's in an adulterous relationship. Now, the state doesn't care. The state will grant him a divorce and grant him a second marriage.

But the state doesn't know God. The state doesn't much care about God or God's standards. And there are people walking around who are legally married.

The state has licensed their marriage. And in God's sight, they're just shackled up with a whore because they're in adultery. Because their first marriage that the state let them out of without any grounds is still in force as far as God is concerned.

I'm not saying that's true of all people divorced or married. I'm divorced or remarried. And, you know, I'm not as hard on divorce or marriage as some people like to be.

But I'm very hard on divorce. I try to be as hard on divorce as the Bible is, and no less or no more, and likewise on remarriage. But all I'm saying is this.

The state is so out of the loop in terms of divorce and marriage as far as God is concerned that they don't even know who's married and who's not in God's sight. And why Christians would look to the state for its endorsement and so forth, I think it just

needs to be rethought. I mean, I'm not at the point where I feel like Christians should never get marriage licenses.

As I said, maybe I'll get there. I'm on a journey, too. I'm learning.

And some of this stuff is new to me, too. But it's definitely one of those areas that we need to rethink. It's one of the areas where the state is intruding into the area that used to be the church or the family's business.

And the family and the church should enforce the vows. If a couple makes vows to be married to one another in front of the church, in front of the family, it's those members of the church and their family that should confront that person if he defaults on them. But the church just stays out of it now.

We can all witness a wedding. We can see these two people vow perpetual faithfulness to each other. And then three, five, seven years later, we can see them start to break up and fall apart and go different directions.

And we just look the other way and we don't do anything about it. Well, the courts will take care of that. Yeah, but they won't do it righteously.

It's not the court's business. It's the church's business. At least when it comes to marriages among Christians.

It's not a matter for the state, but the state loves to be involved in everything. But, of course, the state gets involved in a lot of other ways, too. They'd like to decide how your children should be educated.

You know, I'm against state schools, and I guess that's not any big surprise to anyone here. Most of us are a bunch of homeschoolers. I'm sure a lot of you are not real fond of state schools.

I went through the state school system. But it's more than just getting out of the state school system. It's a question of getting the state out of the education of our children.

When we first decided to homeschool and when Benjamin, who's now 16, was only five or six and we were just starting with him, my wife went to the educational department or whoever, ESD, educational service department of our area. And she got a list of things that first graders are supposed to learn as far as the school board is concerned. And so she got this list.

I think it was three pages long in small print. All these things that you're supposed to teach your first grader. And my wife was just greatly intimidated by this.

There was so much to it. A lot of things in there were things we didn't learn even until we were in high school. And some of the things I never learned because I never went to

college.

And I thought, give me a break. They really are trying to tell me that first graders are supposed to learn all this stuff. Stuff that neither my wife nor I know.

Although my wife went to five colleges and I'm a fairly well read person. And I thought, I don't even know this stuff. How can they say that this is what first graders learn? And they want to tell me that the kids in the state schools are learning everything on this list in first grade? I don't think so.

But it was very stressful to my wife. And she wasn't going to give up homeschooling, but she just was at her wit's end. I just had to say, well listen, who gave our children to these people? That they should tell us what our children need to learn.

These people don't have any claim on our children at all. If our children grow up to be criminals, then the state has an interest in it. They can put them in jail.

They can do whatever they want to criminals. But if our kids don't turn out to be criminals, they're not in the state's jurisdiction on this matter. God never gave the state the authority to educate my children or to tell me what my children need in their education.

The Bible actually tells me how to educate my children. It tells me what they need. And if the state wants to insist that though I'm homeschooling, I have to follow their curricula, the state's just going to have to learn to live with disappointment.

Because they're not going to get it from me. I said to my wife, you know, who made this list of requirements, counseling us to give our kids this? Was this some godly person? The Bible tells us not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Was this a godly person who counsels us to teach our kids all this stuff? I don't think so.

And if they were, they weren't following scripture because none of those things they said we have to teach our kids are in the Bible. So, you know, we basically just ignore it. We've never tested our kids.

One reason we moved to Idaho is because we could do that legally. We did it illegally in Oregon for years. Because Oregon requires that if you homeschool, you register with the school department and you test the kids every year.

We thought, why? God didn't give them any authority to make laws like that. So we just figured they're illegitimate laws. And I mean, just like when Pharaoh told the midwives to kill the babies, you know, that's an illegitimate law.

So they didn't do it, and God blessed them. And God blessed us, too. But we were relieved to move to a state where you didn't have to do those things, you know, where

we didn't have to sacrifice legality in order to avoid sacrificing our children.

But, you know, the state just doesn't have any business educating kids. It's not the state's children. I may have told you last week, I don't remember now, but I think it was one of the last things I said, possibly, if I did say it, was that we have a friend in Oregon, a lady who had a home birth, didn't notify anybody, didn't notify the hospital or anyone like that, but somehow the social people found out, social services, and they showed up at her door and said they wanted to give her some literature and check up on her, how her baby's doing and stuff.

And she said, no, we're doing fine. We don't need your help. Thanks.

Go home. We didn't call you. And they said, no, we just want to make sure that Oregon's babies are healthy and so forth.

And so they gave her some literature. And the front of the brochure that they gave her said, Oregon's children, everybody's business. Well, that's pretty much the statist idea.

Your kids are my business. Why? Why are your kids my business? If your kids don't turn out badly, you're going to have to answer to God for that, not to me. And I don't have any business telling you what you have to do with your kids.

Now, if we're Christian brothers and sisters, and I think you're making a mistake, I probably have an obligation to speak to you about it, but you don't have to do what I say. That's between you and God. God made the head of the home the sovereign head of his family over issues of what his children are taught.

God told the father to teach the children. And, of course, he delegates, in many cases, a lot of that to the mother legitimately. But it's an in-house kind of a deal, what the kids are taught.

Now, I don't say it's wrong for Christian parents to send their kids to a Christian school. We wouldn't do it. And we have a lot of reasons that we wouldn't do it.

But I'm not saying there's any real violation of the Bible. Jesus probably wasn't homeschooled. Like all the Jewish boys of his age, he was probably synagogue schooled.

