Private Sin Impacts Society

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The June issue of the *AFA Journal* focuses due attention on how five areas of private sin impacts all of society. This is such an important issue since a very large portion of our society has bought into the idea that "what I do in private has no impact on the public." This current issue reminds us that it is not true!

The first area the article addresses is pornography. Dr. Jill Manning documents that about 170 million Americans use the Internet and that nearly one-third go online "for sexual purposes." Her research has also revealed that online sexual activity is "a hidden public health hazard" that is exploding.

Substance abuse is another example of how private sin impacts society. The U.S. Department of Justice has found that more than one-third of convicted felons had been drinking alcohol when they committed their offense. Another study found that more than one-quarter of state and federal drug offenders committed crimes in order to get money to support their drug habits.

A third area is crime in general. The statistics are staggering. The National Center for Victims of Crime estimates that just three areas (robberies, arson, and Internet fraud) cost us more than $1.6 trillion.

Abortion is a fourth area. Pro-choice advocates say that it shouldn't matter to society what a women does with her body. Apart from the obvious moral objections to abortion are the social and economic costs. As one expert from the National Right to Life observed, "You can't lose fifty-three million lives and not expect it to have a serious economic impact."

A final area documented in the article is fatherlessness. U.

S. Ambassador Gregory Slayton has been on my radio program a number of times and documents the social and economic impact of fatherless homes. The estimated price tag for fatherhood failure is more than a trillion dollars over the last decade alone.

These few examples show the error in believing that private sin has no impact on society. We are paying a huge cost for people's sin. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

In Celebration of Fathers

Turn on most American TV shows today and try to find a dad who is respected, honored, and followed as he does his best to lead his family.

Good luck with that.

One of the greatest sources of pain and dysfunction in our culture is what has happened to fatherhood. On the one hand, fathers are dismissed as superfluous by social and cultural policies such as no-fault divorce and the wholesale acceptance of single mothering. On the other, many men passively refuse to resist the gigantic lie that they don't matter and are not important, producing the disaster of wholesale fatherlessness. The rates of the four major youth pathologies—teen pregnancy, teen drug abuse, school dropouts and juvenile crime—are tightly correlated with fatherlessness, often more so than with any other socioeconomic factor.{1}

God has a very different perspective on fathers and fatherhood. The God of the Bible has revealed Himself to us not just as Creator or Sovereign of the Universe. He has revealed Himself to us as *Father*. Even beyond that is a

staggering revelation: the Lord Jesus called Him "Abba"—Daddy{2}, and we are invited to do the same.{3}

Because of this, earthly fathers have an incredibly important responsibility and privilege: to show their children what the Heavenly Father is like. Every father, whether he wants to or not, whether he's aware of it or not, makes a powerful statement about God with his life that is either true or false. By their modeling, some fathers show God to be warm, accepting, loving, kind, and protective. Others declare that God is distant, cold, disconnected, and punishing. Many believers grow up without a father or with one who is difficult and detached; for them, spiritual and emotional health means learning to recognize and renounce the false image of God they were given and embrace the true Father-heart of God.

Children infer their own value from the way their fathers relate to them. Being ignored or neglected assures a child that she is invisible and worthless. Being treated as a vicarious means to achieve a man's own goals, or worse, as a sexual object, diminishes a child into a thing. But when a dad spends time simply being with his kids, they feel like they matter. When a dad invests in the ordinary moments of life by being fully *present* with his son, a boy learns how to be a male and that he belongs in the world of men. When a dad treats his daughter with respect and dignity, cherishing her femininity regardless of the form it takes—girly-girl or jockette tomboy—she learns that it's safe and good to be a girl. (And she learns what kind of treatment to expect from young men as she grows older.)

Sometimes, the simplest things can make all the difference in the world. On one life-changing Oprah show, someone offered a true word of wisdom, suggesting that a child knows his father really loves him when he sees his daddy's eyes light up. Fathers who heard this and starting putting it into practice reported that it immediately changed their family dynamics as

their children felt more loved. Regardless of a child's individual "love language,"{4} there is something profound about being able to see evidence of a father's delight. This is a lovely reflection of the much grander truth that we all long to see the lit-up face of God's attention, affirmation and affection when He looks at us. Consider the deeply moving Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6:

> The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:
> The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:
> The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

I respectfully suggest this is a picture of Abba-Daddy's eyes lit up as He looks at His beloved child, giving us "face time" because He loves us and He wants us to know and *feel* we are loved.

Dad's, this Sunday is your day. Enjoy it, knowing that God has given you the great gift of your irreplaceable influence in the family and in the world. That memorable line from the first "Spiderman" movie is memorable because it's biblical: "With great power comes great responsibility."

The Lord bless you as you use the power of your masculine strength to love and serve your families to the glory of God.

Notes

1. Jeffery M. Leving and Glenn Sacks, American Chronicle: Are single mothers the 'New American Family'?, http://ancpr.com/blog/archives/453#more-453. Accessed June 14, 2007.
2. Mark 14:36
3. Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:6
4. Dr. Gary Chapman, "The Five Love Languages," www.fivelovelanguages.com.

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