

# Marriage and Money Part I

**Money is a common cause of friction for married couples, and it's no wonder.**

His, Hers or Ours?

Financial Authority

Tithing When Your Spouse Objects

Why Does My Spouse Spend So Much?

Big Dreams on a Small Budget

God's Minimum Financial Standards for Couples

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:24). So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate (Matthew 19:6).*

Money is one of the major causes of friction in a marriage, and it's no wonder.

Living in a world in which we are constantly worried about taking care of ourselves, it's easy to forget that marriage is a commitment to forge a new life with another person.

The lack of trust emerging from society has created prenuptial agreements and separate bank accounts.

These undermine the commitment to a shared life with a spouse and are contrary to biblical teachings.

## **Ours, Not Mine**

A husband's and wife's incomes in marriage should be merged and shared. Someone should be in charge of keeping a budget for the household, and whatever funds there are should be held mutually. This will require a lot of faith in the Lord, as well as in your spouse.

Don't forget to ask God what He wants you to do with your money. He made you stewards over your finances for a purpose, so you should always remember to ask what His plans are. Many blessings can come from appropriate money management in marriage.

## **God's Minimum Financial Standards for Couples**

**God's Word contains basic principles to govern every aspect of marriage, including finances.**

The Word of God has basic principles that govern every aspect of marriage, including His minimum financial standards.

Although often these biblical principles are in marked contrast with the world's ideas concerning money, if couples will dedicate themselves to living by God's principles they will avoid many potential financial problems.

## **The OPM Principle**

The primary financial principle taught to married couples by the world's financial institutions is called *OPM*, or *Other People's Money*.

However, this principle is nothing more than a credit mentality and a credit standard -- the ability to borrow that allows couples to buy things they really cannot afford to buy.

This principle works great during the early years of marriage, because it allows couples to accumulate a lot of things they otherwise cannot afford to buy.

Unfortunately, there always comes a day of reconciliation, when the bills for all those things comes due.

Before they realize it, because they built too much too quickly, using too much debt, married couples find themselves in debt far beyond their ability to repay.

## **God's Minimum Standards**

God requires minimum financial standards of finance in marriage for His people.

If couples establish these minimum standards and determine to make them an essential part of their financial management, they will, without a doubt, lay a strong foundation for a healthy and balanced marriage.

The following are four primary minimum standards of finance found in God's Word that all couples are encouraged to adopt.

### **1. God owns everything.**

*"We have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either" (1 Timothy 6:7).*

Once couples accept the fact that God owns everything and that they have been chosen to be stewards or managers of God's property, it's important for them to manage according to His principles and standards.

It's how we faithfully manage what He has given us that will determine whether He will give us greater things to manage.

*"Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things" (Matthew 25:23).*

So, since in a marriage a husband and wife are one, the financial assets and incomes of both husband and wife should be merged and they should operate from a unified financial management base, rather than from a separate and independent management base.

## 2. Think ahead and avoid problems.

*"Which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14:28)*

Too often couples put off planning until they are so deeply in debt that it seems impossible to get out. By then it is too late to plan, except for crisis planning. Couples need to begin planning by writing down their goals and objectives, which should include a yearly balanced budget.

These goals and objectives need to be reviewed yearly. Obviously one of the first goals is to avoid financial bondage by staying out of additional debt and committing to pay off existing debt.

This doesn't necessarily mean that they shouldn't borrow, but borrowing to buy consumables, such as gifts, vacations, and clothes, should be avoided. This type of credit debt will put a couple back into insurmountable debt faster than they can pay themselves out of it.

## 3. Keep good records.

*"By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Proverbs 24:3-4).*

It is impossible for couples to have their finances under control unless they understand the basics of good bookkeeping.

Recently it was discovered that less than two out of 10 couples know how to actually balance their checkbooks. This means that many married couples seldom know how much money they have to spend or how much they are spending.

Couples should develop their financial plans together and work together, but there should be only one bookkeeper in the home who pays the bills. Two bookkeepers invite bookkeeping disaster.

#### 4. **Get educated.**

*"The naive believes everything, but the sensible man considers his steps" (Proverbs 14:15).*

Most financially naive couples are not stupid regarding money; they are just uninformed and do not understand how borrowing and interest rates work. As a result, their primary concern becomes "How much are the monthly payments?" rather than "How much is this going to cost ultimately?"

In addition, many times the inexperienced people borrow more money than they can repay because they have no budget. In essence, they have no idea where their money goes each month or how much credit their income can support.

Couples need to learn financial management and budgeting and use that information to avoid debt or financial problems.

God's Word provides standards for managing money that are essential for marital unity. If couples study these biblical principles, learn them and put them into practice in their marriages, and adhere to those standards no matter how tempted they are to adopt the world's standards, their marriages will be strong and will remain sound.

*Remember: When you know better, Do better.*

*Bro. and Sis. Nelson*