

# Family Sanctuary

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*Restoring the  
Biblically Hebraic  
Home*

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# Introduction

Everyone needs sanctuary, a place of peace and safety, a place of blessing and affirmation, a place of sanctity and security. These are the functions for which God designed the home from time immemorial. Through the centuries, however, persistent and unrelenting attacks have been made upon the most fundamental unit of both society and the church. Hellenization, Latinization, and secularization have rendered the modern Christian home a mere shadow of its biblical ideal.

God's design for the home, however, has always been and will always be the same. It is perfectly clear when we return the family and home to the matrix from which it emerged in a truly biblical restoration. It is not enough, however, to call simply for "biblical" restoration. The term *biblical* has become so diluted that it has been virtually eviscerated of meaning. In order for true biblical order to be restored, a return to the "biblically Hebraic" must take place. The unfortunate truth about most faiths in today's world is that they *claim* to be biblical but they fall far short of *being* biblical.

The problem is that practically all societies and people groups have read their own concepts and cultures into the Bible rather than drawing out from the Holy Scriptures the truths that have always been there. The church's approach to the Holy Writ has been ignorant at best and disingenuous at worst. When interpreting the Bible, Christians have engaged

in eisegesis rather than exegesis, by injecting their preconceived notions into Scripture rather than extracting from the text what it clearly says.

Texts without contexts have become pretexts. The grammar of the Scriptures (Hebrew language in the first testament and Hebrew thought underlying Greek language in the second testament) has been largely minimized. Likewise, the history and culture of the people through whom and to whom the sacred texts were committed have been ignored. Entire theologies have been based upon a “criterion of dissimilarity” in which texts in the Apostolic Scriptures that have clear connections with the Hebrew Scriptures have been dismissed as not being the authentic words of Jesus and the apostles but the work of subsequent redactors. The very idea has given rise to a Christianity that has been wrenched from its moorings and set adrift in a maelstrom of non-biblical—even anti-biblical—traditions, secular humanism, and demonic perversion.

In order to restore society to a “biblical” basis, the church must first restore the Hebraic roots of the Christian faith. This is especially true in the important arena of human relationships. God’s perspectives on family and the home can never be understood without a renewal of the Hebraic foundations which God himself established for this core element of human existence.

A complete rethinking of the issues of family and home is necessary. Ideas founded in Greek philosophy and in various polytheistic and monistic religions must be abandoned. If today’s society is to be saved from implosion because of the destruction of its nuclear unit (the family) a return to biblically Hebraic understanding must occur. Nothing short of a Hebraic restoration will suffice.

God’s Word works! What God has said will outlast everything that exists. “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away,” Jesus declared. What God

said about family and home is ultimate truth, and God's Word is the only thing that will endure. Since God dynamically modeled among the Jewish people his instructions regarding society's fundamental unit, it is to the Jewish people and the Hebrew Scriptures that the church and society must look for understanding that will renew the biblical home and bring health and vitality to society at large.

Trying to fabricate a program that will somehow accommodate the modern notion of family by obliquely incorporating biblical terminology into sociological or psychological categories will only result in furthering the disaster. A thin veneer of religiosity over societal definitions of family will not suffice. Syncretism is not the answer.

It is for this reason that I have undertaken the research and writing of this volume. It is my understanding that recovering the Hebraic foundations of the Christian faith is a golden key that unlocks the treasures of Holy Scripture and enriches the lives of believers. In no area of life could this be more true than in the family and the home.

I wish to thank my faithful colleague Dr. Karl Coke for his ongoing insightful teaching on the primacy of the family as the institution for spiritual growth and maturity for Christian believers. My colleagues Dr. Marvin Wilson and Dwight Pryor have also imparted superb teaching on this important issue.

I wish also to express my appreciation to my dear friends Dr. Charles and Luellen Bryant-Abraham for their careful reading and evaluation of the manuscript and for their insightful and helpful suggestions. Judy Grehan has also been an invaluable asset with her thoughtful observations and careful copy editing of this book. My dear Israeli friend, Zvi Zachor, has fulfilled an important role in promoting and marketing my books, including this volume.

