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The Foundation of Society

When one thinks of a society, various pictures may appear in one's head. A tall, bustling city; quiet, large farm lands; covered wagons marching down a road. No matter what kind of society one imagines, there is always one thing in common: people. People build and destroy a society. Even within a large society, there are smaller societies within it, families. Families are the foundation of society. The lesson and morals, both good and bad, taught in the family form the society. A broken family leads to a broken society.

The definition of family in the Student Dictionary states, "A group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit." This definition is very similar to the Student Dictionary's definition of society: "The aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community." If we look at these two definitions, we can see they have sufficient similarities. They are both a group of people that have lived together. One by blood and the other by a set of laws and systems. Families exist within society.

The easiest way to explain this is through C. S. Lewis's '*The Inner Ring*.' Society is one big ring, and in that ring you have thousands of other groups of people together, through work, school, clubs and friends. Rings upon rings

tying people to one another, like a spiderweb. However, the smallest of those rings and the most important are the ones that tie families together, because that is the ring that everybody started in. Your origin ring.

The foundation of that ring is very important because it will change how the next generation acts. If chosen wrong, it could have generational effects of falsifying wrong morals and values. Thomas Paine wrote on the first page of 'Common Sense,' "A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom." When something is taught for so long, it becomes part of their culture and, therefore, part of their life. We must ensure anything added to our culture is good, true, and beautiful. Once a culture is made, it's difficult to undo.

For example, take slavery. Owning slaves was a culturally acceptable custom. We viewed it as being a privilege and was commonplace. We had normalized the wrongness of owning slaves for years, turning what was wicked into a false beauty. However, thankfully, people came to their senses and fought back against this issue. To remove this normalized falsehood, many brave men had to die in wars. However, at the end of it all, they eliminated the acceptance of slavery.

How could we have normalized something as big as slavery? How many small falsehoods have we normalized in our current day society? How many more of them will be taught in homes and be perpetuated through the

generations? If one wants a strong, beautiful, true society, then one must seek the weak, ugly, falsehoods in the roots of their current society to get to the beautiful society they long for.

The fifth of the Ten Commandments says “Honor thy father and mother.” The Ten commandments were split onto two stone tables. The first stone has commandments about God; to have no other gods but him, to not make graven images, to not take his name in vain and to keep the sabbath day holy. The last commandment on this stone is to “honor thy father and mother.” The fifth commandment does not fit the trend of commandments between man and God. In fact, it goes along with the other five commandments on the other stone. To not kill, commit adultery, steal, lie, and be jealous. The last six of the commandments are more earthly commandments, commandments between person to person. While the first four are heavenly commandments.

It is interesting that the fifth commandment, an earthly commandment, is on the same stone as the heavenly commandments. Now this could just be a coincidence, but from what we know of God, he does not deal with coincidence. Honoring thy father and mother ranks first among the earthly commandments.

To honor the heavenly commandments, one must honor their parents. Honoring your parents teaches you how to honor God. If you learn to honor the parents on earth, it is easier to honor the parents in heaven. God created

the role of parents to help guide his children in holiness and faith so that they can return to him. In fact, honoring one's parents acts as a bridge between the earth and heaven commandments.

One important factor to discuss is that honoring does not mean loving. There is a commandment to love your neighbor, strangers, and God. Nowhere in the Ten Commandments or Bible does it say that you have to love your parents. In fact, the only people the Bible says to honor are your parents. God is not interested in your feelings for your parents, but in how you treat them. The relationship between parent and child is very emotional. One may struggle to love their parents, but one should still honor them.

For generations in America, parents have wanted to be their children's friends, not their parents. They want their children to love them. They become so consumed with having a child's love for them it becomes hard for a child to honor their parents. Weak children are created when a parent's focus is only on love.

Even more interesting is the fact that the fifth commandment is the only commandment that God promises a reward on earth for following. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you." Exodus 20:12. Even the Bible states families are the backbone of a society. That if the family is destroyed, the society soon follows.

We can even see this reward being removed throughout history. Every tierney undermines parental authority. Nazis, Germany and Communist China, did all they could to have children honor the government or party, rather than their parents. Each tierneys had their society fall when parents were removed.

