



# ELIJAH AND ELISHA

MESSENGERS IN WORD AND DEED

# God Brings Life

- God brings life, future and hope to those in need
- 2 Kings 4:8-37
- This story is the beginning of a decades-long friendship between Elisha and the Shunammite woman.
- She was not a widow, nor was she poor.

# God Brings Life

- Yet because she did not have children, there was the chance she would become economically vulnerable if anything happened to her husband.
- The story of this woman and the poor widow are placed back to back. The poor widow was from Judah (S) and was deep in debt when her husband died. The Shunammite woman was from Israel (N) and was very wealthy.

# God Brings Life

- The Shunammite woman showed support of Elisha when she offered hospitality to him, not just food but even a place to stay when he was traveling through the area.
- This story shows us another contrast between Elijah and Elisha's ministry. The picture we get from Scripture is that Elijah spent much of his ministry in hiding or out in the wilderness, except at Mount Carmel.

# God Brings Life

- But the stories of Elisha's ministry in Scripture show him out-and-about among the people.
- This reflects the transition between Elijah's ministry, which was primarily warning about judgment because of idolatry.
- Elisha's ministry showed the restoration and healing that comes from the Lord when we do repent.

# God Brings Life

- The ancient practice of hospitality was an obligation.
- If you did not practice hospitality for someone who came to your home, you brought shame on your family; if you did offer hospitality, you brought honor.
- But this woman went a step further.
- She came to Elisha to offer him food – she initiated it.

# God Brings Life

- Then she built a whole extra room onto her house for him to stay.
- She didn't just give him space in her guest room, which any home would have because they practiced hospitality so often. She built an entire space just for him.
- This woman went above and beyond because of her faith that he was a holy man of God.

# God Brings Life

- Elisha wanted to repay her for her kindness and suggested putting in a good word for her with the king, but she said she didn't need that.
- She was content with her life, she lived peaceably among the people in her area, meaning she didn't have any disputes she would need a king or judge to resolve for her.

# God Brings Life

- God had given a son to many barren women in Scripture before her – Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Samson's mother, and Hannah.
- He also gave the Shunammite woman a son.
- The sons of these other women were significant in the history of Scripture.

