

What Does God Want Your Family to Do?

KERRY LEE MORGAN



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Kerry Lee Morgan is an Attorney, admitted to practice in Michigan, Virginia, the District of Columbia as well as the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern and Western Districts of Michigan, U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court. He served with the United States Commission on Civil Rights in Washington D.C. Mr. Morgan has written a number of thought-provoking articles in the areas of natural law and unalienable rights.

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Introduction

This essay is titled “What Does God Want Your Family To Do.” What is a family? What is it supposed to do? What is its authority? Why was it created by God? How does God answer these questions? Do you know? Who is defending this kind of family and who is attacking it? Who are its friends and who are its enemies? Are the federal and state governments, the church, the corporation, the school, or other its friend or foe? Are pro-family groups really pro-family? If you want answers to these questions, read on.

Where to start? Let’s start at the beginning. God himself created the family. He said it was composed of a man and woman, both made in his image. Each family begins with marriage between a man and woman. God instituted marriage too. The government did not create the family or marriage. No government or court has any authority to license, define or redefine either.

Children are the fruit of the marriage. This is the standard. Certainly there are single mother and single father families as well. These arrangements are also families. Genesis 1 and 2 also tell us what the family is supposed to be doing. God has given the family tasks to perform—bear children, feed, nourish and educate them. He has also commanded the family to engage in labor and meaningful pursuits.

He has given the family all the tools it needs to exercise all this authority. He will hold each family responsible for their home and family, the health care and education of their own children, governance of their own household, pursuit of labor, use of their property, and the exercise of their religion. Genesis is the starting point and may not be ignored.

Some people maintain that Genesis is unimportant or outdated. What nonsense. This is God’s word. It is true for today as it was back then. Others argue that the family should be spreading the gospel. In Matthew 28:18-19, Jesus declared: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Jesus commanded that Christians should teach about the Kingdom of Heaven and obedience to God’s laws while on this earth. That is the Gospel he commanded for all Christians. There is nothing peculiar to the family in this command.

Note that Jesus said nothing about setting aside or ignoring God’s commands in Genesis 1, 2. God also repeated his commands for the family in Genesis 9, after the world wide flood described in Genesis. Jesus’ command to make disciples of the nations, baptize, and teach are obligations of Christians. These are not imposed on unbelievers. The family obligations of Genesis on the other hand, apply to all families without regard to belief. God expects family’s worldwide to act like families and be faithfully to these duties. Claiming they are unimportant or optional or inferior to the duties incumbent upon Christians is pure nonsense. It is a false teaching.

No, the purpose of the family is not summarized in Matthew 28. Also consider Abraham as a family man in this respect. God approved of Abraham because he was a man who would

“command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.” Genesis 18:19. Shockingly today, few if any, dare place these responsibilities, first and foremost, within either the *family or the father*.

Such endeavors are not likely to be regarded as what families do. The common belief is that these are things to be undertaken by the church and its youth group. Education in general is considered the authority of the government controlled education system and, indeed, by the government itself. The school, the government, our physicians, employers and churches declare their supremacy over families. For they also have either knowingly usurped, unwittingly suppressed, or piously ignored God’s plain directive that such endeavors are first and foremost core familial duties. Every family must regain control over their own health choices, vaccination choices, education of their own children, free use of their own land and property, freedom to pursue labor and practice their religion. Without the freedom to do these things, no family can keep the way of the Lord in the 21st century.

I. What Is Family Authority? Thinking from Genesis.

Beginning in Genesis 1:26-28, after creating man and woman, God said “let them rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” He also said “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”

These obligations are therefore familial obligations. They apply over the globe in all nations throughout all periods of time. These obligations do not expire. They were neither altered nor modified by Christ or the church. They include the right and power to raise and utilize animals, subdue, build, work and live on real property, and bear, rear and educate children.

When a family exercises these universal obligations, they also fulfill part of what it means to honor and worship God as a family. When a father commands his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, he merits the approval of God. When a father fails to command his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, he merits the disapproval of God. See Genesis 18:19.

Such familial endeavors are perhaps as much, if not more critical to our future as evangelism and ministry. They are more critical because they were first given. They outshine volunteering for church functions. The family that pursues familial endeavors is obedient to God. The family that neglects these obligations is disobedient. No amount of religious or spiritual pursuits can cover up that disobedience. No sermon or platitudes about serving Christ, loving God or your neighbor can take precedence over obedience to the commands of God instituting marriage and entrusting the family with its purpose.