That's where he learned to read, because his parents might not have even known how to read. We don't know. I'm for homeschooling.

And I think anyone could do it that's determined to do it, if that's their priority. But if someone feels they can't and they're convinced they can't, then I'm not saying they're violating any direct command of Scripture if they avail themselves of Christian education through other means, too, as long as they are still the primary authorities in their children's lives. But state schools, I just don't think that's biblical.

And I think it's just one of those areas where the state intrudes into the family. And once they do, you know. I'm sure if you listen to the radio, you know the direction the state's going in this.

They want to know whether your kids are learning to be tolerant of alternate lifestyles. They want to know if your kids are prejudiced against homosexuality, if they're, you know, male chauvinists. They want to make sure your kids are socially developing properly.

And it's not just a matter of them being disappointed. If they're not, they think it's their business. And if your kids are not developing the way that the state thinks they should, the state has teeth.

And there have been proposals, some of them have been implemented, that if the children in the public schools are not adjusting socially, which means they're not, they still think it's wrong to be a homosexual, that the state will send counselors to the family to help the parents along in their development of tolerance. If the parents don't tolerate, then the kids are taken and put in a home where they will. This is the state trying to own children and determine what they're going to be taught.

One wonderful thing about homeschoolers is they don't have to face this quite as directly, because my kids don't go to some place where some pagan is assessing their development and deciding whether I can keep my kids or not. It's none of their business. And it's part of the war on the family that the devil is bringing through our culture.

We need to, as Christians, take a stand for the sovereignty of the family in many areas that God has given the family sovereignty. Now, I'm not saying that the family should be an isolated unit apart to itself entirely. Obviously, Christians need to be in fellowship with other Christians, and all people need to be interacting in some way with the society at large.

I'm not making a case for cloisters or nunneries or living in caves or being hermits. I'm just talking about the need for parents to keep their hands on the controls of their children's education and of their children's lives in ways that the state is going to arm wrestle you with. They're going to tug a war with you, and you're going to have to be strong if you're going to uphold biblical standards.

Another modern attack on the family, and probably the most severe, probably the most damaging in our modern era right now, is feminism. Now, if I say feminism is bad, I expect everyone here to kind of nod their heads and say, yeah, we agree, feminism is bad. I think most conservative Christians, they realize feminism is bad.

Liberal Christians don't think so, and there are some people who are evangelicals who have never used their brains in a Christian manner, and they don't know whether

feminism is bad or not. They probably just buy into it. But among conservative Christians, most are now savvy to the fact that feminism is a bad thing.

I think, at least all the people I know are. But even that being so, my assessment is that every woman I know, and I don't mean any offense to you women, this includes my wife, every woman I know in our generation has been brought up under such a total saturation of feminist thinking that even though they renounce it, even though they say, feminism, that's bad, I don't like feminism, that's evil, I know it's from the devil, there are feminist roots that go down that's been there from our childhood, us men too. Feminism has been entrenched since before we were born in our culture, and we have bought into a great deal of it.

I mentioned women's suffrage last week. Women's suffrage was passed as the 19th amendment in 1920, long before any of us were here. But think about it.

How many Christians have ever wondered, even questioned, whether women's suffrage was a good idea? I mean, I know a lot of Christians who are against feminism. I'll bet James Dobson is against feminism. I'll bet most conservative Christian leaders are against feminism, but I never heard any of them suggest that women's suffrage was a bad idea.

I think it is. I think it's a bad idea. And as I mentioned last time, an anecdote I heard from Steve Majors, that one brother said, and he spoke what many of us knew instinctively, he said that the day that women's suffrage was passed in this country was the day this nation ceased to be a nation of families and became a nation of individuals.

Because now women have the right to vote contrary to their husbands on matters. And the husband is no longer the one who stands for the family, speaks for the family. Now the wife and husband as separate individuals speak, and she can even cancel his voice out if she wants.

And that is, frankly, just part of the whole feminist war on the family. Now, what I'm saying to you is this. As much as people of our type tend to think badly of feminism, and think it's a bad thing, there are feminist assumptions that many of us have hardly ever dreamed of challenging, because it's so shot through in our culture.

And I would like to encourage you to realize that feminism is not some benign thing, just one of those cultural mistakes that's passing through as a fad. This is a deliberate attack on the family. It's an attack against Christianity.

And it is an attack against the Bible. And it is one of the most potent forces in our culture right now, and one of the most damaging. This stack of books I have here is here because I want to read some things about feminism, many of which I could say off the top of my head, but I'd rather read what some other people have said, partly because of

who they are, and partly because they say them well.

This is a little-known book by Werner Neuer. He's a young German theologian, studying in many of the liberal seminaries in Germany. But reading his book, I was very surprised and refreshed that he takes a very biblical stand, although most German theologians are very liberal that I've encountered.

But I wanted to read it. This is called *A Man and Woman in Christian Perspective* by Werner Neuer. I'm just going to read some highlighted portions.

I'm not going to read anything like a whole page or anything like that, but I want to read some portions of what he said. And I've got some other very good stuff I want to read, just if I could indulge me that way. Werner Neuer, among other things, makes these observations.

He says, The current feminist movement stands in a long tradition of women's movements, which have existed in Europe since the last century and whose origins may be traced back to the 18th century. But modern feminism cannot be viewed simply as the current form of the women's movements which date from the beginnings of this century. Whereas the women's movements before the First World War were interested primarily in the political and legal equality of women, votes for women and the right to education and a career.

And with that upheld, at least in Germany, relatively conservative attitudes prevailed to the character and role of the sexes. The current feminist movement is more or less intent on totally destroying the traditional conceptions of what constitutes male and female. The most important single forerunner of the modern feminist movement is Simone de Beauvoir, French, I don't speak French, so Beauvoir, I think is how you pronounce her, Simone de Beauvoir, whose book, *The Second Sex*, has fundamental significance for the women's movement.

Simone de Beauvoir, who lived for decades with the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, without marrying him, contests every type of naturally given difference between male and female. She propagates an ideal of humanity's future beyond male and female. Instead of the natural procreation of children, she advocates artificial insemination.

