

Today, I am very excited about beginning a new series we're calling



“Proverbs for the Marriage and Family.” Now that picture was a common occurrence in this country for almost 200 years. A father, a mother and children...the nuclear family. But something began to happen in this country after WWII. We came out of winning the war and we got prosperous and unfortunately, with that prosperity came a falling away from God...to the point, by the time we reached the 1960's, we began to totally jettison to the teachings of the Bible, and replace them with secular humanism where: “everyone does that which is right in his own eyes.”

Slowly but surely, through those decades and since, the nuclear family and the home have fall apart. Fathers began to disappear from the home. The government began to reward women for having children out of wedlock. Cohabitation became the norm, (and BTW today, that's not just in the “world,” it's also in the “Church”). What is more...what's being taught to our children...went from reciting the pledge of allegiance and saying a prayer...to today...discussions of transgenderism and critical race theory to kindergartners. So, it's no wonder marriage is no longer held in high regard.

Today, we have homes decimated by not only divorce and co-habitation, by but laziness, sloth, purposelessness, anxiety and depression. During Covid, we paid people to stay home and we separated ourselves from one another...and we have not recovered. Today we are slaves to the “Attention Economy,” and we seek solace in meds, drugs, alcohol, entertainment, video games and binge watching. We're colossal time wasters.

No, today, the nuclear family is NO LONGER the norm. In fact, the nuclear family is seen as patriarchal, colonialistic and racist...so say the progressives of our day. The progressives believe anything in the past has to be bad...there's no value in it. We must “progress.” So, marriage is more acceptable for two men and two women than one man and one woman for life.

In fact, our culture is so backward that we don't even know what a woman is. So, we have men competing against our girls, (which BTW is going to kill girls' sports), while allowing these same men in our girl's locker rooms. So why should we be surprised that we have national retailers selling genderless bathing suits? No wonder we've got a current supreme court justice who was afraid to define what a woman is. No wonder that 30% of 12-19-year-old girls today, identify as LGBTQ. No wonder that depression and suicide is epidemic among our teenagers. And yet, we have the elites in our education system who promote drag queen reading hour to children, as young as 5 years old!

Our culture has become depraved. It's almost unrecognizable from even 30 years ago. But, if you don't agree to allow children to determine their gender, when they can't even make the right decision about broccoli versus French fries...when they can't get a tattoo until their 18, oh...no...if you don't let Johnny become Suzi at 8, then you're uneducated, transphobic, bigot. And this is why we have doctors and hospitals, in the "name of science" performing procedures on our children that will irreparably damage them for life. We're in a free-fall, church...and I don't think anyone in this room would argue that we're no longer a wise people; but instead, we're an aimless and wandering people.

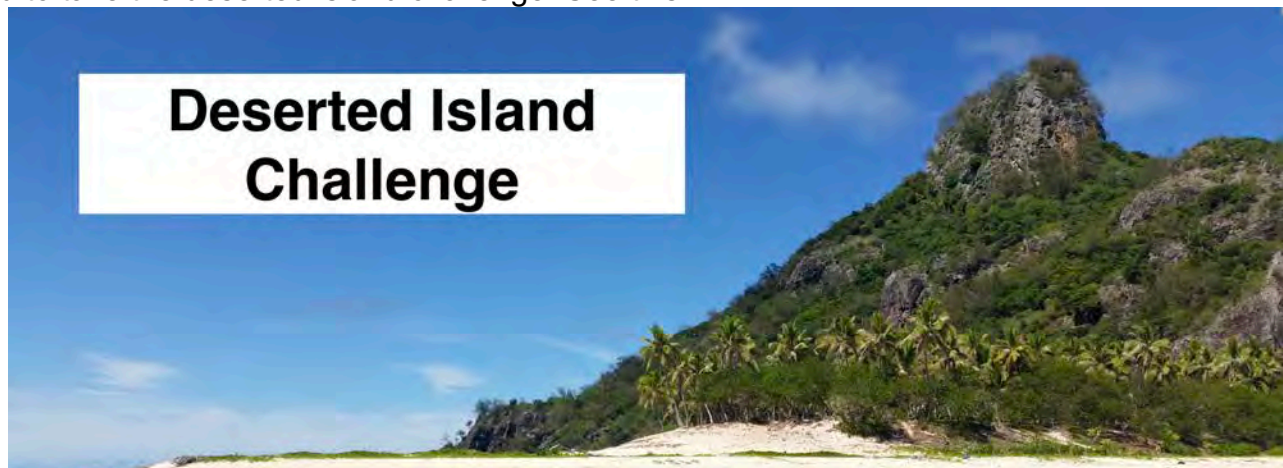
Therefore, over the next 11 weeks, we're going to talk about marriage and family from a Biblical perspective. We're going to talk about the roles of men and women, the roles of husbands and wives, and the roles of children in the home. We're going to talk about what husbands need...what wives need and what children need. We're going to talk about divorce and remarriage. We're going to talk about what the Bible says about parenting...about teaching, training and discipline in the home...we're going to talk about how to parent the heart, not just behavior. We're going to talk about what the Bible says about dating and relationships. So, I want to encourage you not to miss a single Sunday, if you can help. I really believe this series has the potential to change us.