Now that we have gone over the importance of family, and why to honor it? We must dive into history to see how different societies collapsed by losing their keystone; families. We will do this by exploring Communist China and Ancient Rome.

Communist China has not fallen in terms of economic growth, but they have fallen in terms of morals. Mao saw family as an institution that kept peasants oppressed. He placed numerous policies in place to break down the family structure. He did this by removing one of the fundamental aspects of family; quality time. He did this by making families eat in cafeterias. No longer were they allowed to cook their traditional foods or discuss family matters at a dining table.

He also made laws that made women able to join the workforce. If the woman chooses to work, that is great. However, these women did not have a choice. It was either work and support the Communist party, or do not work and betray your country and be seen as lazy. The bigger question is, where did all the children go while the parents were at work? Not with their

grandparents, which was tradition. Instead, the Communist party supported daycare. Daycare built and controlled by the government.

But even more than making it harder for families to spend time together, Mao removed their tradition, culture and history by destroying family records, and ancestral temples. Extended family records were demolished, with no hope of fixing them.

Even more morally devastating is how easily families can, and will, turn on each other. Take a mother and son, for example. The son sees his mother storing traditional clothes and photographs in a drawer. The son could either tell the Red Guard and get his mother in trouble, but he would be praised and respected by the Communist party. Or he could not tell the Red Guard and hope they never learn of it. However, with their raids and consent searching that would be difficult. If he says nothing, he would be dragged through the mud for being related to her, never getting his reputation back. Who can you count on if not family?

Ancient Rome's foundation is anything but families. Romans viewed Rome as being founded by twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, children of Rhea Silvia, daughter of Numitor. Numitor and his brother Amulius ruled the kingdom Alba Longa. Amulius was greedy and killed his brother for sole rule. To further cement his leadership, he killed Numitor's sons. But out of respect, he left the daughter, Rhea Silvia, alive, as long as she promised to never produce an heir and became a Vestal Virgin. However, she was raped by the

god of war, Mars, and gave birth to twin sons: Romulus and Remus. Amulius was enraged by this and imprisoned Rhea Silvia and ordered the twins to die. However, the servants pitied them and placed them in a basket and sent it down the Tiber River, giving them a small chance of survival. The basket washed ashore to a she-wolf, Lena, who raised the boys to be warriors.

The boys grew and decided they wanted to settle their own land. However, they could not stop arguing about who should rule and where the settlement should be built. Romulus built his settlement on Palatine Hill, naming it Rome. Remus, in anger, jumped over Romulus's walls to show him how weak his city was. Out of anger, Romulus killed his brother. The founding of Rome was a rather unpleasant family reunion. Romans supported a story where brother killed brother. Rome was never built on the idea of family. One can see that in their gods.

It is well known that Rome based many of their gods off of Greek gods and other surrounding countries. All their gods have been changed to be more warlike, or forgettable. Zeus was made into Jupiter. Zeus was the leader of Olympus, as well as law and order. Jupiter was the leader and general of all the gods, the deciding factor of fate. Athena was made into Minerva. Athena was the goddess of weaving, battle strategies and knowledge. Minerva was stripped of anything to do with war and thought of as a useless crafting goddess. Ares was the god of war, however, he was rarely worshipped by the Greeks. Mars was second only to Jupiter and was highly worshipped. Each

god added to Rome was either mad to be more Roman and warlike, or they were treated as useless and forgotten.

Rome's foundation was not built on families, but now it is important that we understand how this led to their downfall. The family is the keystone to every society, keeping it strong and supported by giving its people a sense of unity and common beliefs. If the government helps support that common belief, the people will teach their families to honor their country and protect it. However, if the government does not support the family and the morals and values they teach each other, then families will be torn apart, creating a bunch of individuals. Individuals that no longer have a common set of beliefs that they can agree on and can make the base of their society. Which often makes the people turn on the society.

Rome had gotten so big that most of its people had different traditions, beliefs and cultures that they were teaching their young and neighbors. Each little section had become so individualized that a single person could not meet the needs of everyone. Because everyone needed and wanted different things, based on what they as an individual valued, not what the society valued. Their individualism weakened their families, which weakened their society.