Marriage and family are key parts of the universal law of nature applicable to all human beings. For the Christian family sharing the good news of Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven he proclaimed, all have their place in addition to, but not in lieu of, family obligations.

While each of these obligations is given to families to perform, they aren't required to do it all alone. Each obligation carries with it the liberty of seeking and retaining the help of others—often by contract. For instance, the family can hire help with respect to raising crops and livestock. It can hire a contractor with respect to building a home on its land. The family can retain a physician to assist with bearing and treating children. The family can also buy textbooks and hire tutors or retain teachers with respect to the education of their children. Of course, the family is free to associate with others to assist it in its own worship and study of God's word.

Each obligation carries with it broad *familial* authority to undertake all of the incidental and particular tasks associated with the obligation. For instance, the family ought to be able to freely negotiate the time, place and manner as well as the wages to be paid to those whom they hire. It is free to order its own worship and study of God's word. It is not subordinate to the clergy, Sunday schedules or to church programs. The family and the father in particular, need no clerical permission to baptize their own children, administer communion if so desired, or perform marriages of its own children. It has all the authority it needs to do these things directly from God.

II. Familial Authority Is Not Dependent on the State, School, Employer or Church

Now this all sounds well and good but must be grasped in its larger context. The critical part about this kind of family is that God has not rendered familial freedom *dependent upon or subject to the authority of the state, the school, any physician, or business enterprise, or the church.*

A. *The State School Versus the Family*

Sadly, looking at the family today, one does not generally see much of the family's authority or freedom given by God being well exercised. The state-approved and controlled school is a clear case in point, though not the only case. It is a classic example of how the family has been made dependent upon the government controlled school and state for permission to teach its own children. All government education laws force the education of a child under the state's authority. They compel exposure to state-approved curriculum, by state-licensed teacher, at government mandated time and hours for at least 12 years. That is a sobering truth.

But in God's educational economy, the state has no authority to regulate or license any family choices with respect to the education of their own children. God has not given the civil government the authority to require a child to learn a "standard" curriculum. He has not displaced the family with the government's system of approval, licensure or regulation of those whom parents may freely select as teachers and tutors. It certainly ought to have no authority to compel one man to subsidize the financial burdens associated with the education of his neighbor's child. Nor may the state legitimately exercise the power to punish nonconformists – those who will not submit to the school's procedures, rules and regulations for their home or private school.

God gave the obligation of education to the family exclusively and not to the state. Yet, the state school says to the family: "You may not educate your children except by our leave." But God says to the family: "Teach your children as you walk in the way," i.e., day by day as you live at

home and in society. To children he commands: “Honor your father and mother.” See Deuteronomy 6:7.

This is not to say the family may use its authority to hurt or injure their own children. The state may punish wrongdoers, but it lacks the authority to declare that doing something right (such as the education of a child by his or her parents or their agents) is wrong. It lacks the authority to pass a law that says a parent’s right may only be exercised subject to the state’s false claim that it has an overriding compelling interest in the education of your child. It has no such interest to either regulate or control the educational choices of parents. A family should not be required to obtain the permission of the state or school as a prerequisite to exercising its rights with respect to the education of their own children.

This is the challenge of the 21st century family—the family must dare to recover its God-given authority over the hearts and the minds of its own children. Yet today, none dare call this something a family ought to do. When a family attempts to assert their authority to educate, many times their children are labeled truant and parents are prosecuted, fined and jailed. Let us understand the matter rightly. A parent who by law is forced under threat of criminal prosecution to send their children to a government approved school, does not thereby do so “voluntarily” or “freely.”

A parent’s decision to retain another to assist in education of his or her children must be free and voluntary. Otherwise the “decision” is no decision at all. It is obedience to a command under threat of prosecution. For those who resist, it is an occasion for the state to act violently against parents. When this happens, regretfully Christian teachers and superintendents employed by the government school system often remain silent. Their silence approves the use of force and coercion, and in case of resistance, violence against their fellow Christian parents.

Their employers, School Board, Department of Education and Union masters will not tolerate dissent. To object might risk peer disapproval or their pension. We hope, nevertheless, that Christian teachers would at least defend the rights of parents to educate their own children, because after all, the child’s parents are in whom God has placed the authority to educate. God did not place the education of my child in my neighbor teacher’s hands. Caesar does that, contrary to the will of God.

So too the religions leaders, elders and pastors often remain silent when the state moves against a parent who is educating their children. Some even oppose a parent’s right and encourage or counsel parents submit their children to be indoctrinated in the government system of education. They are ignorant in believing that a child exposed to practical atheism for 12 years, 6 hours a day, is a good and positive thing. These are the same leaders who lament that your child will likely lose their faith if they go away to college. They fail to grasp that 4 years of atheism taught to your child as an adult, is relatively insignificant when compared to 12 years of atheism force fed them as a child. The wise parent avoids such myopic advice.

