

# The decline of marriage

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



It is apparent that as time progresses marriage is on the demise. The decline of marriage is having a negative effect on children. Those children, who are born into single parent families often get into drugs, perform poorly in school, suffer from abuse and have emotional problems. The big question becomes why. According to James Q. Wilson there are two possible explanations, money and culture.

The welfare systems of today support unmarried mothers. It allows them to receive housing, food and clothing without having to work. Simply put it makes it much easier to live without a husband or father. Women may actually prefer to live with babies and not with husbands. There was a study done which proved that because of welfare it is twelve percent more likely for a woman to have a baby out of wedlock before the age of 22!

AFDC began in 1935, in the 60's most women on welfare was widows or separated from their husband. Today this is not the case, two-thirds of children on welfare have an unmarried mom and only a very small percentage of them are children of widows. Money does not explain this dramatic change, culture does. Wilson says, " The Enlightenment made human reason the measure of all things, throwing off ancient rules is they fell short...what tradition once required was to be set aside in the name of scientific knowledge and personal self-discovery". Although the Enlightenment has given us many wonderful freedoms it has had some negative affects as well.

There was a time when people were looked down upon for getting a divorce or being on welfare. Today this is no longer the case. It is easier to get out of

a divorce today than it is to get out of a mortgage. Even the Supreme Courts view of marriage has changed. In the past the Supreme Court referred to marriage as a “ sacred obligation”. By 1965 it became nothing more than, “ an association of two individuals”. Unfortunately there is not much we can do to change this. None of us want to give up all of the freedoms we have gained. Wilson puts it best when he says, “ the right and best way for a culture to restore itself is for it to be rebuilt, not from the top down by government policies, but from the bottom up by personal decisions”.