

Greco-Roman Family

"Like today, the family was the most basic unit of society in antiquity. However, unlike the typical household unit in contemporary Western culture, which usually comprises mother, father, and children, the so-called nuclear family, the ancient Mediterranean household was an intergenerational social unit that included other relatives and enslaved people" (Hubbard 2010, 179). Intergeneration and enslaved people would not be a part of the nuclear family in the Western world. We may have various settings, but this will not be the cultural norm. Some parents want their children to find a place to live at eighteen years old in America. And our current politically correct social institutions are not necessarily in favor of solid families. From my understanding, the black families in America were much more potent as a nuclear family right after the abolition of slavery than we are today. Even with fear, stress, and great uncertainty. One of the leading black movements in our community is BLM (Black Lives Matter) is against Christianity and the nuclear family, as mentioned in the statement in their manifesto. We learn that the cultures of the Biblical world were strongly patriarchal and male-oriented. In the Roman world, there was legislation known as "the power of the father." We also learned that the father's authority did not end when the child reached adulthood.

Household Order: Household codes in Greek, Roman, and Jewish literature describe the ideal familial relationships that ought to exist within a household. More specifically, they attempt to prescribe correct behavior and authority structures between husbands and wives, children and parents, and enslaved people and masters. The duties of each group were outlined. The wife, the children, and the enslaved people had specific tasks. Although slaves were considered property, there were times when they were treated well, either because of a skill or they

became trustworthy with certain chores. What amazes me is that some of these customs exist today, even the acceptance of the husband's infidelity.

Betrothal/Marriage: Girls were typically married very young, at least by modern standards. Most women would be married in the Roman world in their mid to late teens. We read and hear in the news about teen brides in the East, most times due to the action of parents or male relatives, and the comments are very unfavorable or angry. And among us are hundreds of teen pregnancies, which seems to be the norm. For years, our social services will contribute to that teen single mother, but the contribution is canceled if she marries. I appreciate that when a wedding is done with both families' blessings, it is better. It gives strength, honor, and encouragement to the couple. It provides a support system. "One of the most significant differences between marriage in the ancient world and marriage in the contemporary Western world is that in Greece and Rome, marriages were so not much romantic partnership as strategic alliances. While love was not wholly unimportant, it was not the most crucial consideration" (p.183). It is fascinating to learn about the marriage and sexual desires of the gods and the temple orgies. A husband can make love with his lover being male or female, in his wife's presence, which reveals ancient customs. We are not very far away from this same behavior today possible.

Adultery/Divorce: "Divorce was widespread in the Roman world of the first century. Also, divorce was more accessible and more common during the first century than the century before. In Roman law, adultery was defined as an illicit relationship with or by a married woman or woman of respectable rank. Sexual liaisons by a married man with slaves, courtesan, younger boys, or women of lower social orders were legally permissible under certain

circumstances and involved little or no social stigma" (p.185). This information is like a revelation to me due to the era of this history. The divorce rate among all social classes in the Western world today is alarming, especially among the more affluent in our society.