

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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Divorce Problems

The problem of juvenile delinquency comes mostly from broken homes. In most cases, the parents are separated or divorced.

Character-building organizations, as the YWCA, the YMCA, Boys and Girl Scout leaders, and other organizations can assist in curtailing the many juvenile problems. During this particular time, parents enter into heavy squabbles over bills and preparing children for occasional dates. The squabbles usually end in the court room after separation papers have been received.

Some of the facts about marriage and divorce will correlate with the subject of juvenile problem cases that are so often brought before the court. Statistics show that there are successful marriages. These usually occur between five and ten years after marriage.

The law gives their requirements for obtaining divorce as one year separation, adultery, illegal and unnatural sex conduct and alcoholism. As to the sociological and psychological or legal reasons why the number of divorces are being granted would be a subject within itself. It is without a doubt much easier to get married than to get a divorce. It only costs \$3 to \$5 for a license, and the same for a minister or a justice of the peace to perform the ceremony. Several attorneys have said that service fees for obtaining a divorce run from \$75.00 to \$500.00.

There are two or more sides involved in a divorce that one should be aware of and that is the children who are left without the love and affection of united parents.

In most divorces today, the blame is placed on the in-laws, especially the mother-in-law. Mother refuses to give up her daughter or son from her home and so the daughter or son would rather cleave to the parents than render love and affection to the mate. No advice is passed between the two unless it is endorsed by the in-law. When the first child is born, oh, how the grandmother can spoil it before it reaches the age of two or three years. When the child gets married and has any misunderstanding in family life, the older folk begin to point a finger at the son or daughter-in-law and make statements as to why they shouldn't have married the husband or wife in the beginning.

There is a sign in one of the leading churches, here, which states, "The Family that Prays together, stays together." Many divorces are planned before the couple marries. The father, who may tend to be a little over-protective of his daughter, often warns his son-in-law how he should treat his daughter. Perhaps in some cases, if the in-laws would let the married couple handle their own problems and cause no interference, there would be fewer divorces, and a standard unification between the two.

More emphasis should be placed on the subject of marriage, divorce, and the Bible, in the junior and senior years of public high school.

Love and affection is not a try-out thing when it comes to marriage. It should be a strong Christian agreement.

We advise girls who have made a mistake in giving birth to an illegitimate child to forget a boy friend who refuses to marry her until after the child is born, and upon hearing from his friend that the child is exactly like him wants her as a wife. If she marries him, he makes her feel that he did her a favor by making her his servitude. We advise the young lady to find her place in society to the best of her ability. There are plenty professional positions that she may prepare herself to fill, as typists, IBM machine operators, ecetera.

There is no criticism in this writing of the law of divorce but a reminder to the readers of some of the facts about it and so that they may study this problem of marriage and divorce before going into it. By all means, give it a good study, think of the future of the children from broken homes, who are juvenile delinquents because of divorce. If you have been married and have a divorce, think twice before you act again.

This Week's Sunday School Lesson

Becoming A New Person

What Is Our Concern?

In the eyes of the world Nick was a success. At sixty he could retire from his business. His children had finished college, were married, and were established in their professions. One daughter was a schoolteacher and married to a young engineer who was doing well in his company. Nick could not understand why Mary continued to teach, but that was her decision.

Nick's youngest son was an officer in the air force, and his wife had a gift shop. Nick worried about whether Ruth could make a go of it if anything happened to John, who was stationed near a trouble zone. Nick worried even more about what might happen to John.

Nick's oldest son was working with Nick and was doing well. In fact, he really carried most of the responsibility for the business now. Yes, Nick was considering retirement. Just one thing held him back. His work was his life. What would he do if he retired?

Beth had always thought that when the children were in school, she would have time to do all the things she wanted to do. She might read the books her friends talked about. She even had the wild idea that some morning, after the housework was done, she would take her paints and easel and try her hand at water colors again. Beth had enjoyed her art courses in college.

But Beth was disappointed. The children in school seemed to take more of her time than ever. There were so many demands—places they had to be taken, dresses and jeans to keep laundered, lunches to prepare, meetings to attend. Sometimes Beth felt irritated with the routine of living. What did it all add up to?