B. Zoning of Family Property Versus Family Regulation of Property

Consider another example of the family being stripped of its authority. Consider local zoning ordinances or zoning boards of appeal as an example of how the family has been made dependent upon the state for permission to take dominion over its own land. God gave families the right and power to “take dominion” over their own little piece of land. How does this right stand today?

Certainly the state may *encourage* families to take dominion over their property and to subdue their own land through building homes, garages, sheds and by digging wells, planting gardens and fields, and by raising animals and harvesting crops. But, the state has no authority to authorize, regulate or license a family in the exercise of these obligations. God gave these obligations to the family exclusively and not to the state or local zoning board. Local government or its zoning officials instead say to the family, “You may not undertake any of these tasks except by our leave.”

In answering the government denial, we may assert that God says to the family, take dominion over the animals and your land, subject to no man’s permission. God took Adam and put him in the garden in Eden to work it and keep it. Why can’t he do the same for you? You want to have a garden in your city? Noah was a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. Why can’t he do the same for you? These people had authority over their land. That authority arose under the grant of God directly from His mouth as a binding rule for all generations.

This is not to say that a family may use its property to the hurt or injury of its neighbor. A family which uses its property to the actual and demonstrable hurt or injury of its neighbor may certainly be enjoined by a court and prohibited from further doing so, provided his neighbor can establish an actual harm or injury. This is the law of public and private nuisance. But zoning restrictions are not based on actual harm to your property caused by your neighbor’s use of his property. They are not based on any harm at all. They are based on what a master planner believes your local city should look like to ensure maximum revenue to the local government in property taxes. Don’t be naive about this. Don’t believe that argument that your property values will be higher with zoning. People will pay for freedom just as they will for the illusion of security, but there is no security in being controlled right down to the approved color of exterior paint you can use.

This is the challenge of the 21st century: The family must dare to recover its God-given authority over its own land. Yet today, none dare call this authority the authority of the family. When the family actually attempts to assert its authority over its own land, that family is labeled a public nuisance, a threat to the community, or fanatics.

Though the state may provide a remedy for legal wrongs, it may not demand that a family first seek its permission to do what is right and good. And it is right and good to fulfill those obligations which God has entrusted to the family concerning land use which does no harm to one’s neighbor. Regretfully, most Christians serving in local government never heard this idea or simply think just the opposite. They think that everyone must comply with their decisions about what land is zoned

for specific purposes, what is an acceptable use and what is a permitted use. They probably know nothing about Genesis or the authority of the family based on God's command. They probably never heard anything of the sort in their churches or from the pulpit. Nor are they likely to hear it preached. They will have to learn it on their own if such matters as the will of God for families is of any interest to them.

C. Voluntary Surrender of Familial Authority to One's Employer.

While the usurpation of family authority by the school and state with respect to the family's use of its own land and education of its own children has been *forced* upon families by the law, quite another situation presents itself with respect to the loss of family authority to the employer. The obligations which God has extended to the family and required of the family have not been taken away by the employer by the force of law. These obligations have rather been *willingly surrendered* to these entities by short sighted mothers and fathers.

Consider the world of business and commerce. Whether you are employed by another or self-employed, your labor ought to be an extension of the gifts, talents and abilities which God has given into your hand. To the extent the employer encourages and utilizes those gifts, talents and abilities, then to that extent your employment itself is an extension of, and the servant of, your familial obligation to labor through the work of your hand, or the thoughts of your mind. We are not talking about ministry. We are talking about any work reflecting your skills and abilities. This is as it should be.

But, to the extent the employer does not encourage or utilize your gifts, talents and abilities, to the extent your labor is just a paycheck, then to that extent your employment is not an extension of, or the servant of your familial obligation to take dominion through your work, but rather the employer is simply a means to an end—income. For many families it comes down to this just to survive. But if the opportunity to change comes along, then it should be considered.

Many employers have goals and objectives which are good. Assuming that the employer's goals and objectives are good and right, the question is whether or not the employer's objectives are a practical extension of your own and whether or not the employer's means of achieving those objectives rely upon and utilize your God given gifts, talents and abilities.