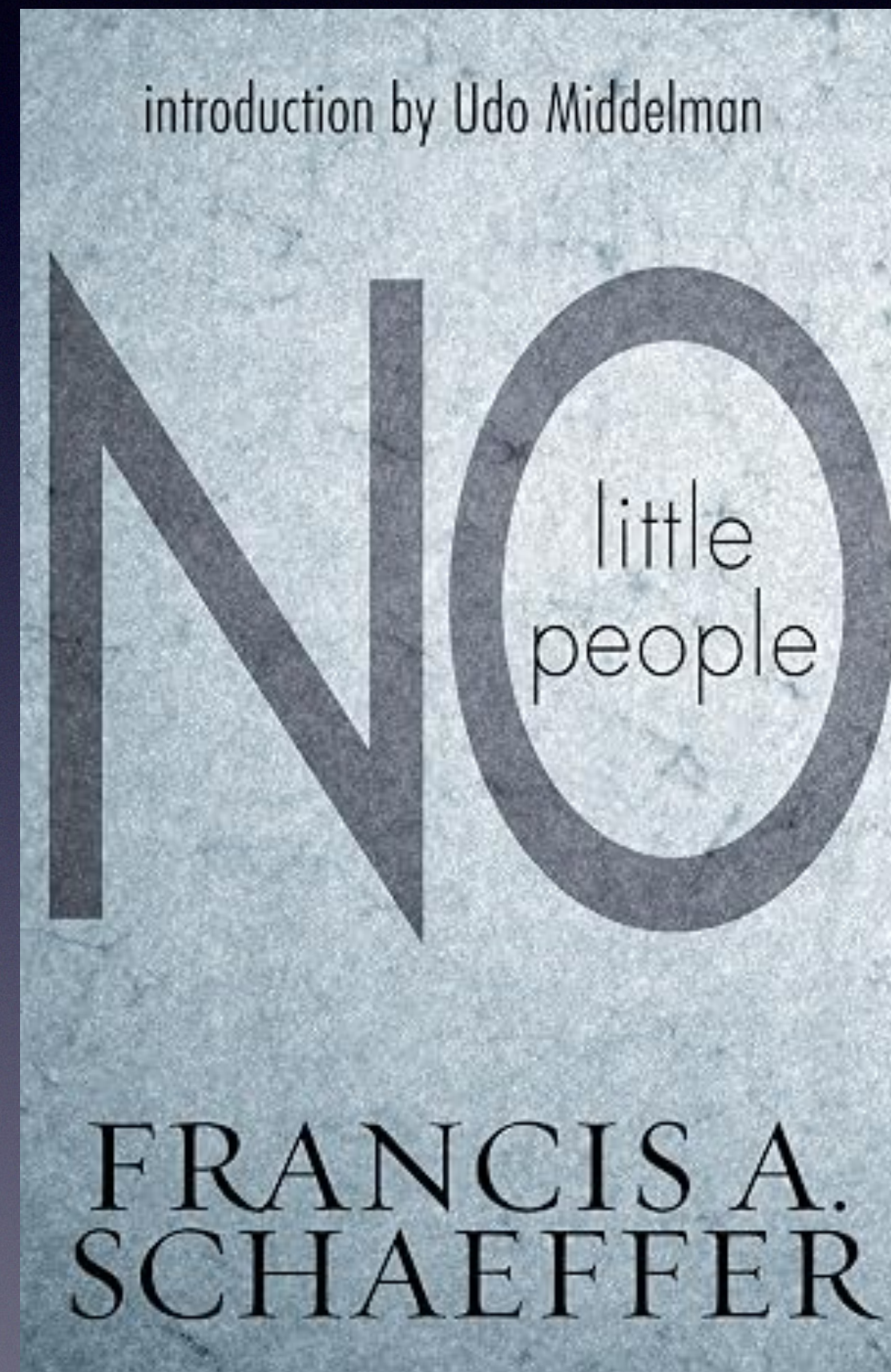
# God Brings Life

- Sarah and Rebekah's sons were Isaac and Jacob.
- Rachel's son, Joseph, saved the family of Abraham and the whole world from dying in the famine.
- Samson rescued God's people from the Philistines.
- Hannah's son, Samuel, was the last judge of Israel. He established the monarchy with Saul.

# God Brings Life

- Compared to these men, the Shunammite woman's son was obscure; he didn't do anything significant in the biblical story. Giving her a son wasn't about carrying on the line of Israel; it was about providing for her family.
- God cares about every one of us. He knows the number of hairs on our head and cares about every one of our needs, the big and the small (Matthew 6:25–34; 10:30–31).

# No Little People



- Most Christians conclude that their limited talents, energy, and knowledge mean that they don't amount to much.
- Francis Schaeffer says that the biblical emphasis is quite different.
- With God there are no little people.

# God Reverses the Curse

- God reverses the curse and brings healing, restoration and life
- 2 Kings 4:38-41
- We read here that Elisha went back to Gilgal to meet with the school of prophets there.
- Elisha visited the schools of the prophets in different cities.

# God Reverses the Curse

- Mount Carmel was spiritually significant because of Elijah's standoff with the prophets of Baal there.
- It was also an ideal place to withdraw for reflection, rest and prayer.
- Mount Carmel overlooks the Jezreel Valley, a central crossroads of Northern Israel. From there Elisha could easily travel all over Israel and down to Judah.

# Mt. Carmel and the Jezreel Valley



# God Reverses the Curse

- Gilgal is where the second generation of Israelites had recommitted to the covenant, after crossing the Jordan, before taking the land in the conquest (Joshua 5–6).
- It's close to where Elisha performed his first miracles – crossing the Jordan, then healing the water at Jericho.
- Now he was back in that area, meeting with the prophets in Gilgal, and there was a famine.



# God Reverses the Curse

- Elisha told Gehazi to make a stew, and one of the prophets put in unfamiliar gourds he had found, which caused the stew to be poisonous.
- Just as he had thrown salt into the water at Jericho, Elisha threw flour into the pot of stew, and it healed the poison. In the same way salt would have only made the waters of Jericho even more undrinkable, there is no natural reason flour could have done anything other than thicken the stew.

# God Reverses the Curse

- It was not the flour; it was the supernatural power of God.
- The pagan magicians actually believed flour had magical powers to remove evil magic.
- But they had to do rituals and incantations to try to make it work; Elisha just threw the flour in the pot
- This reflects Elijah on Mount Carmel.