A host of other friends have joined together with Pat and me as a family in community, lending their support, prayers, and advice as we seek to provide quality, theologi-

cally sound, and conceptually balanced materials on which individuals and faith communities can build solid lives and ministries. It is a challenge that we do not take lightly, nor do we imagine in our wildest dreams that we could do it alone. Our laterally connected network of scholars and leaders gives us mutual accountability, both academically and spiritually, and for that we are exceedingly grateful.

I believe that as you read this volume, you will be challenged intellectually and spiritually to consider new perspectives that I believe are nothing more than restored biblical and historical positions on some of the most important issues in life, those that impact the family and the home. I pray that they will assist you in establishing the sanctity of your home and building and maintaining your family sanctuary.

Fraternally in Messiah  
John D. Garr, Ph.D., Th.D  
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*Chapter 1*

# **Society's Heart and Soul**

## ***THE INDISPENSABLE FAMILY***

Sanctuary! A retreat to sanity in a world of madness. A respite of safety and security. Repose in loving, affirming relationships. Relief from stress and rest from labor. A refuge for spiritual renewal, growth, and development. The biblically Hebraic home is God's provision for all of this and more!

Unfortunately, however, these are not descriptions of the average home in dysfunctional Western culture. During the past century few decades, revisionist attempts have been made to redefine both the family and the home. Men with political agendas designed on societal or world domination have made savage efforts to restructure the understanding of the home or to destroy it altogether. The nuclear family is under heavy attack from demonic societal forces that threaten its demise.<sup>1</sup>

Still, the family remains the fundamental building block of society, and the home is society's heart and soul. Healthy homes produce healthy societies. When societies have strong and mutually affirming bonds in the home, a general sense of security provides an atmosphere conducive to personal growth and the resultant courage to strive for excellence.

On the other hand, when the bonds of family are not valued and strengthened, a general sense of insecurity arises, resulting in malaise and irresponsibility. Dysfunctional or non-functional homes produce societies marked by either anarchy or autocracy. When societies depart from the fundamental model of social interaction that the Creator designed the home to be, fundamental morality suffers, and general societal disintegration occurs.

### **DYSFUNCTIONALITY AND DEMOLITION**

The mad and maddening quest for “success” that has glorified—even deified—individual accomplishment in the modern and post-modern worlds has left many, if not most, homes hollow shells, void of any resemblance to the family sanctuary of ancient times. An egocentric generation has reduced the home to little more than an overnight rest stop for strangers. The family table (*qua* snack bar or merely refrigerator) has become little more than a feeding station for an increasingly restless generation on the move.

The assertion that every want and whim must be an inalienable right has fertilized the growth of perhaps history’s most selfish generation. The “have-it-your-way” mentality is so reinforced by clever advertising that even a chest-thumping popular song boasts, “I did it my way.” Parents are so acclimated to demanding their rights that they give little thought to sacrificing to maintain a secure family environment.

This is an institutionally stimulated generation that wants to be free to feel, not to think. Because everything is assigned value on the basis of either feeling or utility, everything is consequently devalued. The music industry has become a diabolical medium for disseminating hate, violence, promiscuity, and perversion. The more vile the performance, the more admired and imitated the idol. The result is that in much of Western society today alley-cat morality is glamorized, and canine mores are the norm. Children of the MTV genera-

tion are governed by one rule, "What's in it for me?", and dominated by one maxim, "If it feels good, do it." The quest of the masses is for *joie de vivre* in unbridled and unending excess.

In this "enlightened" age of personal freedoms, absolute ethics and demands for standards of conduct are old-hat: they are antiquated relics of man's past ignorance and superstition. Religions that make demands are enemies of progress and must be stamped out. The only absolute that absolutely exists in this generation is the understanding that there are absolutely no absolutes. Any restrictions on individual "liberties" must be dealt with in harsh, restrictive ways.

