

A NATION OF DAGWOODS?

Recently, in a newspaper column, a lady complained that her three female friends at a social gathering criticized her because she got up to get a drink for her husband. They told her this was "demeaning behavior" and that she was "no ones slave." This is only one small expression of the new feminism growing and being nurtured in the western world. The ascendancy of women who have rejected male leadership seems to have one of its roots in a generation growing up watching mom make decisions while dad watched sports. This same generation of men suffered from what sociologists have called momism, the tendency of father-son communication to go through mom.

In the black community the women watched many of their men being hung, castrated or reduced to no future in a prejudiced environment. Consequently black women rose up to hold the rod in the home while working outside the home. Afro-American youngsters had little acquaintance with daddy, and mom became a powerful figure whose chief job was to keep them in line.

Did you ever watch a college football game and the camera pans on a player after a touchdown? What does he usually say? "Hi Mom."

In middle class white America Dagwood has been endured for years. He has always been Blondie's blundering partner and she a dutiful wife. Once Dagwood had a role reversal as Blondie started a business. When she tried to hire Dagwood she found him so incompetent she had to fire him. Poor Dagwood had to return to his former boss who knew he was inept.

What is a young man to think in the midst of these times? Homosexual and lesbian relationships are lifted up in our land as if all of history has been awaiting this marvelous discovery. In fact history teaches that, whether at Sodom or Pompeii, destruction falls upon those who promote this unnatural way of living. As women strive for male power and men fill the gap by seeking the feminine side that is disappearing, a nation of Dagwood's is emerging unable and unaware of the destruction waiting around the bend.

Amongst God's people there is awareness and anger about these things but the sad truth is that even in the church, men are putting their jobs and entertainments above their responsibility to lead. Consequently, Christian women can inadvertently be thrust into and influenced by this seductive feminist spirit that lifts her up. Christian men, in the interests of

domestic peace, can abdicate their place of bringing the word of God to their wives, and Christian women can look for leadership from other women. Inadvertently a Christian feminism emerges that reflects what is happening in the world around us.

Aren't you glad God didn't call men to have a heart after Dagwood? No, he called us to have a heart like David, who was willing to stand up to Goliath. David was an obedient son to his father, a faithful shepherd of his sheep, and a brave warrior when all the men around him were afraid. Saul and his own countrymen persecuted David for years though he was completely innocent of the charges against him. All these things happened to him before he finally became king.

David knew how to be a man because he was raised as a man. David knew how to be a brave man when his brothers were unable because he had a fierce devotion to the Lord God of Israel. Manhood without a deep devotion to Christ eventually leads to fleshy aspirations. Manhood without a love of the holiness of God can lead to fleshy control. David was a man who could be led by the spirit.

It is clear from the Psalms that David spent time with the Lord. It is also clear that he struggled in his relationship with God. The Psalms record that struggle as well as the songs of praise and adoration that came into his heart. David's entrance into ministry was playing the harp before Saul the king. When David played, the anointing of the spirit would bind the demon working in Saul's life. This was the warrior David at work, not with sword and spear but with the weapons of the spirit. He could only do this because he had worshipped in quiet places with the Lord. How many men of God today spend the time journaling, writing, and praising that David did?

The side of David that became a stumbling block to his blessing was the warrior side. Yes he was a great warrior king, but he was also a man of blood. God withheld the building of the temple from David and gave it to Solomon over this issue. The warrior side said we can take that city. The warrior side said slaughter the inhabitants. The warrior side becoming bored said, "Take Bathsheba and kill Uriah." Much is said of the necessity of man to be in touch with the warrior side of his nature. In David we see that the prophet priest beautifully tempers the warrior side. David was prophet, priest, warrior, poet, and musician. He allowed God to develop the creative part of his heart. All men must find and yield to the creative side of who they are. Men are often identified to other men by the type of work they do and how successful they are at it. If that defined David in the years he was

running from Saul he would have been called a failure. Men of God should not be identified by the type of work they do. Men of God are known of God by what comes out of their heart. If a man allows God to move in his heart, to develop the creative side of him then he has something to give to his fellow men and equally important something true and beautiful to give to his wife and children. Imagine how Blondie would feel if Dagwood sat her down and read to her what God had showed him in his journal. Imagine the conversation that could follow. Imagine then, that Dagwood went out and did the thing God showed him. Blondie now sees Dagwood following God. Dagwood is going somewhere. Dagwood is leading. Blondie could become a helpmate to that kind of man. She could work with him. She could give wise counsel to him. She could respect him and yes she could love him.

Men need to listen to their wives and draw out their counsel but both parties must keep in mind that there is always a margin for error.

I was in the parking lot the other day and said to my wife,
"Come on honey the car's over here."

She said, "No it isn't. It's in the other direction."

I said, "No follow me. It's over here."

After two steps I realized she was right. I didn't demand she keep following me. I turned around, and we walked together to the car.

Abraham set out from Ur with his wife Sarah. They went through many difficulties together. Sarah listened to Abraham and obeyed him in extraordinary situations. In Egypt Abraham asked Sarah to tell people she was his sister so no harm would come to him for she was a beautiful woman. She was his half sister so perhaps it was not a lie, but it was not the complete truth either. This was difficult for Sarah, but God vindicated her. Abraham also listened to Sarah. Many say that Abraham's greatest error was listening to her above the voice of God when she suggested he have sexual relations with her maidservant Hagar. The result of that union was the birth of Ishmael. The troublesome results of the conflict that followed are with us today.

If you study the life of Abraham and Sarah neither was always right. But both had a heart after God. Both were willing to forsake all that they had to go to a land they knew nothing about. They were willing to do whatever was necessary to inherit the promise of God. Can you see either Blondie or Dagwood doing that? First they would need to be willing to leave behind the life style that was binding them.

One prominent preacher told me that the only way to grow a sizeable church in America was to aim our preaching and teaching at the middle class. Sustain them, he said, and they will sustain the church. The problem with this paradigm is it only rearranges Blondie and Dagwood's life. It does not significantly lead them on so that Dagwood becomes the man of God and Blondie, the woman of God who will set aside all for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

The former way of life in America and many parts of the world is slowly departing the stage. Dagwood can barely understand what is happening to him. Sodom is rising from the dead and calling to the dead to join in the debauchery. At the same time the Kingdom of God is calling for men like Abraham and David and women like Sarah. Men and women of passion devoted to the Lord and to one another. They must demonstrate the value of covenant in an hour of covenant breaking. They must demonstrate to the next generation the faithfulness of God. They are the Elijah generation preparing those who will listen for the return of the King. Will you join them?

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