

The Role of the Family in National Obedience to Our Creator and Implications for the Statesman

We have been addressing the issue “How could a nation experience God’s blessings promised to the nation that is obedient to Him?” God has promised:

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people (Proverbs 14:34).

We recognize that the Religious Institution must play the leading role in achieving this goal. My intention is for Statesmen to clearly understand the role that the Family is designed by our Creator to play in building an optimal society cooperatively in partnership with Religion and Government.

As a brief overview, the Religious Institution, the Family and the Government each play essential and unique roles in building the society and nation intended by our Heavenly Father with the aim of untold blessing for everyone. Obviously, we have not reached this yet, which causes us to take a hard look to see what we can collectively do better. To show you where we are going, let me summarize roughly the roles to be played by each:

The **Religious Institution** is the channel of truth from God and what He requires.

The **Government** is the protector of the right of that truth.

The **Family** is the purveyor of the truths and values undergirding obedience to God.

Let us consider. As God was laying down the ground rules for His children, He set the stage with this guidance for how transmission of the truths necessary for national blessing should proceed:

When your son asks you in the future, ‘What is the meaning of the decrees, statutes, and ordinances, which the LORD our God has commanded you?’ (Deuteronomy 6:20)

.... it is in the intimacy of the Family that the rich truths of life, originating through God’s hand, whether seen or unseen, are to be conveyed to the next generation in an unbroken chain. The mechanism for conveying this truth was clearly laid out:

These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Look at the settings for this conveyance of these truths:

*Talk about them,
when you sit in your house,
when you walk along the road,
when you lie down,
when you get up,
bound as a sign on your hand,
a symbol on your forehead,
written on the doorposts of your house,
written on your gates.*

There is scarcely an area of life that is left out. Thus, it is in the normal activities of life that these values are to be transmitted. The truths are to be embraced from the source of truth — God. But then, they are to be passed on from generation to generation, person to person, in an unbroken chain. You can see how easy it would be to break that chain. All one father or a mother needs to do is carelessly ignore the seriousness of this

responsibility. As we have proceeded through the pain of the current pandemic, what has been as painful as the disease has been the increasing violence within the Family. For example, a father who physically or emotionally abuses the Family members within his care WILL NOT be able to impart the truths from God intended to be passed in the context of trust and tenderness in the crucible of life. It would be nearly impossible to take seriously any words expressed under these conditions.

Those who are parents must engage in continual self-examination, continual regeneration to maintain purity of life and message. This is no small task when, for the time being, the Family is often challenged in attempting to meet the basic survival needs of its members.

This is where we must seek to fulfill our challenging responsibility as God would have us. We have the amazing guidance from God in the person of Jesus. Hence, in each action or decision we take within the Family, we asked these questions: "What would Jesus do? How would Jesus make this decision?", if we did this with every action we take, we would be operating as Jesus does.

Our responsibility within the Family is not performed for our personal comfort – to ensure that we always experience being surrounded by a loving family. It must be done out of obedience to God in recognition of the Family's role in national blessing. It is essential that the Family understand clearly its role in advancing national blessing and not allow this perspective to become lost. It is so serious, with implications for our whole society, that Jesus warned us:

But whoever causes the downfall of one of these little ones who believe in Me—it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. (Mark 9:42)

This is one of the harshest – if not the harshest – warning Jesus gave on any subject. In my experience, Family members respond to Jesus' approach more than an authoritarian approach. Jesus' approach is really a servant approach within the Family. The responsibility to Family, as clarified by our Creator, conflicts with personal goals continually. The promise of blessing to the children is powerful:

Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land (Ephesians 6:1-3).

... so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life. Described here is blessing – blessing upon the next generation of children resulting from their obedience to God. We, as parents, want this blessing for our children. Furthermore, there is blessing upon the parents for their obedience:

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).

Then all your children will be taught by the LORD, their prosperity will be great (Isaiah 54:13)

Not surprisingly, we need to ensure displaying tenderness in dealing with children. There is a certain fragility that we must be sensitive to:

Then Jesus said, "Leave the children alone, and don't try to keep them from coming to Me, because the kingdom of heaven is made up of people like this" (Matthew 19:14).

Perhaps we should pause to reflect whether we might, in fact, have it backwards? By this, I mean that we must realize that there may be elements in the hearts of children that allow them to see more clearly God's hand.

The reality of the modern culture is that much of a child's education is currently performed through a formal process conducted by 'professional' educators. It can be tempting for those who participate in the process to view their roles incorrectly. These important servants must see themselves as servants of the Family, under whose authority they serve. Professional educators must support the Family in transmitting the truths and values our Creator requires primarily of the Family. A challenge is that if a professional educator did desire to convey content supporting the truths required by our Creator, what obstacles might they face by those who argue for separation of Church and State?

What are dangers, hindrances, obstacles to Family fulfilling this responsibility that Government must protect?

Education: Diluting the value-passing, truth-passing process. We must be extremely careful not to allow the formal or informal educational process to undercut the basic responsibility of the Family to convey God's truth and God's values to the next generation. Education must cautiously avoid values contradictions and protect the parents' efforts at conveying God's truths. This requires extreme restraint and an increase in trust that the Family will fulfill its God-given responsibility.

Media: has an amazing influence in conveying detrimental values. It is essential to exercise due diligence to avoid those detrimental values.

Government: has a huge responsibility to protect this obligation and right of parents to convey the required truth and values necessary to support obedience to God and contribute to God's response of blessing upon the nation. This is necessary, as God has said:

Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that you may prosper and so that you may enter and possess the good land the LORD your God swore to give your fathers (Deuteronomy 6:18).

Approaches on the Part of Statesmen and Governments

If Government feels that the Family is too weak to properly fulfill its responsibility, then it would be better for Government to work to strengthen the institution of Family rather than attempting to take over its responsibilities, potentially leaving the Family even weaker than we found it. If Government does have responsibility for a specific area, then the following questions must be asked of the proposed decision:

Does the proposed decision on the part of Government contribute toward, or at least not detract from, the Family functioning as the fundamental unit of society in which individual character and values are nourished and which provides the model for all other relationships?

If Family has responsibility for the specific area, then the following questions must be asked:

Is there anything Government should do to make it possible for Family to better accept this responsibility or meet this need?

Must Government work to produce a better environment, e.g., economically, within which the Family can be stronger and better play its God-given role?

This becomes an essential ingredient in receiving for our nations the promise from God:

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people (Proverbs 14:34).