# God Reverses the Curse

- The prophets of Baal did all this shouting, dancing and even self-flagellation in their attempts to entice Baal to come.
- All Elijah did was pray, and God sent down fire.
- By using flour, Elisha was showing God's superiority over these other "gods."

# God Reverses the Curse

- The poisonous gourd is described in the story as a “wild vine,” the same phrase used in Jeremiah to describe how Israel had turned away from the Lord (Jeremiah 2:21).
- In the Old Testament, God often described Israel using the imagery of a vine He had planted and cultivated but that had turned bad and was not bearing good fruit as it should have (Psalm 80:8–9; Isaiah 5:1–7).

# God Reverses the Curse

- The text doesn't explicitly tell us this was meant to symbolize Israel's idolatry, but prophets' actions often illustrated their message. This wild vine brought death to the stew reflecting the way Israel's idolatry would bring them death.
- This shows God's power and His provision for His people during a famine, but it also illustrates how dangerous idolatry can be.

# God Provides

- God can miraculously provide everything we need and more
- 2 Kings 4:42-44 and John 6:1-15
- This account clearly foreshadows what Christ would do on at least two occasions, the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000.

# God Provides

- But this story has very different numbers of both bread and people.
- In this story, Gehazi was shocked that Elisha asked him to give only 20 loaves of bread to 100 men.
- The Hebrew in this verse calls this gift to Elisha “the bread of the firstfruits,” which is the firstfruit offering the people were supposed to take to the temple.

# God Provides

- The man brought the gift to Elisha, bypassing the spiritual leadership in Israel, who were leading people astray from the Lord.
- This man came from the town of Baal-Shalishah, “three Baals,” a town in Israel where the people were worshipping Baal rather than God (the temple was in Judah).

# God Provides

- The offering was supposed to be two loaves; this was 10 times that, either 10 years' worth of offerings or offerings from 10 faithful families in Baal-Shalishah.
- Some sacrifices of the temple were burned completely to the Lord, but some were given to the priests since they didn't have their own portion of the land to grow their own food (Numbers 18:12–13).

# God Provides

- Elisha told Gehazi to give these loaves to the prophets to eat, 100 men. Twenty loaves of bread may sound like a lot, but these loaves were small individual loaves.
- Gehazi was shocked; this amount of bread would never feed 100 men. But Elisha said the Lord had told him they would eat their fill and even have some left over, which is exactly what happened.

# God Provides

- This was Elisha again pointing to God as the source of power, not himself. God supernaturally multiplied the loaves.
- As He did with Joseph in Genesis and Elijah earlier in Kings, God provided for them in the middle of a famine.
- This miracle was about God reversing the curse of the famine for those who were faithful to Him.

# God Provides

- When Jesus multiplied the five loaves and two fish to feed the 5,000 men plus the women and children with them, the people in the crowd would have known that Elisha multiplied the loaves for his prophet-disciples.
- This amount of food for this number of people was even more shocking; it was one-fourth the amount of food and 50 times the number of people.

# God Provides

- Jesus' miracle was 200 times as big as Elisha's. This would have been a very clear message about Jesus for anyone familiar with the Old Testament, which would have been everyone in the crowd.
- Jesus was more than a prophet.
- He was the Bread of Life who came down from heaven to give life to the world (John 6:33).

