



Deuteronomy & The Beauty of Obedience

Family Matters

She shall continue to be his wife; he must not divorce her as long as he lives. (Deuteronomy 22:19)

Essential Building Blocks

The only way to create a human is for one man and one woman to unite in intimacy. This is by God's design. From your inception, then, God intended for you to flourish in a family. This makes families the essential building blocks of civilization. When families are strong, people tend to flourish. When enough families fail, _____.

Miscellaneous and Family Law (Deut. 21:22-22:30)

- **Deut. 21:22-23. Exposed.** Leaving the body of a criminal exposed overnight desecrated the land.
- **22:1-4. Do not ignore.** Israelites not only had the obligation to avoid doing wrong; they had the obligation to seek out the right as well. They were to love their neighbors as themselves (Lev. 19:18).
- **22:5. Clothing.** Because gender is a natural and biological part of the created order, men and women are not to treat gender interchangeably (see Gen. 1:26-27). Rather, we celebrate the complementarian gift of two genders.
- **22:6-7. Bird's nest.** Moses does not specify if this is for humane reasons or for conservation, but the law results in both. **Parapet.** A low protective wall.
- **22:8-12. Together.** Israel was not to mix certain things. Though we are not explicitly told why, the law was apparently designed to give Israel an _____.
- **Tassels.** Numbers 15:37-41 explains that the tassels are to remind Israel to keep God's law.
- **22:13-21. Virginity.** Virginity was crucial for preserving the integrity of paternity, which was crucial for preserving the integrity of the family. If a man falsely accused his wife of misrepresenting her virginity, he was severely punished. If she had lied to him, she was to be stoned. **Cloth.** Likely the bed-sheet reflecting that the woman had been a virgin. Americans are so acclimated to promiscuity that this text is almost incomprehensible to us.
- **22:22. Another man's wife.** Adultery was a capital offense.
- **22:23-27. Pledged to be married.** Betrothals were as binding as marriage, so violating a betrothal carried the same punishment as did adultery. **In a town.** OT towns were small and compact, sharing walls, noises, smells, etc. In a town, one could assume that the liaison between the man and woman was consensual if there were no cries. In the **country**, one could not make that assumption.
- **22:28-29. Virgin.** It is unclear whether this text refers to assault or merely to enticement; the Hebrew word means "hold," and can imply either. Either way, if a man does have sex with an



Jewish man wearing tassels to remind him to obey God's Law (Gilabrand at English Wikipedia)



Remains of ancient Beersheba. Note how close the quarters were. Privacy is a modern invention (dmy)

unbetrothed woman, he must pay a substantial fine and he must offer to marry the woman and pay her expenses for life. Noting Exod. 22:16-17, the ancient rabbis pointed out that the woman is not obligated to accept the man's offer of marriage.

- **22:30. Father's wife.** Perhaps a prohibition against sleeping with a stepmother (see Lev. 18:7-8). We should remember that sex is a relational _____, and playing around with sex tears relationships apart. For the integrity of the family, God is strict about sexual behavior.

Protect the Integrity of our Families

- Understand how much is at stake.

The greatest poverty in America is the poverty of being _____. The greatest injustice in America is the injustice of _____ children. The greatest source of social unrest in America is _____ families. The greatest victim of America's family ethics is, and always will be, our own _____. No government program, no policy, and no amount of money can repair this damage. The damage can only be repaired when we embrace God's ethics. (cf., Mal. 4:6)

- Reclaim the _____ of your family.

When you married, you made a vow, and God expects you to keep your vows (Deut. 23:21-23). The family is sacred: it is God who joined you and your spouse (Matt. 19:4-9), and it is God who gave you children (Psalm 127:3). Your marriage is a model of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32). Treat your family with honor, and protect its purity (Heb. 13:4).



We choose our spouse, but God creates our family. Strong families are essential for our well-being, so we must treat our families as sacred. (Brad Dorsey, Pixabay)

- Deal with your selfishness.

The greatest threat to your family is selfishness; either yours or that of another family member. Selfishness is the opposite of love, and selfishness will damage or destroy your family. Don't measure your relationships by how they _____ or by what you are getting out of them. Rather, measure them by what God teaches.

- Treat your family as a ministry.

Think of your family as a ministry in which your job is to build up other members (1 Thess. 5:11; Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:29). Use the table of ethics in Ephesians 5:21-6:4. **Husbands:** love, nurture, and care for your wives. **Wives:** honor and respect your husbands. **Parents:** train your children to be like Jesus. **Children:** obey and honor your parents.

Answers: civilizations collapse, object lesson in purity, superglue, unloved, fatherless, broken, children, sacredness, make you feel