

# **DIVORCE**

(Josh McDowell research 2006-Present)

## **“BROKENNESS...DEEP AND WIDE”**

“The first change is the increase and acceptance of divorce. The sexual revolution of the 1960’s and 1970

Sex combined with a changing moral climate, rising individualism and other factors to lower our collective view of marriage, thus leading to a rise in divorce.”

“It is estimated that there are as many as 1.2 million divorces finalized each year in the United States. Consequently, each year 1 million children go through the emotional tug-of-war of seeing their parents divorce. ‘For the average couple marrying in recent years, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation remains between 40 and 50 percent.’ It is estimated that up to 60 percent of the children born in the ‘90s-today’s children and teens-will live in a single-parent home for part of their childhood.”

“In her study on the effects of divorce on middle-class families, Judith Wallerstein discovered that divorce hurts children deeply and for a long time. Nearly half of these children enter adulthood under-achieving, worried, angry and disapproving of themselves. Three in five of these children feel rejected by one or both parents. Forty percent set no specific goals as they enter adulthood. Many of the children (particularly females) enter adulthood carrying a load of guilt and anxiety that leads to multiple relationships and impulsive, early marriages that end in divorce.”

“Her study also concluded that children of divorce are plagued by a variety of other problems, including rebellion, depression, discipline problems, grief, guilt, fear, an inability to concentrate and an inability to trust. She writes, ‘National studies show that children from divorced and remarried families are more aggressive toward their parents and teachers. They experience more depression, have more learning difficulties, and suffer from more problems with peers than children from intact families. Children from divorced and remarried families are two to three times more likely to be referred for psychological help at school than their peers from intact families. More of them end up in mental health clinics and hospital settings.’”

“In addition, researchers at the National Marriage Project found that ‘many of today’s youth problems can be attributed, directly or indirectly, to the decline of marriage. This includes high rates of juvenile delinquency, suicide, substance abuse, child poverty, mental illness, and emotional instability.’ Research also shows that these issues and problems aren’t unique to the adolescent years. Children of divorce carry them and their fallout through their adult years.”

“A second change is the rise in cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births. A lower view of marriage has combined with changing morals and the experiences of so many adults having grown up in families where marriages fell apart, to leave a growing number of people ready to live together and have families, without the willingness to commit. In 2004, 36 percent of all births were to unmarried women. This is an increase from less than 5 percent in the mid-1960s.

Some of these mothers were living with the child's father. Some were not. Of these 1,470,000 births to unmarried women, 349,000 were to women under the age of 20, and 6,000 of those to girls under the age of 15 years. 'Eighteen percent of children living with single biological or adoptive fathers and 11 percent of children living with single biological or adoptive mothers also live with their parents cohabitating partner. Overall, 4.3 million children lived with a parent or parents who were cohabitating. Since 1970, the number of people living together outside of marriage has increase by over 1,000 percent.

Not only do these trends affect children's well- being as they grow through childhood and adolescence, but they also influence the growing child's own view of marriage. The 2003 Gallup Youth Survey specifically asked teens about their views on cohabitation. A significant majority (70 percent) of teens say they approve of couples living together prior to marriage. As might be expected, 85 percent of teens who do not attend church approve of pre-marital cohabitation. But alarmingly, 50 percent of teens who regularly attend church approve of couples living together before marriage. Clearly, the culture is influencing our kids' values and attitudes."

"A third change is the crisis of fatherlessness. Tonight, some 34 percent of our nation's children and teens will go to bed in a home where their biological father does not live. Some estimate that almost 60 percent of the children born in the 1990s will spend some part of their childhood in a fatherless home. Sadly, more and more children don't even know who their fathers are. Almost 40 percent of children in father-absent homes have not seen their father at all over the course of the past year, 26 percent of absent fathers live in a different state, and 50 percent of children who live without their father have never been in their father's home. Millions of other children are growing up in a home where their fathers may be physically present but are spiritually or emotionally detached."