Many of us do not labor in a way which attempts to utilize our God given gifts, talents and abilities. Perhaps the financial benefits of that arrangement simply outweigh the familial stress of an uncertain financial future. Every family must judge the efficacy of its trade-offs. The goal of the family in the 21st century, in this new millennium with respect to employment, however, should be to increase familial freedom to apply our God-given gifts, talents and abilities more often, and to better effect, than at present. This is the challenge of the 21st century— the family must recover the freedom to labor in an employment environment which relies upon, utilizes, and extends your God given gifts, talents and abilities. Yet who dares call this goal, a family goal?

D. Clergy and Physician Complicity with Lockdowns Attacking Family.

There are bright spots with home-based businesses, but we cannot all work at home even after the COVID-manipulated government lockdowns. These lockdowns were a direct and merciless assault on the family's authority. By imposing lockdowns, state Governors, health officials and political charlatans did not see fit to acknowledge God, or his grant of authority to the family to make its own health related decisions and responses to the virus. In-person work itself was prohibited and made punishable. Those who imposed, funded and enforced such mandates did evil. Those who actively supported this evil were either misinformed, uninformed or cowards. Those who compared the lockdowns, masking and experiential vaccinations to the will of God deserve sharp rebuke. Those who were made to follow these "laws" were true victims.

In response to this evil attack on family governance and labor, God gave our Governors, health officials and others over to their own debased mindset. They thought they were in charge of our health and labor. These officials were filled with all manner of unrighteousness imposing restrictions which were not desired by the people. They instituted "sacred rituals" -- muzzles and social distancing. They funded and concocted injectable "potions" called vaccines. They cast their media "spells" upon the people with fear and threats. Their lockdown orders were built on their evil mindset and fueled by fiction and magic.

The whole charade had the result of coveting the family's decision making authority over their health and labor. Enforcement of the orders was heartless and ruthless. Though government officials should know God's righteous decrees regarding the family's autonomy, and self-governance to work and labor, and its liberty to assume the risk of infection including the freedom to choose or refuse vaccination, they disregarded that liberty and encouraged others to follow their tyrannical ways, declaring their own evil, good, and family autonomy to make its own decisions, evil.

Most churches, clergy and many Christians foolishly went along with the state government's lawlessness. The same is true for the health care industry and your family physician. They did not care to apply the authority of a family from God's perspective to the lockdowns. Most people, however, were simply ignorant of God's views. Sermons either touted obedience to the government or followed the government's masking and social distancing playbook. Did you hear about the authority of the family to decide how it will use its home, determine the safety of attending work, or evaluate the wisdom of masks or distancing? You did not. Why? Because your pro-family church is not pro-family. As a matter of fact, your church probably substituted your pastor's judgment for your God-given authority to decide for yourself what risks you shall undertake. The church did this if it declared you must wear a mask to enter the church building to worship Almighty God. Who made your minister or elder the lord of your conscience? Who made them competent to give medical advice? Who entrusted them with the authority to govern how you will worship, with whom, at what distance, and with what covering on your face?

The family God desires is one that will confront the impious presumption of both legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical. These rules were created by people who themselves are fallible and uninspired. Yet they have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their

own opinions and modes of thinking as the one and only true and infallible view. As such, they have established and maintained false religion. Many more simply believe the lie that our freedoms will be restored at the end of a vaccine needle. Does anyone know how to interpret the signs of the times anymore?

Let us not be gullible about the church's failures in this regard or your health provider. In large part, they went along with the government's COVID response plans. They shut their doors. They practiced the state's COVID rituals. They preached the desirability of the injectable potion. They repeated the Governor's spells. The result was that houses and savings were devoured. Businesses started by families in their church struggled. The clergy were quiet when the government forcibly concentrated the sick and old together and denied family visits, which accelerated our elderly parents' lonely death. These governmental charlatans will receive the greater condemnation. What will the clergy watchman receive? Luke 20:45-47.

Regardless of wherever you work, try to see how your labor is an extension of the mandate that every family should be master of its own labor. Stop listening to the government, its officials and paid public service announcements as to how to live your life, work, and maintain your health.

E. The Church: Blinding Family to its Obligations?

Finally, consider the local church—your church. Here we find no civil law compelling anyone to attend. We find no civil law compelling anyone to believe or compelling anyone to turn over our money or tithe. All these things we do voluntarily. Every family now has within its own hand the power to organize, arrange, and discharge every duty and obligation which they owe to God without interference from the local church. But what have we made of this freedom? Have we been beguiled to give up freedom to the church by the church itself?