# God Provides

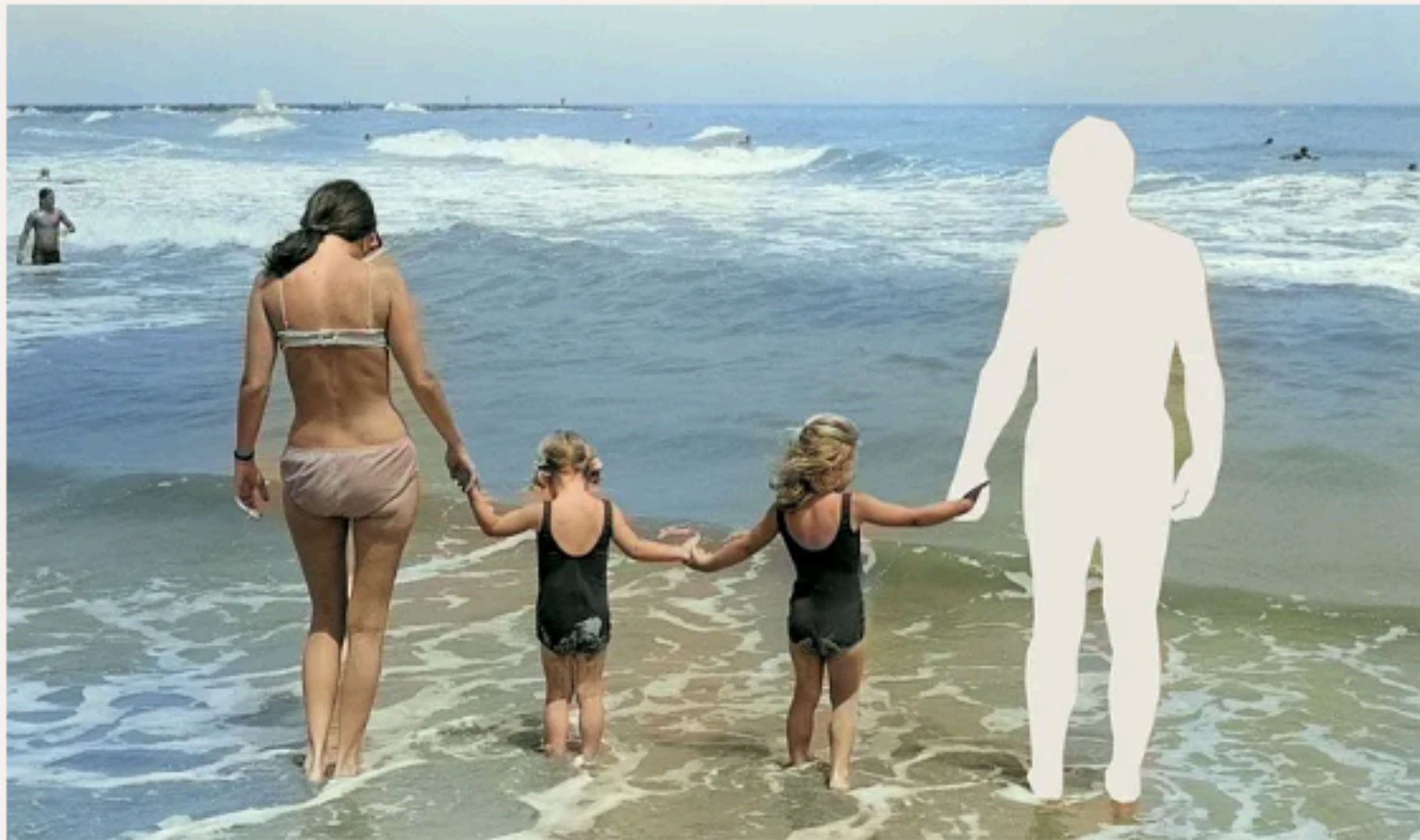
- The purpose of the firstfruit offering was to acknowledge God as the One who had given them the land and the harvest. It also showed faith that He would continue to provide for them in the future when the first and best were brought to Him.
- In Elisha's miracle and later in Jesus', God showed His people just that. He will provide everything we need when we seek His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).

# God Provides

- He can bless us with even more than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). In this story, the very thing the man offered became God's provision for His people.
- God took what the man offered in faith and multiplied it for the good of His people. He can do the same with the resources we offer Him in faith; He can use it and even multiply it to bless the world and build His kingdom.

# Father's Day

## America's Great Dad Divide



"THIS GROWING TENDENCY TO SIDESTEP FAMILY LIFE IS CELEBRATED BY MANY ON THE LEFT—AND SOME ON THE RIGHT—AS A FORM OF FREEDOM," WRITES BRAD WILCOX. "BUT FOR MANY MEN, THAT FREEDOM IS A LIE." (ILLUSTRATION BY THE FREE PRESS; IMAGES VIA GETTY)

American dads have never been more devoted to their children. But increasing numbers of men are choosing never to enter family life at all.