She emphatically calls for the legalization of abortion and regards its legal prohibition as absurd. What she is propagating is much more a cultural revolution. A revolution of the most radical sort.

Now, our series is called *Toward a Radically Christian Counterculture*. We got the word radical, we got the word cultural in there. Well, feminism got there ahead of us.

They were a radical cultural revolution before us. We just need to be a counterrevolution of sorts. And this is one of the things that a radically Christian counterculture has got to

be concerned about.

One of the cheap things in our day. What she is propagating is much more a cultural revolution of the most radical sort imaginable. It is a cultural revolution which puts in question all the convictions, traditions, and customs on interactions between the sexes that have developed in the course of human history.

One of the most radical publications of feminism is Shulamit Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex, The Case for the Feminist Revolution*. That word dialectic should perk up some ears there. The book advocates the destruction of the sexist society, the complete sweeping away of gender differences.

She wants to break up the family and to substitute the upbringing of children by groups instead of parents. In the church and in theology too, a feminism has grown up which portrays the emancipation of woman as a demand of the gospel. Church feminism is therefore working for the maximum possible influence of women in church leadership and a revision of male-shaped theology.

Admission of women in the pastorate or priesthood is a fundamental demand. Exclusion of women from the pastorate is seen as discriminatory and contradicting the gospel. Feminist theology is concerned with a new orientation in exegesis to bring out the Bible's positive evaluation of women and in dogmatics with the revision of the traditional concept of God.

The received picture of God as father must be completed through a picture of God as mother. Thus feminist theology is intent on a feminist piety which prays to God as both father and mother. By the way, he doesn't bring out the worst of it.

Most feminists, including in the church, are not only wanting to talk about God as father and mother, they want to talk about the goddess. They want to talk about the goddess and goddesses. And this is, if you think I exaggerate, you haven't read much on this subject.

The feminists, not only outside the church but in the church, have conventions where they celebrate the goddess, which, of course, is just the next step after God being seen as father and mother. Then, of course, you've got God the goddess. Theological feminism leads also to a new kind of biblical criticism.

All biblical passages which express the subordination of women to men are rejected as historically conditioned in favor of those passages which express the full equality of the sexes. Just one more paragraph from Werner Neuer. He says, The following discussion, meaning the rest of his book, is not to be understood primarily as a response to the question of feminism, but as a response to the question, what is God's will for the sexes in the present situation? The decisive question for Christians is never whether he can

supply a satisfactory answer to the ideological queries of his time, but whether he is obedient to the will of God for his time.

In every respect, the Christian is freed from the bondage to the spirit of the age and is bound only to obey God, which I think should be obvious, but it's not obvious to evangelical feminists, as they call themselves. There is a stream within the evangelical church that call themselves evangelical feminists and biblical feminists. These people, as he said, I've read their books.

I have a few books here. I've got a shelf full of books related to feminism that I've read, and many of them written by Christians favoring feminism or people who call themselves Christians anyway. But I have just a few things I want to read from various authors.

This woman, this book is *Domestic Tranquility* by F. Carolyn Graglia. Anyone seen this book? It's an excellent book. I don't recommend it for children because she's pretty explicit about the whole sexual agendas of the feminist movement, but it's an excellent, excellent book.

I just want to read a little bit of what she said here. She is a trained lawyer, and I'm not sure of her religious orientation. I think she's a Roman Catholic, but that doesn't come out.

She doesn't write it as a Christian author. She writes it as, as she calls it, a brief against feminism. She's a lawyer or was a lawyer.

She left that profession to be a mom when she started having children, and she's a housewife by choice, a lawyer by training. But in her book, which I highly recommend, it's a thick one, she says since the late 60s, feminists have very successfully waged war against the traditional family in which husbands are the principal breadwinners and wives are primarily homemakers. This war's immediate purpose has been to undermine the homemaker's position within both her family and society in order to drive her into the workforce.

Its long-term goal is to create a society in which women behave as much like men as possible, devoting as much time and energy to the pursuit of a career as men do, so that women will eventually hold equal political and economic power with men. They have promoted a sexual revolution that encouraged women to mimic male sexual promiscuity. They have supported the enactment of no-fault divorce laws and have undermined housewives' social and economic security.

They have obtained the application of affirmative action requirements to women as a class, gaining educational and job preferences for women and undermining the ability of men who are victimized by this discrimination to function as family breadwinners. Now, you might think it's strange to speak of men being victimized by feminism, but the idea

is this. There are men who can't find jobs, partly because a lot of women who don't need the jobs, because their husbands can support them and would support them at home, the women are out there taking the jobs that men could otherwise get.

And also, it is now the case in many industries that because an employer assumes that a man's wife is also working, he doesn't get the same high wages as he used to for the same job, because the assumption is he doesn't need as much as he used to because he's not supporting the family himself. Now, if he is supporting the family himself, he still gets the low wages that are based on that assumption. These are some of the developments in the job market that have come about because of feminism's influence.

So she says that these women have undermined the ability of men who are victimized by this discrimination to function as family breadwinners. From the journalistic attacks of Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem to Jesse Bernard's sociological writings, all branches of feminism are united in the conviction that a woman can find identity and fulfillment only in a career. The housewife, feminists agree, was properly characterized by Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan as a parasite.

The housewife was characterized as a parasite, as being something less than human, living her life without using her adult capabilities or intelligence and lacking any real purpose in devoting herself to children, husband and home. Revealing their totalitarian belief that they know best how others should live, and their totalitarian willingness to force others to conform to their dogma, feminists have sought to modify our social institutions in order to create an androgynous society in which male and female roles are as identical as possible. The results of the feminist juggernaut now engulfs us.

By almost all indices of well-being, the institution of the American family has become significantly less healthy than it was 30 years ago. Feminism is waging war against the family, and the family in America is much less healthy than it was 30 years ago, and very, very largely because of feminism. Statism has a lot to do with it too, but feminism and statism are working together against the family very effectively.

