

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH

David Halbrook

“What is faith?” Faith is a belief in something unseen. For some such things there is sufficient evidence. For example, we believe that our great-great-great-grandmother existed though we never saw her. Our own life is proof of her life! Likewise, we know God exists because of what we see for every house has a builder (Romans 1:20; Hebrews 3:4). People may believe in unseen things simply because they want to believe it, even without true evidence. This is the faith of people who believe in reincarnation or purgatory, for which there is no eyewitness testimony or proof. Demand evidence for anything you do not see but believe.

“How do I get faith?” You have faith when you choose to believe something. In spiritual things *faith comes by hearing ... the word of God*. (Romans 10:17, here “hearing” means “accepting,” not just listening to). It is not a miraculous gift from God, as some people teach (otherwise, everyone would have it since God wants all to believe!). It is the natural result of God’s word and man’s God-given ability to reason.

What questions do you have about faith?

Editor’s Note: DO NOT assume that “everyone knows” what faith is. Faith in God is often presented as “blind faith” (faith without proof) thus true religion is falsely viewed as the belief in fairy tales. Some man-made churches teach that you can’t believe in Jesus without God working a miracle on you. For these, and other reasons, find someone to share our article from *Arkansas Weekly* with this week. Then, maybe they’ll have other questions.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

Phillip Owens

God designed marriage to be for life (Matt. 19:6[1]). God’s overall view of divorce is that He hates it (Mal. 2:16[2]). However, if a mate’s spouse commits fornication, God allows the innocent mate to divorce the guilty spouse and remarry without sin (Matt. 5:31[3],32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12[4]; Luke 16:18[5]).

So many people in our country have either never heard or read those passages, or disregard them as irrelevant if they have. Divorce is rampant. Many divorce for no reason except they are tired of living with their present spouse. When such remarry they commit adultery (see above passages). While God gives a mate whose spouse commits adultery the right to divorce and remarry, even then one does not necessarily have to exercise that right. Genuine repentance on the part of the guilty spouse and longsuffering and forgiveness on the part of the offended spouse can go a long way in keeping a marriage intact, even following the heartache of an adulterous affair. It would seem that this is especially important if children are involved.

God’s pattern for rearing children is for them to have their own mother and father. However, because of recalcitrant immoral mates, innocent spouses have no choice except to divorce and rear their children as single parents. On other occasions spouses whose mates sought divorce when no fornication was involved and when they themselves did not desire divorce are still left with the task of rearing children alone. More times than not custody is awarded to the mother, leaving little or no contact with the father. Given the character of some fathers, this is good.

God’s pattern cannot be improved upon. A child needs both parents. Recently one attended a class on human development for elementary certification in which a counselor gave a number of statistics concerning the effects of divorce on children.

Here are the statistics.

Children need their Fathers

- Nearly 4 out of every 10 children are being raised without a father.
- Among long-term prison inmates, 70% grew up without a father, as did 60% of rapists and 75% of adolescents charged with murder.
- Fatherless children are 3 times more likely to fail at school, require psychiatric treatment, and commit suicide before the age of 18.
- They are also 40 times more likely to experience child abuse than children in 2-parent homes (due to increased stress on the mother and increased time left with other relatives or friends).

Effects of Divorce

- 63% show some sort of psychological problem (anxiety, sadness, moodiness, phobia, and depression) to a much greater extent than children with other types of problems.
- 56% have poor grades or a significant drop in grades compared to before-divorce figures.
- 43% show increased aggression toward parents.

Effects on Female children

Among teenage and adult females whose parents divorced when they were children:

- Most suffered lower self-esteem.
- Most were precociously involved in sexual relations.
- Many had delinquent-type behavior.
- Most had difficulty with the trust of a partner and consequently difficulty establishing and maintaining a lasting adult heterosexual relationship.

Statistics

- In 1995, 18.9 million children lived with only one parent (27%) and 60% of those were with their mother.
- Of children living with one parent, 38% lived with a divorced parent (as opposed to a parent who was widowed or had a spouse working over-seas, etc)
- 4 million children live with their grandparents. In only 1/2 of the cases, one parent also lives there and in 37% neither parent was there.
- Most single-parent children live in metropolitan areas (14.5 million).
- Nearly 60% living with only their mother were at or below the poverty line.

- Children living with a divorced father were more likely to be a part of a family with a higher median income than those with mom.
- 85% of fathers granted custody of children were white rather than black.
- Most fathers granted custody were older than their wives.
- Most custodial fathers were better educated than their wives.
- Children are 70% more likely to experience criminal acts (abuse, rape, etc) when living with a step-father.

Children who are murdered by a parent are 99% more likely to be murdered by a step-father than a biological parent or step-mother.

If everyone on earth could realize that since God created man, He knows man completely, within and without. Therefore, He knows what is best for man. Divorce is not best! The above statistics show what God said all along.

What can we do to prevent divorce and its impact, especially on children? The following are some suggestions.

1. Before marriage, choose one to marry who is a Christian and who is deeply convicted as to the permanence of marriage (Matt. 19:6[1]). Be convicted yourself!

2. Do not let “divorce” be a part of our vocabulary when discussing your own marriage.

3. Carry out God’s word relative to how we should treat our mates (Matt. 7:12[6]; I Cor. 7:1-5[7]; Eph. 5:22-34[8]; Col. 3:18-19[9]; I Pet. 3:1-7[10]; Proverbs & Song of Solomon).

4. Realize that any marriage, even between people who serve the Lord, requires work. Sacrifices, communication, and consideration of the other mate’s feelings must be paramount. Otherwise, enticements of the world can tempt one or both parties to divorce.

5. Learn to apologize. We all make mistakes. Take full responsibility for your actions.

6. Learn unselfishness. Most problems occur in marriages because one wants his/her way to prevail without consideration of the other. When a couple has children and a mate divorces for no reason, or commits adultery, is obstinate, etc. and children are going to suffer, but the man/woman insists on his/her course of action, such a person is nothing but selfish! He/she is only thinking of him/herself.

Let us make our marriages as God planned and revealed in His word for our good here and in the hereafter, as well as for our children. www.cocwestside.com/?p=45