

# Prescription for Troubled Homes

By Bobby Dockery

## Part 1

### Introduction

We are living in a time when there are many destructive forces at work in our homes. As a result, millions of homes are crumbling. Some are being crucified on a cross of divorce while others are being sacrificed on the altars of betrayal, money-madness, selfishness and pleasure seeking.

It may well be that there is no more crucial problem facing the world than the problem of our troubled homes! Harvard University sociologist Pitirim A. Sorokin wrote of “the disintegration of the contractual family” because “the tie binding husband and wife... (has been) sundered more and more frequently by divorce and separation.” Dr. Harold Voth of the Menninger Foundation stated, “I honestly believe that civilization as we know it is imperiled by the forces which are eroding the family.” Famed historian Will Durant noted recently, “The family has gone to pieces...get rid of the family and you have nothing.”

Even within the church, many homes are facing grave difficulties. Some are confused as to what a Christian home should be like. In despair they ask, “What can be done to save our homes?” For answers, we must turn to the Word of God—His prescription for troubled homes. God ordained the family as the institution that best fills our physical and emotional needs. This is the message of the first two chapters of the Bible; man was lonely and incomplete until God provided him a family. Our homes will only function properly when they are built according to God’s instruction.

Christian homes don’t just happen, but they must be built! Someone said, “Good homes are not made in Heaven; they come in kits and they have to be put together!”

What are the Enemies of the Home?

Our homes are floundering upon these *Deadly D’s*.

### Divorce

Over 1 million American homes are broken by divorce annually. Many thousands of times a day, the words “divorce granted” are repeated around the world. The divorce-to-marriage ratio in America is almost 50%. That means for every two marriages in this country there is one divorce. ABC News reported on February 19, 1987 that a 16-year-old high school sophomore in Nashville, Tennessee had just been granted his second divorce.

### Delinquency

Skyrocketing juvenile delinquency is another measure of the problems confronting our homes. Young people under the age of 18 commit almost half of all serious crimes—rape, robbery and murder—in the USA. Countries all over the world are

experiencing a growing problem with teenagers and even preteens involved in wild, violent and lawless behavior.

### **Drinking**

Many homes are being dissolved in a sea of drunkenness. There are 10 million alcoholics in the USA, and alcohol is involved in one third of all suicides in the United States. Alcohol is involved in 65% all suicides in Germany, according to West Germany's Minister of Health; in 1976, over 34% of the total population of that country over age 16 had an alcohol problem. Statistics released in London indicate that 4% of all alcoholics in Britain are in their teens or very early 20's. Alcoholism is the third most deadly killer in both America and the Soviet Union after heart disease and cancer.

### **Drug Abuse**

It is estimated that 22 million Americans have used cocaine! There are 5,000 new users every day. According to a 1966 study, 61% of high school seniors have used drugs—one in five have used cocaine, 17% of 13-year-olds have used marijuana. In the first five months of 1986, 180 babies suffering from cocaine addiction were born in one single Los Angeles hospital.

### **Domestic Violence**

Family members killing each other are responsible for 20% of all homicides in the USA. Some estimate that 2 million wives are battered by their husbands every year in America! No one really knows the number of children who are abused in the home; some say as many as 6 million annually. In his home in Houston, Texas, second grader Daniel Brownell was left paralyzed and permanently senseless by his stepfather's attacks. Branded on his body in cigarette burns were the words "I cry." Unspeakable crimes are tearing many homes to shreds.

### **Disregard**

In far too many homes, there is almost total disregard for biblical standards by which homes should be established and maintained. Homes are crumbling because God's will for the family is being ignored. No attempt is made to create a spiritual atmosphere in many homes throughout the world. Family members live heedless of God. The result? Millions of homes are hurting!

The condition of many homes is best summed up by the woman who wrote to a preacher and said, "I want to tell you my home is Hell. If Hell is any worse than my home, it must be an awful place."

## **Part II**

### **The Purpose of the Home**

Happy homes are impossible unless God's purpose for the home is recognized. The ideal home is the one that is built upon God's ideal for the home. Consider the following purposes for marriage and the family that are found in God's Word.