By Brad Wilcox

06.17.26 — Parenting

Parenting

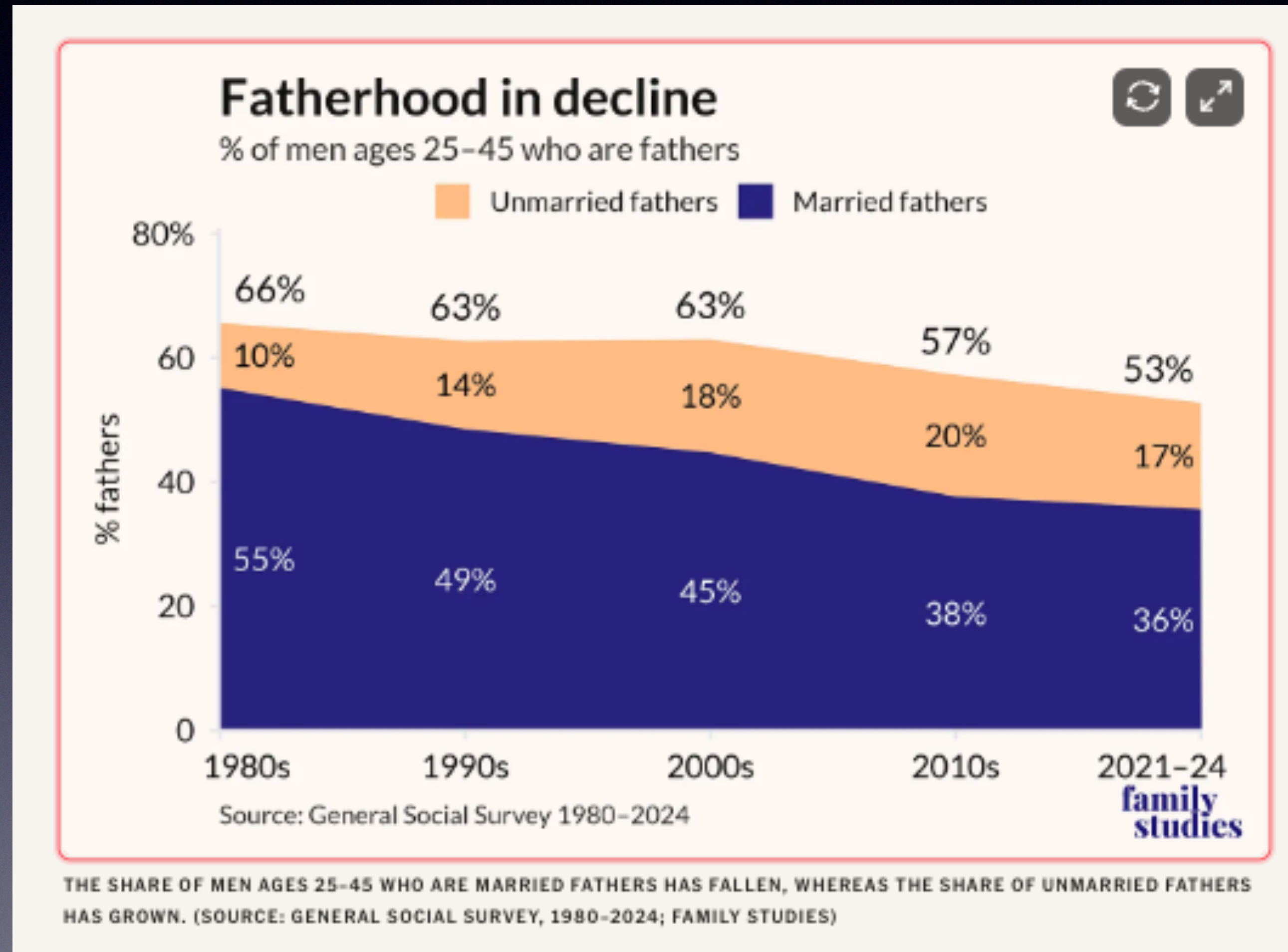
These are stories that impact families—from wars over parenting styles to parents' rights an...

FOLLOW TOPIC 

# Father's Day

- This Father's Day, the state of American fatherhood is strong.
- Data show that fathers are investing record amounts of attention, affection, and time in their children.
- As Derek Thompson and Aziz Sunderji wrote in April, dads are spending nearly quadruple the number of hours their grandfathers spent with their kids.