By God's grace, the family is free to baptize its own children if that is its desire, and to confess sin directly to God, to take communion, give and receive instruction, and to worship God Almighty at such time and in such manner as the family deems appropriate. The family is free to do all these things without the permission or consent of any other body of believers, any cleric or any church, local or otherwise. The family is free to do these things because God has made it free and has never given to the church any power to demand the family first seek its permission prior to enjoying any of the liberties or privileges associated with the priesthood of all believers.

But modern church leaders teach either explicitly or implicitly, that the family is simply incompetent to discharge its duty to worship God and to enjoy all of these freedoms. We are told that the family is not competent to baptize because it lacks ordination. The family is not competent to administer communion because it is not composed of approved priests or ministers. Neither is the family competent to give or receive instruction because it has not received appropriate theological training.

Added to these falsehoods is the argument that the family may not and indeed ought not, perform any of these functions on its own, and moreover, that it must exercise these liberties only

according to the time, place and manner which the church or some pastoral leader has authorized. Both Protestant and Catholic institutions differ only in matters of degree on these points. Neither dare call such liberties the liberty of a family. None dare call the exercise of these liberties, the exercise of a family's liberty.

In short, the church says you must go through the church in order to get to God with respect to some dimension of worship. This claim should sound familiar. The school says you must go through the school in order to get to the education of your children. The state says you must go through the bureaucracy in order to take authority over your own land and labor. Today, the church has said, you must go through the church in order to have fellowship or to worship God. The soft sell of this false teaching is that you should be a "member" of a local body. What nonsense.

This is not to say that there is no place for the church. Nor that the church may not baptize or offer communion or such and like things. It is only to say that the family, which was created 4,000 years before the church, may do these things without the permission of the church or the necessity of doing them through a local church. The church is here, among other reasons, to encourage the family in the discharge of its obligations to God and to elucidate those obligations.

Regretfully, it knows nothing of the Genesis family's authority or of God's pleasure with fathers and mothers teaching their children the ways of God and of justice and righteousness. The church has gotten hung up on elevating evangelism and personal discipleship to the head of all truths. This is all it knows and feels it may safely teach without offending the flock. If it departs from these and begins to teach the whole counsel of God, perhaps your church fears it will lose members and revenue. You can bet it will indeed lose these things if it begins to teach about God's purpose for and authority of the family.

Don't expect your church to change its spots to actually help build up the family to educate its own children free from state interference, regulation and control. Don't expect the church to help build up families to use their land in the manner which God directs, rather than in obedience to local zoning ordinances. Don't expect the church to build up the family by affirming that worship and discipleship are the duties of parents and the church is a voluntary resource rather than our master. Don't expect your pastor to have any understanding about the implications of God's grant of authority to you as a father or you as a mother or to you as a parent. To them these things are of secondary importance to their ministry of evangelism and preaching Christ in every sermon.

Indeed, don't expect your elders or pastor to champion these core and fundamental Biblical truths. They don't have the theological training to accord the family its God given place because their training has erroneously taught them that the Great Commission is the only thing that really matters. They probably don't even believe the family enjoys the freedoms stated herein anyway. If you try to change the mind of your religious leaders, they must first have the ears to hear these truths. It is alright to let the blind lead the blind. It is the responsibility of families we are discussing anyway. You don't need their support or permission. The husband and wife and father and mother must lead by example. The church's consent or the clergy's understanding is not required. At worst, they will oppose you. At best, they can be ignored.

While fellowship with other believers is a way to help better fulfill a family's obligations, it is not dependent upon *local* fellowship. The church was not put on this earth by God Almighty to usurp any function or obligation of the family, and if and when it does so, it does so against God and His institution of the family itself.

This is the challenge of the 21st century– the family must dare to recover its own independent duty to obey and worship God, a duty required long before there ever was a thing called the church. Moreover, the family should consider the value of encouraging its local church leader to teach the whole counsel of God especially the stated purposes of marriage and the family. They need encouragement to be mindful of these things and to be more inclusive than just focusing on safe topics such as personal ministry and evangelism.

Conclusion

At the end of the 20th century, the core familial obligations of education, land use, health, labor and religion have been subjugated to the will of the state, the school, the employer, and the church. It is the challenge of each family to dare to find its way back toward the full exercise of familial authority.

We need not obtain the permission of the state to educate our own children. We must change the law so that families can exercise their liberty to use their land and determine what is best for their health. We must recover the freedom to exercise the full measure of family authority which God has placed in our hand and to which God holds the family accountable. The church should play its part too, but judging by its response to the COVID-19 governmental subjugation of freedom, we must lower our expectations of its ability to lead in the restoration of the family to its God-ordained authority and purpose.

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