Communist China showed us how a society can economically prosper, but collapse morally. Ancient Rome showed us how a society built on the ruining of family can fail when everything gets too individualized. Now we

must dive into how one could create a society that embraces the idea of putting family first. Plato wrote a concept for a family-based government in *'Plato's Republic.'*

Plato is one of history's most respected philosophers. In Plato's Republic, he discussed the idea of family and how to implement the family unit into government. He wrote, "The family is said to be the basic cell of all human society, the primary association of human beings." He believed very much the same thing that is written within C. S. Lewis, "The Inner Ring." That the family is one small ring that is placed within the larger ring of society. That what society teaches the parents will pass on to their children into their smaller ring of the family.

In modern society, we pride ourselves on our individualism. We receive this praise through our schools, parents, even the media, that if we are more 'authentic', we have more to offer and are better. If we have a society full of individuals, where no one has any common beliefs, culture or values, then what good is a society to this collection of individuals? To have a society, you have to be unified, and the place that children first learn is in the home. To have a family-based government in Plato's mind, we would have to eradicate individualism.

To Plato, to remove individualism, one would have to have a community at the forefront of their mind. That there would be selective breedings to produce the best children. Socrates says, "There is a need for the best men to

have intercourse as often as possible with the best women...if the flock is going to be of the most eminent quality” Republic, 459. To create the next best generation would come from the best of the past generation. To maximize the community, only the best children would join.

In the Republic, parents are not to raise their children, to not even live in the same buildings as them. That hand selected nurses who lived away from the community would raise the children. To understand what Socrates means, consider the community of children as a boarding school.

At this “boarding school” they would cultivate a sense of collective community and equality, so that they can become guardians of the state and warriors. They also believed that involving children in wars would bring out a sense of patriotism. Because they would see that their fellow countrymen would die for their beliefs and values.

By selectively breeding children, raising children in the way the government wants and exposing them to war to invoke patriotism, that following this formula would create uniformed children that are equal and embrace the idea of community. In Plato’s mind, to create a true community, one must remove diversity and embrace the idea of “we” towards the society.

The section on Plato’s Republic that says to have selective breeding is very understandable. With selective breeding, a society can control its growth. It can also make sure that the smartest and strongest are producing children, to create an even better generation. Even the section on showing children

war is understandable. By no means did Plato mean we should send children into war. He stated we should have children watch wars, prepare for them and clean them up. When the children were older, they could mildly participate. If children saw that others in their community would die for that society's values and beliefs, that would strengthen that child's love for the society and beliefs that it upheld.

However, the idea of removing children from their parents seems like a disaster waiting to happen, because of two reasons. The first being that it is a parent's divine right to parent their children. If we follow the statements about the Ten Commandments, then by removing children from their earthly parents, you have also removed the child from their heavenly parents. If a child can not practice honoring their earthly parents, then that child will not know how to honor their heavenly ones. By all means, not all children live with their parents. In that case, whoever is filling that parent role is who the child should be honoring. May that be a blood relative, friend or mentor. As well as the fact that God stated that if children can not honor their parents, then society will collapse. If children are removed from society, from their parents', blessings will be taken away.

The second reason removing children from their parents is a complete disaster is because of how easily corruptible it is. All it takes is one person in charge to mold an entire generation into what they want. Because they have nowhere else to learn their values from. Because all they know comes from

“boarding school.” But even if, by all means, the society was not corrupted, removing children from their parents would still be wrong. Because of the first reason. Because of the divine right that parents have to parent.

The role of families is the backbone of society. It is the smallest, but most important of the rings. What they teach within this ring is the most important lessons taught because they form who a person believes and who they grow into. For that reason, we must be sure that the values we have are truly beautiful and not false wrong doings. We also went over that the relationship of parents towards children is divine and the main connection to God. The last item we went over is how Plato viewed a family-based society to be formed. And how selectively breeding and watching war is understandable and may lead to a stronger society. We also went over how removing children from their parents is the worst thing to do because it removes the connection to God, removes blessings from God and is so easily corruptible. The best way to not destroy the family is to keep society out of the family. Because a broken family leads to a broken society.

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