By the way, feminism as a movement, I mean, you may have picked it up before this, but it's something that a lot of people have never noticed. Feminism as a movement is a misogynist movement. Misogyny, of course, means hatred of women.

Feminism hates women. The feminists are against women and womanhood, and feminists are male chauvinists in the extreme, because feminists believe that a person cannot be valuable unless they do what a man does, that a person cannot be of value unless they are as much like a man as possible. In other words, only a man and what he does is really valuable.

What a woman is and does is worthless, and so in order to get some worth, she ought to become more like a man. That is a very male-affirming position to take. Let me read you

something that was published in Newsweek.

I was amazed to find this in Newsweek. I forget, boy, this is a Xerox copy, and I left the date of the magazine off that I didn't think I had. I have it on my original.

Anyway, it's called The Failure of Feminism. It's just an editorial written by a woman named, well, she's a single mother of a two-year-old daughter and a freelance writer. Her name is Kay Ebeling.

She lives in Humboldt County, California. She's not a Christian, but she's a very good... Here's what she tells us that feminism has done for her and her friends. I almost want to read the thing in its entirety.

It's so cogent, I think. I don't know. I may skip over some.

She says, the other day I had the world's fastest blind date. A yuppie from Eureka penciled me in for 50 minutes on a Friday and met me at a watering hole in the rural northern California town of Arcata. He breezed in, threw his jammed daily planner on the table, and shot questions at me, watching my reactions as if it were a job interview.

He eyed how much I drank. He then breezed out to his next appointment. He had given us 50 minutes to size each other up and see if there was any chance for romance.

His exit was so fast that as we left, he let the door slam back in my face. It was an interesting slam. Most of our 50-minute conversation had covered the changing state of male-female relationships.

My blind date was 40 years old, from the experimental generation. He is actively, quote, pursuing new ways for men and women to interact, now that old traditions no longer exist, unquote. That's a real quote, she says.

He really did say that. When I asked him what he liked to do, this was a man who'd read Ms. Magazine and believed every word of it. He'd been single for 16 years, but had lived with a few women during that time.

He was off that evening for a ski weekend, meeting someone who was paying her own way for the trip. I, too, am from the experimental generation, but I couldn't even pay for my own drink. To me, feminism has backfired against women.

In 1973, I left what could have been a perfectly good marriage, taking with me a child in diapers, a 10-year-old Plymouth, and a volume one number, one of Ms. Magazine. I was convinced I could make it on my own. In the last 15 years, my ex has married or lived with a succession of women.

As he gets older, his women stay in their 20s. Meanwhile, I've stayed unattached, and he drives a BMW, I ride the buses. Today, I see feminism as the great experiment that

failed, and women in my generation, its perpetrators, are the casualties.

Many of us, myself included, she says, are saddled with raising children alone. The resulting poverty makes us experts at cornmeal recipes and ways to find free recreation on weekends. At the same time, single men from our generation amass fortunes in CDs and real estate ventures so they can breeze off on ski weekends.

Feminism freed men, not women. Now men are spared the nuisance of a wife and a family to support. After childbirth, if his wife's waist doesn't return to 20 inches, the husband can go out and get a more petite woman.

You're laughing because you know it's so true, isn't it? It's far more difficult for the wife, now tied down with a baby, to find a new man. My blind date that Friday waved goodbye as he drove off in his RV. I walked home and paid the sitter with laundry quarters.

The main message of feminism was, woman, you don't need a man. Remember those of you around 40, the phrase, a woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle? That joke circulated through the consciousness-raising groups across the country in the 70s. It was a philosophy that made divorce and cohabitation casual and routine.

Feminism made women disposable. So today, a lot of females are around 40 and single with a couple of kids to raise on their own. Child support payments might pay for a few pairs of shoes, but in general, feminism gave men all the financial and personal advantages over women.

What's more, we asked for it. Many women decided, you don't need a family structure to raise your children. We packed them off to daycare centers where they could get their nurturing from professionals.

Then we put on our suits and ties, packed our briefcases and took off on this great experiment, convinced that there was no difference between ourselves and the guys in the other offices. How wrong we were. Because like it or not, women have babies.

It's this biological thing that's just there. These organs we're born with. The truth is, a woman can't live the true feminist life unless she denies her child-bearing biology.

She has to live on the pill or have her tubes tied at an early age. Then she can keep up with the guys with an uninterrupted career, and then when she's 30, she'll be paying her own way on ski weekends too. The reality of feminism is a lot of frenzied and overworked women dropping kids off at the daycare centers.

If the child is sick, they just send along some children's Tylenol and then rush off to an underpaid job that they don't even like. Two of my working mother friends told me they were mopping floors and folding laundry after midnight last week. They live on five hours of sleep, and it shows in their faces.

And they've got husbands. I'm not advocating that women retrogress to the brainless housewives of the 50s, a stereotype that I don't think ever existed, who spent afternoons baking macaroni sculptures and keeping Betty Crocker files. Post-World War II women were the first to be left with a lot of free time, and they weren't too creative at filling it.

I don't know if she was around then to know, but perhaps feminism was a reaction to the brainless Betty, and in that respect, feminism has served its purpose. Women... Brainless Betty. Women should get educated.

See, there's no one so insulting to women as feminists. There's no one who affirms women more than biblical Christians, but there's no one who insults womanhood more than feminists do, and who affirms male chauvinism more than feminism does. It says women should get education so they can be brainy, and this is her pagan philosophy talking, in the way that they raise their children.

Women can start small businesses, do consulting, write freelance out of homes, etc., etc. But says as long as that... Let me see here. I tried to skip over something.

I couldn't pick it up at a natural point. Women can start small businesses, do consulting, write freelance out of the home, but women don't belong in 12-hour-a-day executive office positions, and I can't figure out today whatever made us think we would want to be there in the first place. As long as that biology is there, women can't compete equally with men.

A ratio cannot be made using disproportionate parts. Women and men are not equal. They're different.

The economy might even improve if women came home, opening up jobs for unemployed men, who could then support a wife and children the way it was pre-feminism. She says, sometimes on Saturday nights, I'll get dressed up and go out club hopping or to the theater. But the sight of all those other women my age, dressed a little too young, made up to hide encroaching wrinkles, looking hopefully into the crowds, usually depresses me.