You've turned to Proverbs...the writings of Solomon, and they're going to help guide us in the weeks ahead. We'll be in Proverbs and other places in Scripture as well. Let's begin with Prov. 1.

Proverbs 1:5-7

⁵ Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, ⁶ to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. ⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Church family, we don't want to despise wisdom and instruction. We want to be strong...we want to increase in our learning...we want understanding and guidance and we get that from the Proverbs and this book...THE BIBLE. **The Bible is our authority** and I want to let you know something that I said 11 years ago in 2012, (when I originally taught this material). Back then, I said we're going to need to take the deserted island challenge. See this:



I want us to take the "Deserted Island Challenge." Imagine we've been stranded and deserted on an island and the only thing you and I have to guide our thinking is the Bible. We don't have a phone...a TV...no books...no mainstream media...no professors...no social media...only the Word of God. Would you be willing to commit to accepting that the Bible is the final authority in all matters? Do you believe...

2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

Will you accept God is smarter than man...the Creator, smarter than the created. God smarter than professors, Fox and CNN pundits, politicians and anyone else who might want to weigh in on marriage and family. Would you commit to that? If you won't, then I will tell you right now...the Scripture says you're not wise. See it again...

Proverbs 1:5-7

⁵ Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, ⁶ to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. ⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Now, let's take a moment to understand some things about the proverbs. We know King Solomon, the son of David, was the principal writer of most of the Proverbs, and he wrote them around 900 B.C. During that time, Israel was at its pinnacle: spiritually, politically, culturally, and economically. And like America...when prosperity comes...people usually can't handle it, and begin to fall away.

Now, when we're talking about proverbs, we need to understand what a proverb is. A proverb is simply a "saying" that conveys a specific truth in a pointed way. In fact, it's been said that Proverbs can be described as: "SHORT sentences that are LONG on experience." So, when we talk about proverbs, we're talking about "wisdom writings," and we need to understand this: we're talking about wisdom, not intellect. I know a lot of really smart, intellectual people who have no wisdom at all. Just look at the people who are running our country...our media...and look at our secular education and university systems.

Wisdom is the ability to see people, events, and situations as God sees them and that's what the book of Proverbs is. It's the revelation of the mind of God in everyday situations that are timeless.

Turn with now to Proverbs 2. Let's go deeper and see yet another set of Solomon's proverbs and I want you to notice to whom Solomon addresses these words...his son(s)...his family...

Proverbs 2:1-5

¹ My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, ² making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; ³ yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, ⁴ if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Yes, Solomon had sons...many sons...how do I know...because he had 700 wives and 300 mistresses (aka concubines...a concubine was a lady who was not considered a wife and she had no rights as a wife). She was a woman who cohabited with a man without being legally married to him. Unfortunately, these wives and concubines would become the major reason for Solomon's downfall. Solomon didn't finish well. Solomon's life shows us that even the wise can fail miserably.