"It is no surprise to learn that 60 percent of America's rapists, 72 percent of adolescent murderers and 70 percent of long-term prison inmates grew up without a dad."

"A fourth change in the family that affects our children and teens is the increasing number of mothers who work outside the home. In 1960, 39 percent of mothers with school-age children were working outside the home. In 1987, 70 percent of mothers with school-age children had such jobs. By 2001, 78 percent were in the labor force. While the trend has been for more and more mothers to juggle jobs and families, it appears that this trend may be shifting. A growing number of mothers are choosing to leave the workforce and stay home with their kids."

"A fifth change is the decreasing amount of time parents spend with their children. Men and women in high-pressure careers often work more than 40 hours a week and bring home work pressures and economic worries. Children are the ones who get shortchanged. The ongoing myth of 'quality time vs. quantity time' is often invoked to justify absence from the kids. When asked about their wishes for a better life, 27 percent of high school student wanted 'more money to buy items such as television and cars,' and 14 percent wished for 'a bigger house.' But the overwhelming majority of high school students-46 percent-wished for 'more time spent together with family.'"

“Sixth, more and more children and teens are victims of family violence. It’s frightening to think that much of our nation’s child abuse and sexual abuse goes unreported. The statistics that are available are frightening enough. It’s believed that by the age of 16, one out of every four girls in the United States and one out of every six boys is sexually or close abused. Most of the abuse is perpetrated by a parent, sibling or close relative. In addition, studies indicate that between 3.3 million and 10million children are exposed to domestic violence annually. Some of that violence is the direct result of alcoholism in the family.”

(Walt Mueller, “Brokenness...deep and wide,” The Journal of Youth Culture from CPYU, (2006): 2,3,18)

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### **“LIVES OF QUIET TURBULENCE”**

“The result was a four-year, nationally representative survey of 1,500 young adults between 18 and 35, members of the first generation to grow up with widespread divorce.”

“How many children of divorce are there?”

About a million American children each year experience their parent’s divorce. Of 18- to 35-year-olds, which is the generation that I studied, one-quarter are children of divorce. The projected divorce rate for first marriages nowadays is 43 percent. For remarriages, it’s about 60 percent. For the first marriages of children of divorce, the rate is roughly 60 percent.”

“Silver lining: Elizabeth Marquardt’s study revealed that for 38 percent of grown children of divorce, ‘God became the parent I never had.’”

(Agnieszka Tennant, “Lives of Quiet Turbulence,” Christianity Today (March 2006):41)

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### **“MARRIAGE”**

“Gallup Poll reports 35% of Americans 40-64 believe marriage is “very important” if a couple have a child vs. 58% of those 65 and older. Overall, 37% of adults believe a child is a “very important” reason to marry, while 65% say marriage is ‘very important’ f a couple plans to spend their lives together. Gallup trends show the percentage of U.S. adults who are married has fallen from 77% in the 60’s to 53% since 2000. The percentage of divorced Americans has grown from 3% to 11%, and the percentage of singles or unmarried living together has surged from 9% to 24%.”

(PWB, 6/2/06)

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### **“MARRIAGES FAILING”**

“More than half of U.S. couples who married in the late ‘70s never saw their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, say the Census Bureau. It’s the first time since World War II that married people had a less than even chance of still being married 25 years later, claims *The New York Times*. 70% of men who married between 1955 and 1959 remained married 25 years later, and 61% were still married by their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. 79% percent of first marriages for women in the late 1950s marked their 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary vs. only 57% who married for the first time from ’85 to ’89. While 74.4% of men who married since 1970 stayed married for 10 years, only 46.2% were still married after 30 years. Among women, 71.6% remained married after 10 years and only 42.1% were still together after 30 years.” (Christian Post, 9/21/07)

(“Marriage Failing,” from The Foster Letter – Religious Market Update, October 10, 2007, [www.GaryDFoster.com](http://www.GaryDFoster.com))

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