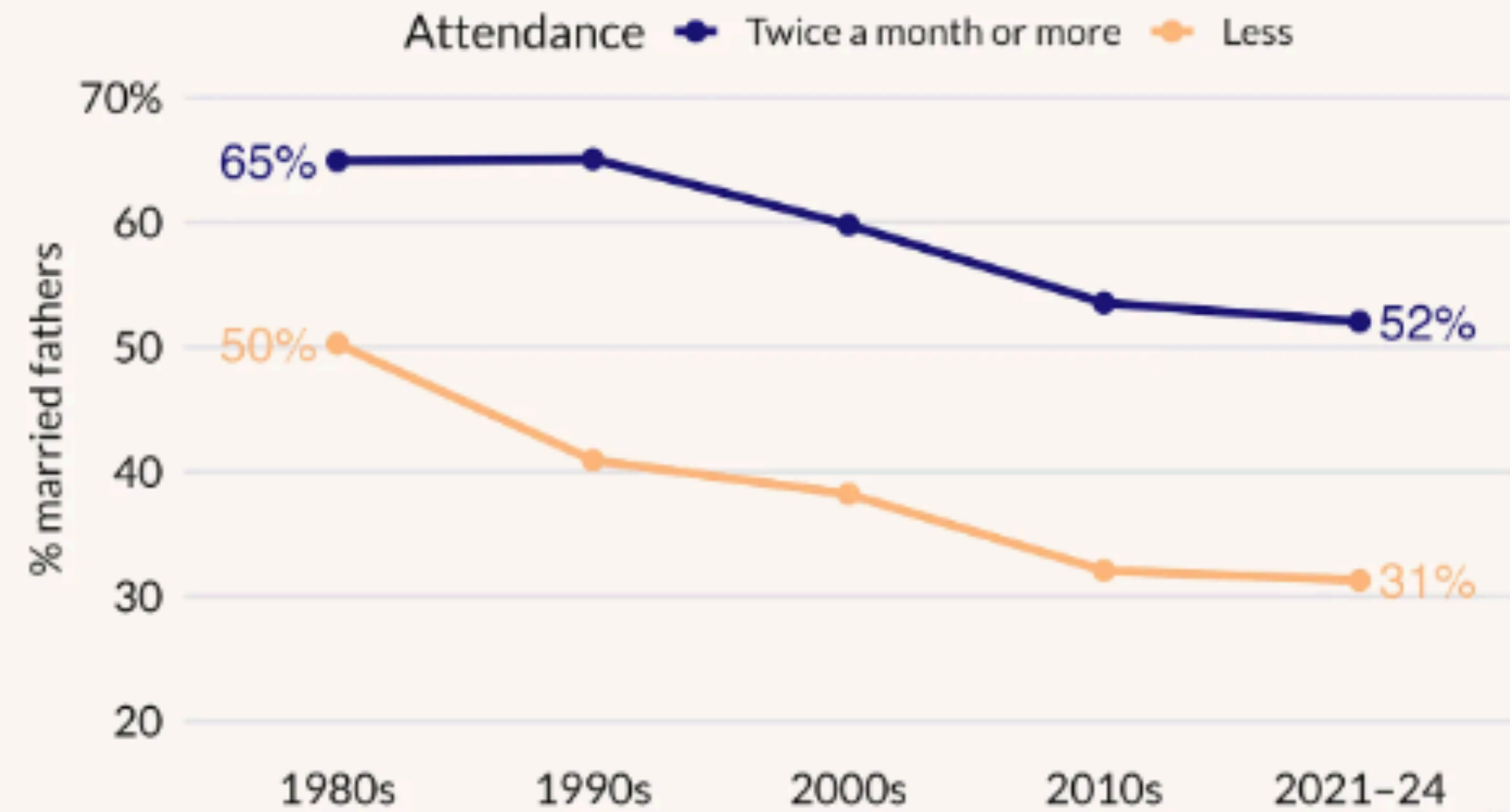
# Father's Day



# Father's Day

## Married fatherhood by religiosity

% men ages 25–45 who are married fathers

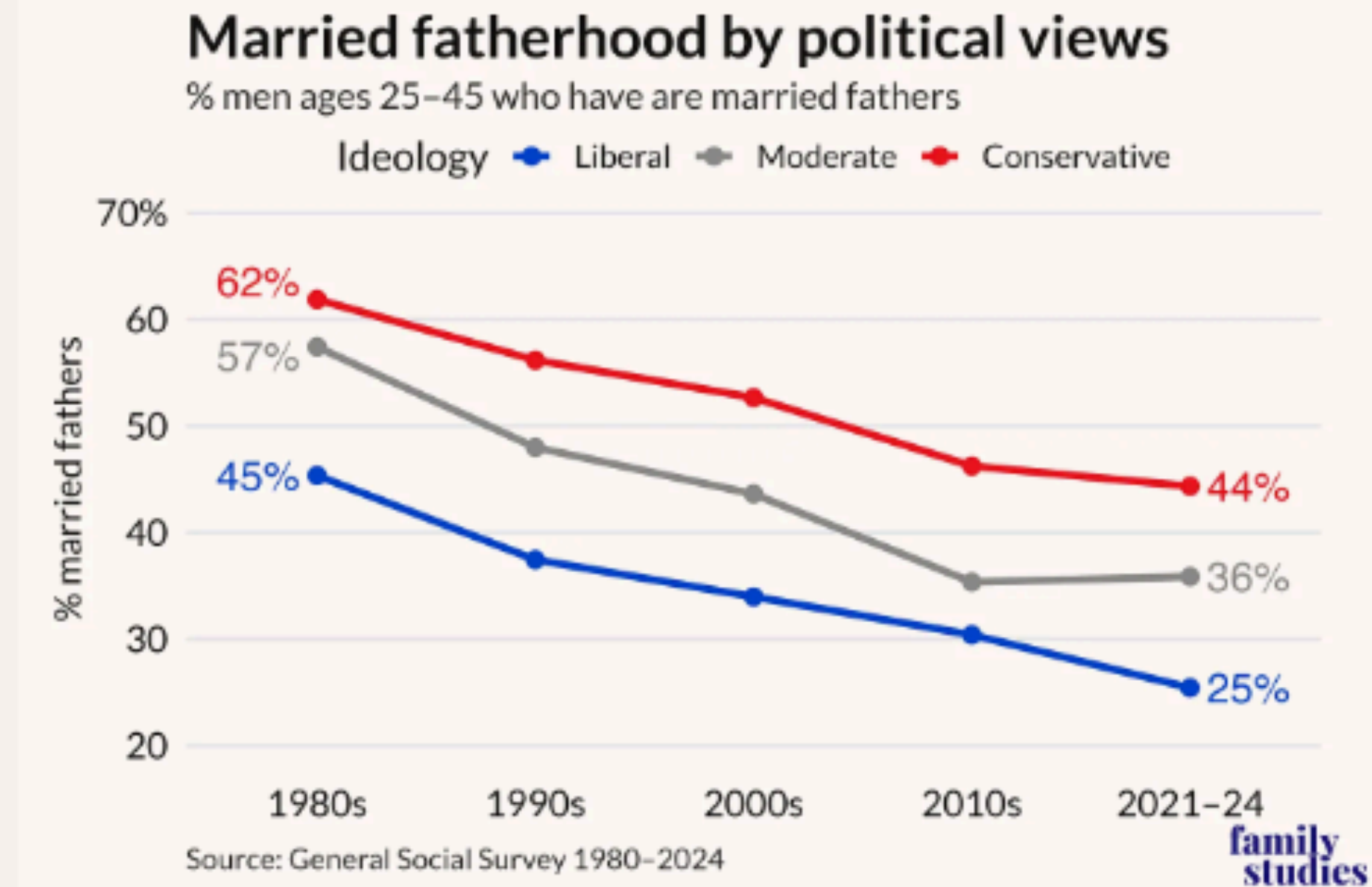


Source: General Social Survey 1980–2024

family studies

AMONG MEN AGES 25–45, REGULAR RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE IS STRONGLY ASSOCIATED WITH MARRIED FATHERHOOD.  
(SOURCE: GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY, 1980–2024; FAMILY STUDIES)