### **To Express Love**

It is intriguing to observe how often the Bible speaks of love in connection with the home (Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:25, 28; Titus 2:4). Love expresses itself to the fullest degree in marriage and the home. The kind of love that should characterize the home is beautifully described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. It is tragic that the human capacity to express and receive love is often twisted to become a means of gratifying selfish lusts.

### **To Provide Companionship**

God said, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Woman was created to be a “help meet” or suitable companion for man. Husbands and wives should enjoy being together, discussing things together and doing things together (1 Corinthians 11:11-12). The family must be a mutual aid society.

### **To Promote Purity of Life**

God has created men and women with certain physical, emotional and psychological needs, which He intended to be fulfilled in marriage. Sexual desire is God-given, but it must be used as God intended within the marriage relationship (1 Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 3:4). Intimate relationships outside of marriage are defined by the Bible as adultery or fornication, and they are condemned as sinful in the strongest possible language (Romans 1:29; Ephesians 5:3; Galatians 6:19-21)!

### **To Preserve the Human Family**

The first man and woman were commanded to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28). Children are “a heritage of the Lord” (Psalm 127:3). Children are to be brought into the world through an act of love, not by an act of lust (1 Timothy 2:15; 5:14). How tragic that annually millions of children are born out of wedlock.

### **To Supply the Physical Needs to the Family**

The family is an economic unit as well as a social and a religious unit. The Bible says that the man who fails to provide for his own has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (1 Timothy 5:8). Only the home as God intended it provides a suitable economic arrangement for the rearing of the family (2 Corinthians 12:14).

### **To Prepare the Family Members for Heaven**

The home should be a spiritual training ground (Ephesians 6:4). All members of the family should find help within the home to develop spiritually. The right attitude toward God, Christ, the Bible, the Church, marriage and the home must be taught and practiced within the family.

When these purposes are recognized and practiced, troubled homes can be healed.

### **We Must Accept Our Responsibilities in the Home**

One of the key words associated with marriage as God intended it is responsibility. In any relationship that involves one person with another there must be mutual responsibility. God intended that both husband and wife bear certain responsibilities in connection with their relationship with each other. No one person has all the rights

in a home. No one person has all the responsibilities. No home can function properly unless a proper balance is maintained. A significant relationship can only be built on significant commitment and responsibility!

### **Loving One Another**

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the importance of love in building a happy marriage (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29, 33; Titus 2:4). Love is the main pillar and support of the home.

### **Creating a Permanent Relationship**

Marriage must be *until death do us part* (Romans 7:2). God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:9). The marriage bond is no mere human contract. It is a divine yoke!

### **Maintaining Absolute Fidelity**

Husband and wife must *forsake all others* and keep themselves to one another alone *as long as they both shall live*. Those who violate their marriage vows subject themselves to the stern judgment of God (Hebrews 13:4). Unfaithfulness to the marriage bond results in broken promises—to God, to husband or wife, to society!

### **Supporting One Another**

Husband and wife must stand up for one another, stand by one another and sometimes stand in for one another! They must learn to be mutually supportive of one another! In a hostile world, the home must be a fortress of strength, encouragement and mutual assistance!

### **Functioning in the Proper Role**

The responsibilities of the home are divided among various members. Husbands and fathers are to love and provide for the family while serving as its head (Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:23-33). Wives and mothers are to be keepers of the home (Titus 2:5), to guide the house (1 Timothy 5:4) and to submit to their husbands (Colossians 3:18). Children have the responsibility to respect and to obey their parents (Proverbs 23:22; Colossians 3:20) and to serve in the home without grumbling or complaining (Philippians 2:14).

### **Conclusion**

Marriage can be either a blessing or a curse. At its best, marriage is a foretaste of Heaven, but at its worst, it is a premature Hell. Marriage will be rich and rewarding when God's will is applied to the everyday situations of life. There is no more critical need than the need for healthy Christian homes!

Let it be remembered that our homes will never be what **they ought** to be until we, as husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters are what we ought to be. Why not resolve to allow God to have His way with your life and your home today?