I end up coming home to spend my Saturday night with my daughter asleep in her room nearby. At least the NBC Saturday night lineup is geared demographically to women at home alone. This is a feminist.

There's a woman who was and probably still is a feminist. Certainly she is in her assumptions. And yet she's kind of giving you a glimpse of how wonderful feminism has really been for the family, for her, for people in general.

This book I highly recommend. It's edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. It's called *Recovering Manhood and Womanhood*.

I could say many wonderful things about it. It's got chapters written by wonderful people, including Elizabeth Elliott and others. Just a great book.

But one of the chapters is written by a woman named Dorothy Patterson. She's a homemaker and a mother. And she writes a chapter called The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective.

I'm only going to read a few excerpts from it. But basically, what I'm reading are to illustrate how feminism has so duped women. And women have lost out on their high calling of what they could have been and could have been so happy being.

And they've wasted their lives following the devil's lie of this whole deception. She says, though feminism speaks of liberation, self-fulfillment, personal rights and breaking down barriers, those phrases inevitably mean the opposite. In fact, the opposite is true because a salaried job, entitled position, can inhibit a woman's natural nesting instinct and maternity by inverting her priorities so that failures almost inevitably come in the rearing of her own children and the building up of an earthly shelter for those whom she loves most.

The mundane accompanies every task, however high paying or prestigious the job, so that escape from boredom is not inevitable just because your workplace is not at home. And where is the time for personal creativity when you're in essence working two jobs, one at home and one away? Basically, she's saying women are getting ripped off by this whole scheme. She says a young woman wrote to Dear Abby describing her mother as, quote, a professional woman who collected a husband, a daughter and a dog to enrich her life, unquote.

According to the daughter, the only one not damaged by this enrichment was the dog. Actress Joanne Woodward says, quote, My career has suffered because of the children and my children have suffered because of my career. I've been torn and haven't been able to function fully in either arena.

I don't know one person who does both successfully, she says, and I know a lot of working mothers, unquote. Golda Meir of Israel confessed that she suffered nagging doubts about the price her two children paid for her career, adding, quote, You can get used to anything if you have to, even the feeling of perpetually guilty. Feeling perpetually guilty, she says.

You get used to it. That's what a lot of women have had to do. Feminism has bequeathed that to them, the feeling of perpetual guilt.

In many cases, they know they're not doing right by their kids, but they're told that they're not doing right if they're not out in the career. Mikhail Gorbachev. Addresses this issue, he said this.

We have discovered that many of our problems in children's and young people's behavior in our morals, culture and production are partially caused by the weakening of the family ties and slack attitude to family responsibilities. This is a paradoxical result of our sincere desire to make women equal with men in everything, unquote. Gorbachev said that Russia had suffered social and economic deterioration because of their trying to make women equal in all respects to men and weakening the family unit, which, of course, communism does.

And, of course, Russia has gotten partially over that. We're just coming into it recently. Golda Meir, again, former prime minister of Israel, by her own testimony, devoted her adult life to the birth and rearing of Israel at the cost of her marriage.

She separated from her reticent husband in pursuit of public life. To quote Mrs. Meir, she said, what I was made it impossible for him to have the sort of wife he wanted and needed. I had to decide which came first, my duty to my husband, my home and my child, or the kind of life I myself really wanted.

And we know which choice she made. She sacrificed her family in order to be a feminist leader. A woman's career can easily serve as a surrogate husband, as during employment hours she is ruled by her employer's preferences.

Because the wife loses much of her flexibility with the receipt of a paycheck, a husband must bend and adapt his schedule for emergencies with the children, visits to the home by repairman, etc. This leaves two employers without totally committed employees and children without a primary caregiver utterly devoted to their personal needs and nurturing. I mean, some of these things are so obvious.

I know a lot of you people probably have been on to this for a long time. But it's incredible how much this is, the church just goes right along with it. The idea that women ought to, should have jobs outside the home when they actually have children at home to raise is just prevalent throughout our entire culture.

Now, when women's children are grown, that of course is a slightly different scenario. Though the Bible does not teach that women in general ought to be out in the workplace. Of course, there are situations in our culture which make it now impossible, I imagine, for some women not to.

In an ideal Christian culture, the church would take care of the women who don't have husbands to care for them if those women were in that condition through no fault of their own. Obviously, there are women who have left their husbands and so forth and they're in bad situations because of that. The church would have to work with their situations hoping to recover their relationships with their husbands or whatever if that's a possibility.

But, I mean, things are complex. We don't do any favors to the church or to society by oversimplifying things. It's a very complex mess that our culture is in right now.

But in general, it is safe to say that the Bible discourages women from taking jobs outside the home. The Bible says that the wives should be keepers at home and rear the children and so forth. There might be some exceptions in the Bible.

It may be women who didn't have children. Lydia, for example, she was a seller of purple. We don't read of her having any children or even a husband.

Maybe she didn't have one. There are women who do not fit the general pattern. But Christians need to, I think, stand by the biblical norms no matter how unpopular it becomes in our culture.

And it will become more and more unpopular. Even though feminists like this woman I read see the failure of feminism, they're not ready to go back to the brainless Betty role, as they called it, of the 50s. Well, you know what? Brainless Betty may have been brainless back then because she wasn't a Christian developing her spiritual life.

Her kids were off at school. What was she to do but watch soap operas and eat bonbons? But if she had had her children at home and was training them in godliness and she was a homemaker devoted to that as her ministry, she couldn't afford to be brainless because that takes a lot more intelligence than any career I've heard of. Now, there are some special technical careers, law, for example, or medicine that might take more specialized training in some areas than the more general knowledge needed for homemaking.

But the fact is the woman who can manage a house and educate her children is not a whit behind in terms of intelligence or achievement or honor. The woman who's first lady of the United States, senator, in fact, that woman is a failure in her life. Failure in her marriage, failure in her mothering.