You see, in my mind, we can draw parallels between Solomon and America. He started out well early in his life, but finished very poorly. And that's where our country is. I want to show you something. There's a publication called:

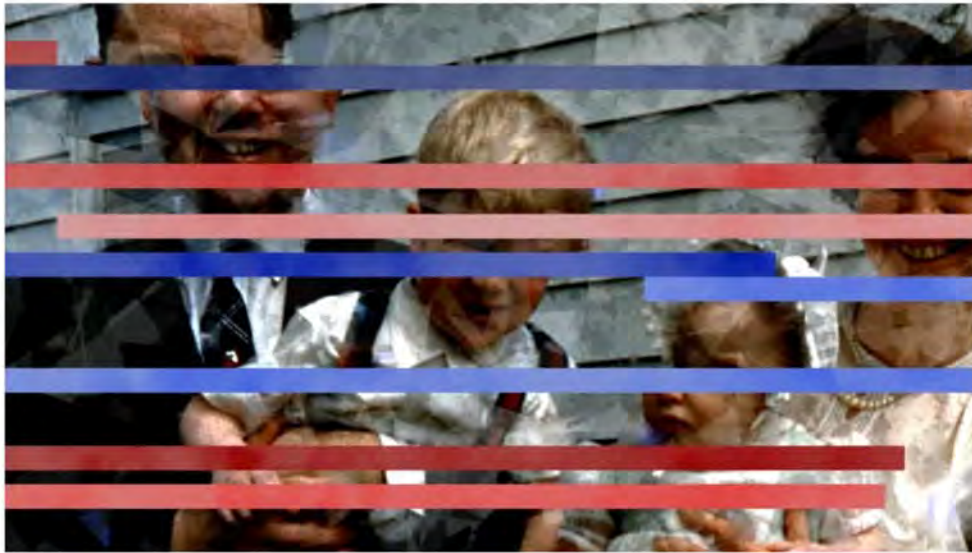
THE WEEK

JOURNALISM WITH A HUMAN TOUCH

It's a liberal publication and as I was researching statistics on marriage and the family, I stumbled across this December 15, 2019 article by Rachel Lu:

Who destroyed the American family?

What conservatives and liberals can learn from each other about family values



RACHEL LU
DECEMBER 5, 2019



Liberals don't hate families.

It shouldn't be necessary to say this, but it is, in light of the dire warnings that conservatives have been issuing for years about the liberal war on the family. Tune into talk radio, and you'll get an earful about progressive plots to undermine family

It's titled: "Who Destroyed the American Family? In the article the writer described the hypocrisy of the right...the red states...Christians versus the Liberals...the blue states... Lu argued in the article that Left is more committed to their values than the right." She said this:

"The collapse of *red state* families is a real problem, however. If the right is truly working to save the family, why are well-to-do Bostonians beating the citizens of Arkansas and Oklahoma in the game of matrimony? Conservatives seem to appreciate that this is a problem for them, as they implicitly acknowledge when they excoriate their progressive brethren for 'failing to preach what they practice.' It's a curious critique that has become increasingly mainstream on the right as partisan demographics shift. Once conservatives condemned progressives for their libertinism, but now, progressives are looking increasingly disciplined... Conservatives do themselves no favors by warning ominously about a liberal war on the family, when they are guilty of not valuing marriage themselves." *The Week*, Rachel Lu

Ouch...she's right...we divorce like the world...we cohabitate like the world...we have babies out of wedlock like the world...we have abortions like the world...and we wonder why there's no power in our churches and why our "Christian homes" are in shambles? You see we've compromised...we've compromised like Solomon. The things that are now "acceptable" would have never been acceptable in your grandparent's generation. And unless you think I want to go back and live in the past, I don't...but, I simply point to the trajectory we're on. Where are we going to be in another 5, years, 10, years, 20 years? How bad is it going to get...and I'm talking: IN THE CHURCH?

Over time, Solomon forgot his own counsel and the wisdom he offered to his own sons. God had told Solomon, (as well as Solomon's father David), that no king should amass horses, silver or gold, nor were they to have multiple wives. These commands were designed to prevent the king from trusting in his own power and might. Solomon broke all three of these commands, and even worse...Solomon did this...

