

Parenthood (17): Redefining the Family

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Strong influences are being brought to bear upon our society to redefine the family. Because of the high rate of divorce and casual attitudes toward sex, much of the population no longer fits the “traditional” nuclear family model. Rather than altering our values and morals to fit the God-given pattern, America has chosen to alter the pattern.

In my opinion, no single medium has done more over the past three decades to promote this change than television, and I issue the following challenge to the reader: *list every TV show you can think of that featured a broken family.* These will get you started: Bonanza, My Three Sons, The Andy Griffith Show, Petticoat Junction, Family Affair, The Partridge Family and The Big Valley.

There has been a subtle and insidious process at work through television over the past thirty years. First, families coping with the death of a parent were sympathetically portrayed. This scenario eventually gave way to the family victimized by divorce, but the sympathy factor remained intact. As the stereotypes began to fall, divorce itself was made acceptable, then the approval of outright fornication. The infamous Murphy Brown episode then glorified single parenthood through artificial insemination. Now we have finally come to homosexuality being made respectable, thus aiding its entry into the cultural mainstream.

Does anyone think this process was accidental?

A mother or father who has been placed in a situation of raising children alone through no fault of their own deserves sympathy. *It is not the ideal but can be made workable with creativity and effort.*

But it is a long way from making the best of a bad situation to glorifying and idealizing single parenthood, especially when the motive is to justify selfishness. Any man or woman who chooses to abandon their mate and ditch their parental duty does not deserve the luxury of thinking that the “family” will be fine without them.

As I am fond of saying, *words mean things*, and “family” has long meant a mother, father and children. It has now been redefined to apply to any chosen living arrangement. God bless those who are raising children alone. But let us guard against the idea that one family structure is as good as another. A strong nation does not rest upon the rubble of broken homes.