But the woman who is the Betty Crocker mom or whatever she called her is the woman who's doing, at least in that realm, doing what women are made to do. They're making a home, making a secure place for children to be raised. Now, see, not all homemakers have been biblical.

And that's why I'm talking about a radically Christian counterculture. I'm not advocating that we need to go back to the way it was in the 50s with Leave it to Beaver. That wasn't a radically Christian counterculture.

I was raised in the 50s. I was born in 1953, and I was raised in the 50s. And my parents were together, and my mom stayed home.

She wasn't a working mom. She wasn't a feminist. But I went to public school.

All of us kids went to public school. And frankly, I don't believe it was the right choice for my parents to make. I don't blame them for it.

They didn't know anyone who was doing anything different. I suspect it was a blind spot. My kids will be able to tell what my blind spots were.

So I don't blame my parents for that. I'm just saying, that was the 50s. The women did largely stay home.

My mom didn't watch soap operas. She didn't like television. But she'd go to the kitchen clatching with the other neighbor ladies and hang out because she didn't have any kids to take care of at home.

I mean, she kept the house tidy as can be. Wonderful home. My mother just kept the house spotless.

But there were no oxen. Where there's no oxen, the stall is clean. But the fact is, my parents were victims.

My parents were victims of feminism. They just didn't know it. And of statism.

Already the state was involved in determining who can be married, who can't be married, and what children should be learning, and what you should do with your kids. I mean, this is not what I'm advocating. I believe that it won't do just to go back to the way things were in the 50s.

We've got to go back to the way it was when Jesus taught Christians how to live and how to conduct the family. Until we do that, we won't get the results that Jesus intended. And we won't be really faithful to his teaching.

One of the things about feminism that was mentioned in quite a few of these things I read is that it brought about easy divorce. Certainly divorce, easy divorce, is one of the most damaging things to the family in our time. We know, I'm sure, everyone here knows, Christians who are in good standing in evangelical churches, who have divorced their Christian spouses without biblical grounds, and both are still going to church somewhere.

And in many cases, both are remarried illegitimately, and they're both still going to church somewhere. Sometimes the same church together. It's an astonishing thing.

Now, the reaction to this that some people make is, okay, the church has to take a strong stand against all divorce and against all remarriage. Well, that's not being radically Christian. That's just being legalistic.

Radically Christian means you do what the Bible says. What the Bible says is if people get a divorce and they didn't have adultery as grounds, they're not divorced as far as

God's concerned. If they remarry in that situation, they're in adultery.

The church should not allow members to do that. Now, you say, well, what can the church do? Easy. Church connection is church discipline.

Something very few churches do anymore. But the Bible says if there's someone who claims to be a brother and they're an adulterer, you should have no company with them. Don't even eat with them, Paul said.

And churches just pay very little attention to that. Almost every church I've been in, and I don't know that... Frankly, I think the fellowship I'm in now is an exception. I don't know of any cases in our fellowship.

But most churches I've been in have been big enough to have at least one case, and sometimes many cases, of people who divorced without biblical grounds and remarried. And the church let them stay. Now, there are times where that situation can be remedied and the church should call for it.

There's times when the situation can't be remedied. What I mean by that is if someone made that mistake before they were a believer or before they were walking with God or before they knew what God wanted and they did that, and now they would make it right and get back with their spouse if they could, but that spouse is already long gone with someone else and married to someone else and so forth. In my understanding, and I base this largely on the story of David, the church has just got to say, OK, you did something really wrong.

If you've repented, we just have to go along from here and not change anything. I mean, David, you recall, sinned with Bathsheba. When he had her husband murdered, he married her.

And the Bible says it displeased the Lord that he married her. He did the wrong thing. He married against the will of God.

He did a sinful thing. But when he repented, God didn't make him put her away. God didn't make him get a divorce.

You know why? Because her husband wasn't around for her to go back to. But if he had been, can you imagine that David is sleeping with another man's wife and the other man is still alive next door waiting for his wife to come home, and God tells David, you have to repent, and David says, I repent, but he still sleeps with her every night? No, that wouldn't be OK. She's still got a faithful husband waiting for her.

Yeah, but since he was dead, obviously that was a different situation. I mean, by the time David repented, there was no way to make restitution in that situation. And so God, you can't unscramble an egg in some cases.

Even God can't unless you want to raise the Uriah from the dead. And so there are situations where I think the church has to have a witness about it but has to tolerate people's messed up situations because there's nothing they can do to make restitution. But there's many cases where people can, and the church doesn't require it.

There's many cases where people are living in a sinful second marriage, or they divorce without grounds, and they can, they could get right. Now, I'm going to give a separate lecture at another time about divorce because it is a complex issue. And there are many opinions Christians have about it.

Sometime I'm going to, in this series, I'm going to give a detailed message on what the Bible teaches about divorce and remarriage and what the church needs to do about it. I'm not going to take the time right now, but let me just say this. Our culture is so corrupt that people can get divorced just because they've decided they're not happy anymore in their marriage, or just because they don't feel like they love each other anymore.

And they get divorced and remarried, and there's no social stigma about it. And the worst part of it is the same is true in the church in most cases. And this easy divorce has done such damage to families.

Kids are just walking wounded throughout the whole society because they've suffered the handicap of being raised by one parent or by two parents, but one isn't really their parent. And, you know, there are a few cases, a very small percentage, where the kids, you know, end up with a second parent who might be okay and better for them than their first parent because maybe the first was a drunk and the second one's a Christian or something, I don't know. But in general, easy divorce is sinful.

It's an abomination to God. And it's something that our nation will be judged for. We think we're going to be judged for abortion.

Well, we will. But divorce, as it is practiced in this country, is, I think, as much an abomination as abortion is. Every church is going to speak out against abortion, any evangelical church.

But very few are going to speak out against divorce, at least speak biblically on the subject. Some will, as I say, just take the pendulum swing and say, we don't allow anyone in this church who's divorced. There's a few churches that have gone that route.

They're no more biblical than the ones who are tolerating all kinds of divorce. Jesus is not that simplistic. Divorce exists in people's lives and marriage failure exists because of really complex problems in some cases.