1 Kings 11:7-8

⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. ⁸And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

What offerings were offered to Molech? Sons. Solomon allowed his wives to offer his own children to the fire of Molech...a false god that doesn't exist. Oh, the devastation of not listening to God! 1 Kings 11 tells us God's reaction...

1 Kings 11:9-11

⁹And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice ¹⁰and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. ¹¹Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.

Church, sin has consequences, and that's true in the life of the individual, which permeates to the family and ultimately permeates through a nation. That's us! **Turn to Proverbs 3.** I'll show you how Solomon didn't heed his own advice.

Proverbs 3:1-2

¹My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, ²for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

Go to Proverbs 4...watch this pattern...

Proverbs 4:1-2

¹ Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain^[a] insight, ² for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching.

But Solomon wasn't attentive to God's word. He disobeyed and walked away from God's commands. He got wealthy...he got fat and sassy...he had women turning his head and everything changed. And I want you to watch how much Solomon talked about wives... This is so interesting.

Proverbs 17:1

¹ Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting^[a] with strife.

Proverbs 19:13

¹³ A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain.

Proverbs 21:9

⁹ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.

Proverbs 21:19

¹⁹ It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.

Proverbs 27:15-16

¹⁵ A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike; ¹⁶ to restrain her is to restrain the wind or to grasp oil in one's right hand.

It can't be done! What a mess in his family! So, how did all of this happen? Did Solomon learn this behavior? I would argue he did. He saw it in his father, David, who was candidly, a passive father, who led a dysfunctional home. Let me tell you a story from 2 Samuel 13. This is a very sensitive topic for the young in our audience...so, I'm going to do my best to be vague. But, I will say this: some of the worst acts of evil can be found in the most respected homes. David was described as: "a man after God's own heart," but his homelife was a total disaster.

Now, we all know David's troubles started with Bathsheba. He committed adultery with her and then had her husband executed. Thankfully, he repented of those horrific sins...but, those patterns would ultimately become known by his children. Under David's leadership, (scholars tell us), Israel's territory as a nation went from around 6,000 square miles to over 60,000 square miles. One historian said: "Under David's reign, there was a chicken in every pot and a grape on every vine." David was immensely successful as King, but NOT as a father.

In 2 Sam. 13 we learn of the account of Amnon and Tamar. They were both children of David, but by different wives. They were half brother and sister. Unfortunately, Amnon took advantage of his half-sister in a horrible encounter. Tamar was now disgraced...and as was custom in that day, she put ashes on her head and tore her clothes in great mourning. Well, Tamar had a brother...a full brother, by the same mother and his name was Absalom. He learned of what had happened to his sister and he waited for David, his dad to act...knowing...and believing... "Surely dad will call us all together and right this horrific wrong!" Let's see...

2 Samuel 13:21

²¹ When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry.

Some manuscripts actually add this phrase: "*But he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, since he was his firstborn.*"

So, he did what? NOTHING! Absolutely nothing! Church, when it comes to families...we have to protect our children and care for our children. It makes me think of this transgender ridiculousness and why it's so insidiously evil for our children. Instead of protecting them in their innocence, we're chest-binding our daughters and emasculating our sons. It's so twisted and so it was with David. He did nothing when he should have had the hard conversation with Amnon. And what about Tamar? Oh, Tamar needed to know that her dad was going to defend her honor and be her advocate, protector and champion. But, instead, he did nothing and that, in and of itself, was just more abuse. This time coming from her passive father...instead of her half-brother!

So, the issue is unresolved. It's just hanging out there. And let me tell you: unresolved issues don't just go away. They fester and cause tremendous pain...psychological issues...fear, panic, nightmares, depression, anger...even physical illness, and children who get caught up in this type of dysfunction have little hope of understanding what's normal and what's not...and guess what...they often repeat these awful patterns in their own families. That's exactly Solomon did!