# Father's Day

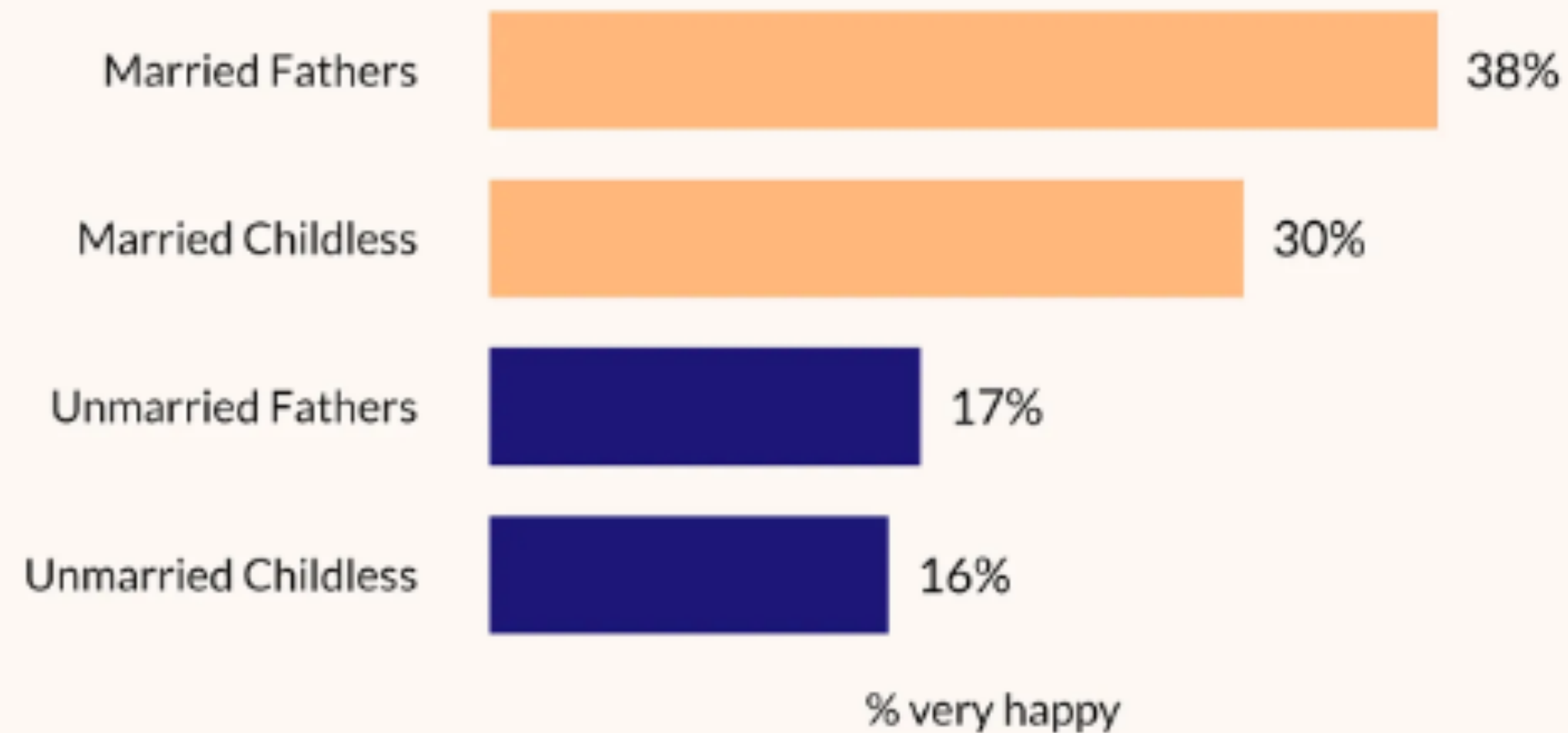


AMONG MEN AGES 25-45, CONSERVATIVE MEN ARE NEARLY TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE MARRIED FATHERS AS LIBERAL MENS.  
(SOURCE: GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY, 1980-2024; FAMILY STUDIES)

# Father's Day

## Married fathers are happiest

% men ages 25-45 who are "very happy"



All differences significant at  $p < 0.05$  in an age-adjusted model, except unmarried fathers versus unmarried childless  
Source: General Social Survey 2014-2024

family  
studies

MARRIED FATHERS AGES 25-45 ARE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO REPORT BEING "VERY HAPPY" AS UNMARRIED OR CHILDLESS MEN. (SOURCE: GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY, 2014-2024; FAMILY STUDIES)