And sometimes it's real simple. Well, someone just wanted to go sleep with someone else. That's real simple.

Sometimes it's not that simple. A lot of times there's been a huge tangle. And it's got to be... I think the church has an obligation.

When people come into the church, there's a tangled mess there in their past. I think it's the obligation of the body of Christ to help them sort it out and see if there's any way that, you know, they can get some of that untangled. But there's also a point where you realize this is so tangled, it's just not going to get untangled.

Let's just say, go and sin no more, you know, and live before God from this point on with what we've got. Because there are times when restitution cannot... it just can't happen. There's nothing you can do.

Well, I'm going to close this here in a few minutes. But I wanted to just identify two other things that's part of the current culture's war against the family. And I'm not done with the matter of families.

Next time I want to talk about some more things on these notes. But in addition to statism and public education and feminism and easy divorce, I believe that public health and children's services are making war with the family. Now, I don't personally believe it's the state's business to pay for my children's or my own medical care.

I believe that if I have a medical emergency that I can't pay for, that my family, my friends, my church are the ones who God places in the position to help out. I don't think he puts the state there. Because if the state helps out... A lot of times people think that the entitlement programs the state has... Well, why shouldn't the state pay for this? Why shouldn't the state pay for that? The reason is because the state doesn't own any money.

The state can't pay because they don't own any money. They can't legitimately just run the printing presses off and make more money to pay for my medical needs. It's not their business and they don't have the money for it.

The only way to get it is by confiscating other people's money. So that my medical benefits get paid for by someone who doesn't know or love me or care about me or even know I exist. Somebody who wouldn't have paid for it at all if they didn't have a gun to his head by the IRS.

That is robbery. That is the government robbing people in order to seem merciful. In order to pretend to be very compassionate.

Oh, the government, we pay for all these people and all these things. Yeah, with whose money? Not government money. With my money and your money.

Now, I don't begrudge the money myself. Some of you do. Probably.

I know a lot of Christians who begrudge the money. I don't care how much money they take from me. My money, I don't care.

It's not mine. If God has someone steal it from me, praise the Lord it was God's money in the first place. I'm not a money person.

I don't care about money, honestly. But I do care about justice. And I do care about the government stealing from people, me or anyone else.

I don't want to steal it from my kids. I don't want to steal it from my neighbor. And I certainly don't want to be the one who's on the receiving end of that theft.

I don't want to be complicit with the government in robbery. You might think, Steve, you're being kind of radical, aren't you? Sometimes, yeah. The question is, how much have we bought in? How much have we bought in? Not radical, no.

How much have we bought in to the whole assumption of our culture? That if I have a need, or if I think I have a need, then I'm entitled, someone ought to pay for it. And since I don't see a lot of people running to my door with checks, the government ought to do it. After all, I'm a taxpayer.

And because I'm a taxpayer, the government owes me. Well, that is a vicious circle, isn't it? But the fact is, Christians, I think, need to get off that treadmill as much as possible. I don't think that Christians should be on welfare.

And I know a lot of Christians who have been, or some who are. I don't think Christians should be on welfare. Now, it's just because if you are a Christian, you are in a different culture, in a different community, that has your interests at heart.

If you receive welfare, or health care, or for that matter, public schooling, if you send your kids to public school, who's paying those teachers? Well, I am, and I don't even believe they should exist. I don't believe in public school, and I'm paying your teachers. What right do you have to confiscate money that's in my pocket, in order to have your kids trained by someone I don't even believe should be training your kids? And I don't even send my kids there.

It's a crazy thing. Our society has just gone tax crazy, and entitlement crazy, and this whole social services, children's services, and so forth, is really a scary thing. Because now, because the kids are everybody's business, it really means the state's business.

The state decides if your kids are abused or not. Now, of course, I believe that parents who abuse their kids criminally should be prosecuted. I'm not in favor of the state keeping their hands out of the situation.

If a kid is being brutally beaten every day by a drunken father, and his life is in danger,

he's getting bones broken, and stuff like that. But you see, we don't need children's services to take care of that. We already have police.

You see, children are humans, and police are there to stop crimes against humans. That's what the state is supposed to do. If a child is being victimized by a criminal parent, who is doing things that would be criminal for that person to do to any other person, I think the police should intervene.

We don't need social services in there, because they have their own liberal agenda, and they don't know when children are being abused and when they're not. They really don't. A lot of times, if a child has a bruise, that'll be called abuse.

Well, I mean, some kids... I'm sure some of you have heard the horror stories, too. I've heard many, and I know some of the people these things have happened to. I know someone who they sent their kids to public school, big mistake, but their kid didn't come home from school.

In fact, I've heard of two or three cases like this that were in my general area. Their kids didn't come home from school one day. The parents got worried.

They called the school and said, oh, your kids are not coming home tonight. They said, why? Well, the school nurse examined them, and they had a bruise on their bottom. And we had to call children's services in, and they've taken your kids.

They're going to put them in a foster home, because your kids are abused. This is the only area where our society has adopted policy, well, maybe not the only area, but certainly one of the major areas, where the suspected person is considered guilty until proven innocent. And it's very hard to prove your innocence.

How can you prove a negative? I don't abuse my kids. How do you prove that you don't do something? It's much easier to find evidence for some positive thing that is done than some proof that something is never done. And unless you can prove that you don't abuse your kids, all it takes is an anonymous tip to some hotline from some neighbor who just doesn't like your looks.

They don't even have to really suspect that you abuse your kids. All they have to say is, I don't like that guy. I'm going to give him some trouble.

Call the hotline. I think this guy is abusing his kids. They don't have to say who they are.

You don't get to face your accuser. You don't get due process. Your kids are investigated.

Your house is intruded on. The social worker shows up with a policeman. And, by the way, you don't have to let him in.

But we know of at least one Christian family or more where they knew their

constitutional rights, and they told the policeman and the social worker, you don't have a search warrant. You can't come in. And the policeman broke the door down and came in anyway.

The cops and the social service got sued and lost. But it still is traumatic for the family. There have been many, many cases, I'm sure you've followed in the news, of this kind of police state abuse of family rights.