Because of this mentality, everything has been redefined. Even history has been rewritten by revisionists with an agenda of pluralism that includes every position except the absolutist and particularist views of monotheistic faith. Marriage is being redefined, not in biblical terms but in aberrant ones to promote politically correct agendas. Family is being so violently restructured that the "nuclear family" of husband, wife, and children is increasingly threatened with extinction.

In Europe, neo-paganism and secularism have conspired to overwhelm Christianity, giving rise to a generation that knows no God and lacks even basic morality. In Germany ancient Teutonic gods are openly worshipped with fertility exercises that would have made the ancient Greeks and Babylonians blush. France has been described as a perfect example of what a nation can become when it is wholly without God. Britain is but a shell of its former self with the current king-in-waiting expecting his oath of office to include a politically-correct commitment to defend all religions, not just the biblical faith to which his ancestors swore fealty.

In much of the former Soviet Union, social experimentation and brainwashing began at tender ages when children were taken from parents and educated by the state. They became state children. In a homogenized society, all homes were the same. They served only as vehicles for the state

religion, atheism. The result of this social experimentation is that nations with malfunctioning moral compasses now find it necessary to invite Western Christians to teach ethics in schools and colleges just to maintain some semblance of civil order.

Likewise, in China the Chairman-Mao brand of communism has made everyone property of the state and legalized forced abortions for anyone who dared to threaten the well being of the state by having more than one child. This utilitarian view has made the masses expendable, including Christians who survive only as an underground church.

Even in nations that were once profoundly clannish and family centered, the madness of family bashing has diminished formerly strong family ties. Values that had endured for millennia have been cast to the wind in an all-consuming quest for a homogenized, politically correct world society. Whole societies are being pressured to redefine both marriage and family in categories that are inimical to the health of individuals, children, and society itself—all in the name of “tolerance.” The truth is that everything is to be tolerated except those religions that make demands with required absolutes—Judaism and Christianity. These enemies of individual “freedom” must eventually be stamped out entirely.

### **COLD HEART, WARM HEART?**

Jesus made this observation about the age of lawlessness: “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.”<sup>1</sup> Herein is the root cause of the unrelenting attacks on the institution of the family and home. Evil triumphs because men of conscience say little or nothing. As lawlessness, even hatred of God’s laws, becomes more abundant, the love that is the essence of the Divine diminishes in human hearts to be replaced by an insatiable desire for self-fulfillment and pleasure. The world which once featured much humanitarianism and concern for the downtrodden is ruled by those who think of nothing except self. When

men's concerns are only for themselves, there is no depth to which they will not stoop. When men are wrapped up in themselves, they make increasingly smaller packages.

Because of sin, the world has become an increasingly cold and cruel place. The very sanctity of the home has been invaded by these sinister forces, making a growing percentage of homes increasingly cold, dark places. Society's heart has been blackened by sin, and love has been crowded out, replaced by self interest and diverse perversions. Then society weeps over kids killing kids in schools. Weapons, poverty, and political oppression are blamed—anything except the sin that is the real cause of this manifest evil.

Even though iniquity abounds, there is one positive assurance from God's Word: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."<sup>2</sup> God's grace is always superabundant, more than enough to meet every challenge. It is time for the fire of God's presence to warm the heart of a cold world. It is time that a renewal movement sweep over the societies of men throughout the world to restore the biblical models for home and family.

With the profound level of disrespect for authority and the lack of civility and etiquette in large segments of society, particularly in the younger generation, a restoration of biblical models for the home is not only a growing need in society but is also an indispensable requisite for its continued existence. If Western society is to survive the challenges of neo-paganism, monism, and secularism, a "back-to-the-Bible" movement must begin at the most fundamental level of society and the church, the family.

Societal renewal begins and continues one family at a time. The nations of the world do not need simply a multi-splendorous manifestation of ecclesiastical triumphalism. They need to be rebuilt from the foundations up. Restoring the family sanctuary is society's first and foremost need. The world needs millions of Joshuas who will make the resounding proclamation: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Rather than worrying about the rest of society and seeking to devise strat-