David was angry, but he did nothing. For how long? A month? Nope. 6 months? Nope! A year? Nope. Try two years! I guess David was hoping to stay away from another scandal. That might hurt his poll numbers...and so, his kids are going to take it on the chin. Well, by the time two years have gone by Absalom has had it and he's going to take action. He decides to host a family banquet for his siblings, and it's at this banquet that he kills his brother. David, of course, hears about all that happened. He was furious. Absalom learns of this and he flees to his grandfather's home, (that's his momma's dad), for three years. This place is called Geshur...a few hundred miles away to the east of the Sea of Galilee. Now watch this:

2 Samuel 13:39

³⁹ And the spirit of the king^[f] longed to go out^[a] to Absalom, because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead.

What does that mean? It means this...David wanted to go see Absalom, but he didn't go! Why? He was only a few hundred miles away! It's your son...go see him...make things right! What Absalom did was horrible, but so was what David had done some 30 years earlier. Unfortunately, David made no attempt to restore the relationship. Finally, when we come to chapter 14, David permitted Absalom to return to Jerusalem...yea!!! But...

2 Samuel 14:24

²⁴ And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence." So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence.

For how long did they live separate? TWO YEARS!

2 Samuel 14:28

²⁸ So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, without coming into the king's presence.

Finally, Absalom was at his wits' end. He could never get an audience with his dad, so he burned a man named Joab's field. Who was Joab? He was David's General, the Commander of his Army. (Absalom was desperate...can you see that?) He was saying, "Joab, I want to see my dad.

2 Samuel 14:33

³³ Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

Yea, they reconciled, right? No. A kiss in that day was like our handshake. And that's where it all ended. If you keep reading, you'll find that David stonewalled his son. Chapter 15 describes how Absalom began the process of seeking to steal the kingdom from his dad. Absalom would go to the

gates of the city of Jerusalem (for four years) and he won the hearts of the people...saying: "If you don't get satisfaction from my dad...come to me and I'll take action." Finally Absalom mounted an armed rebellion against his dad and he stole the kingdom.

David's fatal flaw was his passivity. I would argue passivity is epidemic in our culture. Not passive aggressiveness. That's easy...just look at social media. No, I'm talking about dealing with stuff. You see, David conquered nations and built a powerful kingdom, but he left his family in the lurch because he put his head in the sand. The same man who slayed Goliath, couldn't and wouldn't battle the giant of sin in his own house.

Ultimately, David would regain his kingdom, as his General Joab killed Absalom. David was devastated. Now I tell you this story because I believe this dysfunction was passed down to Solomon.

Listen, we can't keep ignoring what's under our nose that must be addressed. Yes, it may be very awkward and painful to address what you've got in your family...but, if you don't...you are not truly loving your family. You say, "It's not all my fault..." it's their fault. Totally? 100% of it is their fault. Oh, it's easy to get defensive and try to protect ourselves. Listen, own up to the 20% or 30% (or whatever it is) that's your fault and show empathy and stop defending yourself and watch what happens! Listen, when we admit we're wrong and show humility, things change...why? Because can God steps in! Humility (repentance) is the doorway to healing! Never forget: it's never too late to do what is right!

You say, "They'll never reconcile. They'll never forgive me." Maybe, but that's beside the point (but very often people who say this, find out they're wrong). Do your part and leave the rest to the Lord. If they never change, that's on them, not you. Take ownership and responsibility to do your part and you'll be set free from pent-up pain, anguish and guilt. David never got that chance. Absalom died. And wept, Absalom, Absalom, Oh Absalom. Don't let that be you.

Church, what's sad is the fact that it seems Solomon followed in his dad's footsteps. Solomon would eventually write a book in the Bible called: Ecclesiastes and he said this:

Ecclesiastes 2:4-11

⁴ I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. ⁵ I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶ I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines,^[b] the delight of the sons of man. ⁹ So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹ Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

What are you going after? How is your home? You've had a busy week...school's started back...we've entered in the crazy season...and if we're not careful we'll forget God and being striving after the wind. Solomon had the American Dream 2,500 years before America was formed. You'd think we'd have learned by now.

Solomon described this final warning to his son, in the last chapter. Here's the last 3 verses. Perhaps, the last thing Solomon ever wrote:

Ecclesiastes 12:12-14

¹² My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. ¹³ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.^[d] ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with^[d] every secret thing, whether good or evil.

And isn't that eerily similar to:

Proverbs 1:7

⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
