The Great Family Deconstruction

A Statistical Portrait of a Nation in Crisis

The documented impact of family breakdown on marriage, children, poverty, education, incarceration, and the national soul.

Marriage | Children | Poverty | Education | Incarceration | Mental Health | National Cost

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cfadd.org | May 2026 | Updated November 2026

Rebuilding the Family. Restoring the Nation.

The Numbers Behind the Crisis

THE GREAT FAMILY DECONSTRUCTION IS NOT A METAPHOR. IT IS A MEASURABLE CATASTROPHE.

For decades, the collapse of the two-parent married family has been treated as a social trend to be managed rather than a civilizational emergency to be confronted. The statistics below are not partisan. They are not theoretical. They are the biographies of children currently sitting in your pews, your schools, your juvenile detention centers, and your emergency rooms. They are the fiscal ledger of a nation that chose accommodation over covenant.

Read them not as data — but as names.

01 — MARRIAGE

The slow erasure of the covenant household

47%

of U.S. households are married couples — down from 78.8% in 1949

30.8 / 28.4

median age at first marriage for men / women in 2025, up from 23.5 / 21.1 in 1975

1 in 3

young adults projected to never marry by age 45

- Fewer than half of American households have included a married couple for over a decade — below 50% since 2010. In 1949, that figure was 78.8%.[1]
- The marriage rate has dropped more than 60% since 1970. Only about 1 in 2 adults are currently married.[2]
- 58% of all adults — and 42% of practicing Christians — now say it is "wise" to live with someone before marriage.[3]
- Cohabitation at first birth rose from 19.2% in 1990–1994 to 34.8% in 2020–2024 among women without a college degree.[4]

> *"So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."*
>
> — Matthew 19:6 (ESV)

02 — CHILDREN

The generation raised in the rubble

18.2M

children — 1 in 4 — live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home

63%

of teenagers who commit suicide come from fatherless homes

85%

of youths in prison grew up in fatherless homes

- A child raised without a father is 5x more likely to commit crime and live in poverty, 9x more likely to drop out of school, and 20x more likely to end up in jail or prison.[5]
- 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.[6]
- 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.[7]
- 71% of pregnant teenagers come from fatherless homes.[8] Girls whose father left before age 5 had teen pregnancy rates 7 to 8 times higher.[18]
- Children who feel closeness to their father are 80% less likely to spend time in jail.[14]
- 40% of U.S. high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2023. 20% seriously considered suicide.[10]

> *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers."*
>
> — Malachi 4:5–6 (ESV)

03 — POVERTY

The economics of broken covenant

4x

more likely — fatherless families vs. married-couple families to live in poverty

27%

poverty rate for single-parent families in 2024, vs. 6% for married-couple families

$40K

median annual income for a full-time working single mother — vs. $76K for married fathers

- In 2024, 27% of single-parent families lived below the federal poverty level — more than four times the rate (6%) of married-couple families.[11]
- 7.3 million single mothers head households in America. Their median annual income working full time is $40,000 — compared to $76,000 for married fathers.[12]

- Single Black mothers ($38K) and Hispanic mothers ($34K) earn the lowest median incomes. Single mothers make just 56 cents for every dollar fathers overall earn.[12]
- Children with fewer economic, social, and parental resources — the direct product of family breakdown — face higher risk of poverty, poor health, incarceration, and employment challenges in adulthood.[11]

> *"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families."*
>
> — Psalm 68:5–6 (NIV)

04 — EDUCATION

What broken homes produce in the classroom

71%	9x	70%
of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes	more likely — fatherless children to drop out of school	less likely to drop out — children with involved fathers

- Children in single-parent families are more likely to drop out of high school than peers with married parents. Family instability is among the strongest predictors of educational failure.[13]
- Children with involved fathers are 70% less likely to drop out and 40% less likely to repeat a grade.[6]
- Children with more family instability and fewer economic, social, and parental resources are at increased risk for poor educational outcomes, including dropping out of school.[11]
- In 1980, 77% of children lived with two parents. By 2019, that had dropped to 63%. The academic consequence of this shift is now one of the most documented findings in educational research.[15]

> *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."*
>
> — Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

05 — INCARCERATION

The pipeline from fatherless home to prison cell

85%

of youth in prison grew up without a father

70%

of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from single-parent homes

20x

more likely — fatherless children to end up in jail or prison

- Father absence as a predictor of violence is robust for both male and female criminal behavior. It is one of the most consistent findings across decades of criminological research.[16]
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from single-parent homes. Most have suffered from parental abandonment, substance abuse, or a dysfunctional household.[16]
- Children who feel closeness to their father are 80% less likely to spend time in jail. The inverse — father absence — is one of the single strongest predictors of incarceration.[14]
- Studies indicate that a significant number of school shooters come from fatherless homes or homes with high family instability.[6]

> *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*
>
> — Ephesians 6:4 (ESV)

06 — THE NATIONAL COST

What taxpayers pay for the abandoned covenant

$112B+

cost to U.S. taxpayers annually from family fragmentation — divorce and unwed childbearing

$1T+

cost to taxpayers per decade from family breakdown

$1.1B

saved for every 1% reduction in family fragmentation rates

- Family fragmentation costs U.S. taxpayers at least $112 billion every year through increased spending on anti-poverty programs, criminal justice, and education — plus lost tax revenue from reduced adult productivity.[17]

- Each year, taxpayers support single-parent families with approximately $28 billion in Medicaid, $35 billion in other welfare programs, $9 billion in child welfare costs, and $19 billion in court, police, and prison expenses directly tied to single-parent household outcomes.[17]
- The nation spends more than $1 trillion per decade on the downstream consequences of family breakdown. No foreign policy threat, no infrastructure deficit, no health care crisis costs this nation more.[17]
- A 1% reduction in family fragmentation would save taxpayers $1.1 billion per year. Covenant is not just a spiritual imperative. It is a fiscal one.[17]

> *"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."*
>
> — Jeremiah 29:7 (ESV)

The Verdict

These numbers are not a policy argument. They are a covenant indictment. Every statistic in this document represents a child who needed a shepherd and found a hired hand. A family that needed a builder and found an institution that had fed itself. A nation that needed the Church to speak — and too often heard silence.

The Great Family Deconstruction did not happen overnight, and the Great Family Reconstruction will not either. But it begins the same way every covenant reconstruction in Scripture begins: with a remnant that refuses to call the rubble normal.

For the family, Apostle Tommy E. Quick Founder & Executive Director Christian Families Against Destructive Decisions (CFADD) cfadd.org

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