Basically, it's a war on the family. There have been cases where kids were taken out of the home forcibly and put in foster homes because the family didn't have a television. That was considered to be neglect of the children.

Social neglect. And there have been families who have had their children taken from them because a social worker came on the charge of abuse. There was no evidence of abuse, but there were dirty dishes in the sink.

And the trash under the sink was overflowing. And so the social worker decided this is not a hygienically safe place for these children and took them out. And I have known of three cases in McMinnville, where I used to live, where families have been financially ruined.

They've had to sell their houses. They've lost their jobs fighting, legally, fighting battles to get their kids back. And sometimes they got them back after about a year.

Sometimes they never did. And you've got to wonder, are these programs really concerned about the well-being of children? This is kidnapping. When the state shows up at your door and wants to take your kids against your will, and you've done no crimes against them, they are simply kidnapers.

There's no better word for it. I'm not telling you what you should do to kidnapers. I know what the Bible says should be done to kidnapers, but I'm not going to tell you what to do.

I'm just saying this is an area where the state is making war with the family, and they do it in the name of children's services. In fact, in Oregon, where I come from, they had to change the name of children's services. I forget if they changed it to it.

It was CSD for a long time, Children's Services Division. And there were so many scandals of them taking kids forcibly out of homes that were really safe and putting them in foster homes where the kids got abused. That got into the news.

And there were so many Gestapo-like actions of the CSD that they actually had to change the name of the department so that they could sort of disguise who they were because they had such a bad public image. But they didn't change their tactics. They still did the same things.

And this is part of the whole dominant culture's war on the families. And we've got to decide that we're going to stand up to that. Some people say, we've got to get politically involved.

That's between you and God if you think you've got to get politically involved. I don't get politically involved in that way. I will defy, however.

I will defy the culture. I will speak out against it. And I will not compromise as near as, at least so far as I have light.

There are areas of compromise possibly that are my blind spots. But I will not compromise while there's light. Now, my wife, of course, she's often intimidated by knowing stories about what children's services do.

It's kind of a scary thing for a mother. It's scary for me, too. But I think we still need to speak out against it and not be afraid of what man shall do to us.

The Lord's our helper. And we need to be faithful to stand against those evils, insofar as they are intruded into the church and the family. One other thing, and this is it.

I'm just about done here tonight. Another major part, of course, of the war against the family in our current culture is the media messages. On television, movies, songs, everything in the secular media is against the sanctity of the family, against the permanence of marriage, against parental authority, and so forth.

I mean, you'll have a rare exception. A movie might come out once in a blue moon or something that really actually is kind of pro-family. But it's just a token thing thrown in to make it seem like the media is not anti-family.

It's very much anti-family. And children who watch television are going to be bombarded with these messages. Will they succumb to them? I don't know.

I can't predict. Most of them do. If you let your kids watch TV, I can't say your kids are going to be corrupted.

I was. No one knew I was corrupted because I was the best kid in the youth group. I was the most goody-two-shoes kid in my public school.

I was a nerd. I was clean. But I was corrupted by television.

That was in my home. I was corrupted by public school. Not as corrupted as most of the kids were because I came from a good Christian home.

And I didn't think I was corrupted. It's only after I got stronger convictions about holiness and realized what Christians are supposed to be that I realized how much I've been corrupted by those influences. I'm not saying there aren't people who could watch TV

and not be corrupted.

There might be some who could. There'd have to be a lot stronger people than me. And I don't have a TV in my home.

We have videos, and we do watch some of those. Try to be as careful as we can about that. But some people are wisely don't let any videos in their home.

Every parent has to make their own decision. But the messages of the media are not only anti-God. They are anti-family.

They're not only anti-goodness and righteousness. They're anti-parents. They're anti-marriage.

And, of course, increasingly, they're not only pro-promiscuity, but they're pro-homosexuality and a lot of things like that. I mean, if someone doesn't think the family in America is under siege by potent adversaries, they've been sleeping. They're an ostrich with their head in the sand.

And if you think that we can sustain a culture where the family is upheld in a biblical manner without determination to do so, again, you're an ostrich. Jesus said, The kingdom of God suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. And as I understand that passage, he's saying this, that there is violent aggression against the principles of the kingdom of God.

Our culture is waging a violent war against godliness and against the godly family, against Christian principles. And Jesus said, The violent take it by force. And that second clause, I believe, and I think most commentators agree, is about the Christian's reaction to that situation.

Because the enemy is coming in forcibly, the Christian has to respond with equal determination. Now, not the same methods. Many times the church activists say, Well, we've got to get involved in all those areas that the wicked are involved in to clean this thing up.

No, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. We have spiritual weapons if we would only use them. It's that very few Christians are using the spiritual weapons of uncompromising holiness, and fervent, effectual prayer, and faithful preaching of the word of God.

These are the weapons that we have. And believe it or not, they are mighty. Through God.

Through the pulling down of strongholds, and casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. If only the church would learn it,

and do it. Instead, I think the church says, Okay, the problem is coming from the political sphere.

So we need to get into the political sphere. Well, Jesus had problems from the political sphere too. He didn't get involved in it, though.

They tried to get him involved. He wouldn't. Same thing with the apostles.

Almost all of their persecution came from political sources. But they waged a warfare outside of that sphere, and won. The whole Roman Empire fell to Christian influence within three centuries.

But that's too long. Most of us don't want to go that long. Three centuries? Well, God is patient.

We're not. I think that we often want to take the way that will get immediate results, or what we're really called to do is take the way that is faithful and Christ-like, and the very thing the apostles taught and modeled. And if we do that, it may take a century or more to win the culture war.

It doesn't sound very good to me, because I won't be here to enjoy it. My children won't either. But God will be.

And frankly, what happens in the long run is what Christians are encouraged to be looking and investing into. Everything I do in obedience to God may end up with me being... I might die early. I could be martyred.

If I'm totally faithful to Jesus Christ, I might get myself killed early. But that's okay. I'm just one of a long procession of Christians who are supposed to do their bit, and do it faithfully, and then God brings the results in His time.