Peter's situation was more serious. His family was accident prone. And if there was a disease going around, not only did his children catch it, but they inevitably had severe cases.

Now he was troubled about his partner. Joe and Peter had started the business when they came out of the service. They had faced some critical times, but they had always managed to pull through. There never had been any question of trust, and Peter still could not believe Joe had been dishonest. Yet all the evidence pointed in that direction.

As if these difficulties were not enough, the quarrel with his wife lay heavily upon his conscience. Peter realized he had been absorbed in his own problems. But neglectful? That was something else. Could Peggy really be thinking of leaving him? Peter felt like giving up.

If you identify with any of these persons, you, too, are asking the question, How can I find life? The issue is this: How can my life, in whatever my circumstances, have meaning, purpose, and a deep sense of joy and peace?

Before You Read The Scripture

Again we are confronted with an incident concerning Jesus that only John, of all the Gospel writers, has included. As we

prepare to study this account and to listen for what this part of the Gospel record has to say to us, we will do well to think of it in terms of the place the story held in John's thinking.

In his Gospel, John placed the incident during the time of Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem. John began the account of this visit with Jesus' conflict with the Temple authorities, which came as a natural result of his driving out the merchants and overturning the tables of the money-changers.

Following hard upon this example of conflict with the authorities, John summarized Jesus' Jerusalem experiences with these words, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did." (John 2:23) Then comes the Nicodemus story. It is as though John had selected this story as an example of those persons who responded positively to Jesus' teaching in contrast to the negative response of the Temple authorities.

John may well have chosen this incident because the main participant was one of the Temple rulers, a member of the Sanhedrin. The significance John attached to Nicodemus as an example of one who believed is further strengthened by John's later references to him. (See 7:45-52; 19:38-40.)

A Word About Words

Signs: In the first three Gospels, Jesus' works of healing are represented as growing out of his compassion for human need. John refers to any unusual happening involving Jesus as a sign. Presumably, when Nicodemus spoke of "these signs that you do," he referred mainly to Jesus' deeds of healing.

Born anew: The Greek word carries the meaning "from above"; therefore, born of God.

Kingdom of God: The reference to "the kingdom of God" in this story is the only place the phrase is used in John's Gospel. In the other Gospels, especially in Mark, the term referred to a reign of God that was already at hand and was yet to come. Entrance into this kingdom required repentance and belief. In the discourse that John developed out of the Nicodemus-Jesus dialogue, "the kingdom of God" appears to be equated with "eternal life."

Spirit: In Greek the same word, *pneuma*, is used to mean "wind," "breath," or "spirit." In John 3:5-8, then, the translators had to decide when to translate *pneuma* as spirit and when to translate it as wind. Of interest, too, is the fact that in Jesus' comparison of the Spirit to the wind he was using one meaning of the word to throw light on another meaning.

Eternal life: This phrase seems to refer to a unique quality of life rather than to length of life or continuing life.

Flesh: John used this word to mean the whole physical life of a human being. John did not use flesh in the sense that Paul used it—to mean the source of our human sin and weakness.

Son of man: As used by John, this term simply indicates the real humanity of Jesus Christ.

What the Scripture Says
 The Scripture for today is John 2:13 through 3:36. Selected

verses are printed below. See Home Bible Study list in the back of the quarterly.
 John 3:1-15

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' 8 The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can this be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

Memory Selection: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. —John 3:16

How We Understand the Scripture

Our Scripture for this lesson is a familiar story. This familiarity may make it difficult for this passage to speak any new word to us. Perhaps we will be more receptive to what this passage can say if we try to analyze the kind of person Nicodemus was and his motivation for seeking out Jesus. Having done this, we will be in a position to ask at what points we find ourselves identifying with Nicodemus.

First of all, it seems safe to imply that Nicodemus was not yet ready to be identified openly or privately with Jesus of Nazareth. Nicodemus came to him by night. If Nicodemus did not want it publicly known that he had sought out Jesus, why was he interested in talking with Jesus at all? Do we have a clue in the approach Nicodemus took in his interview when he said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him"?

Nicodemus called Jesus "Rabbi." He admitted that he could not account for the wonderful deeds he had witnessed unless

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