



Financial Supplement *for Fully Engaged*

OFFICE OF MARRIAGE & FAMILY
DIOCESE OF SAINT CLOUD

Money a Real Issue

When it comes to marriage and money, many Americans have unrealistic expectations. Often times, lofty ideals crumble in the first few years after the wedding. This is because money represents more than dollars and cents. Money can be used to express love, power and respect or withheld to punish, control or humiliate.

The topic of money is known to cause friction in the early years of marriage. In fact, in both the first and third years of marriage, money was most often reported as a topic of marital disagreement. It beat out tensions about leisure, family of origin, children and religion.

With friction, comes stress. A study from the American Psychological Association found almost three-quarters of Americans are

experiencing financial stress at least some of the time, and nearly a quarter are feeling extreme financial stress. The issues of the debt brought into marriage, financial situation, financial decision-making, the employment of the husband, and the employment of the wife, are among the reasons for stress.

On the next several pages, some of the *Fully Engaged* items from the Finances section have been selected. For each of those selected, there are worksheets and tips to help you reflect on your individual situation. These are designed to lead to fruitful and thoughtful discussions in the area of finances.



Money does buy happiness,
but Marriage buys more!!



Fully Engaged Statement #19

We agree on what percentage of our income we will give to our Church and other organizations.

In marriage, as two become one, we learn to give completely without counting the cost. This becomes a way of life that continues to grow over time. This is a form of stewardship.

Giving back out of love to our generous God also becomes a way of life. Each of us, because we are so blessed, has many opportunities to give back. We can share time and our talents in various ways in our parish. Consider the talents you have and how you might use them to contribute to the life of your parish. Then volunteer some time in those areas. Each parish has many options to choose from.

As part of a life of stewardship, it is important to consider how to give back from your gift of treasure. We all have financial needs. And putting the needs of our parish at the top of the list must be important to all of us. Be intentional and plan each year what areas of need you will be supporting including your parish.

Above all, remember there is always something for which to be grateful. With this understanding, we are challenged to make this way of life ours. You cannot be on the sidelines, either we are grateful or we are not.

We cannot out give God.

The Prince and His Treasure



Hundreds of years ago, a powerful prince with his vast army was pillaging the countryside, going from town to town, doing battle, taking the wealth of each village and leaving behind widows and their children to starve. As the prince's army was loaded with their booty and turned to go home with their winnings, they came across a small defenseless village.

The prince thought that they should take this last opportunity to capture as much as they could, but decided that since their horses already had so much to carry, that he would offer the town some mercy. The prince sent his messenger to the gates of the village with this message, "We will do war with you tomorrow, but before the battle ensues, we will allow the women and children to leave. You will be allowed to take with you whatever treasure you can carry on your back."

At dawn of the next morning, the messenger went again to the gates of the village and said it was time for the women and children to leave. As they opened the gates, all of the women had strapped to their backs their greatest treasure...their husband. The prince was so moved by this gesture, he spared the town. Do we treat each other as our greatest treasure?

What gifts do we have, as individuals and as a couple, that we could share with our Church and/or community?

We will share these gifts in our parish by: _____

We pledge to contribute \$_____ each week/month to our parish.

We pledge to contribute \$_____ each year to _____ (our favorite charity.)

Fully Engaged Statement #132

Growing up, I was taught to save money.

The following statements are about your family, you and your friends. Under the **ME** column, answer **YES (Y)** to any statement if this is the situation most of the time. Answer **NO (N)** to the statement if it is seldom the situation. Under the **YOU** column answer how you think your fiancé will respond to the statements concerning his or her family attitudes.

ME

YOU

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. _____ It was important for my family to save for future emergencies. | _____ 1. |
| 2. _____ I feel it is important to save for future emergencies. | _____ 2. |
| 3. _____ In my family, it was the primary role of the male to provide for the needs of the family. | _____ 3. |
| 4. _____ I believe that it is the primary role of the male to provide for the material needs of the family. | _____ 4. |
| 5. _____ My family believed it was important to pay bills on time. | _____ 5. |
| 6. _____ It is important for me to pay bills on time. | _____ 6. |
| 7. _____ My family carefully budgeted for family vacations. | _____ 7. |
| 8. _____ Family vacations are more important to me than a new car (as long as the old one still runs.) | _____ 8. |
| 9. _____ My family sometimes lived beyond their means. | _____ 9. |
| 10. _____ I will go into debt to buy a house, but for no other purchase. | _____ 10. |
| 11. _____ My family made donations to church and other charitable causes. | _____ 11. |
| 12. _____ I believe it is important for us to share some of what we have with our church and the less fortunate. | _____ 12. |
| 13. _____ In my family, a good paying job, even with long hours, was more important than time with the family. | _____ 13. |
| 14. _____ Time as a family is more important to me than a better paying job as long as we have enough to live on. | _____ 14. |
| 15. _____ My family became extremely anxious whenever they went into debt. | _____ 15. |
| 16. _____ The thought that we, too, may need to borrow money makes me nervous. | _____ 16. |
| 17. _____ My parents kept "money" secrets from each other. | _____ 17. |
| 18. _____ It is important to me that we both be honest regarding our use of money. | _____ 18. |
| 19. _____ My family was careful in its use of credit cards. | _____ 19. |
| 20. _____ I am responsible in the use of credit cards. | _____ 20. |
| 21. _____ My family had clear goals of what possessions they wished to acquire. | _____ 21. |
| 22. _____ I have goals of where I'd like to be financially and what possessions I'd like to have ten years from now. | _____ 22. |
| 23. _____ My family had a tendency to become preoccupied with money and financial matters. | _____ 23. |
| 24. _____ I have a tendency to be unconcerned and even irresponsible about financial matters. | _____ 24. |
| 25. _____ My parents tended to fight a great deal over how to spend their money. | _____ 25. |
| 26. _____ I will probably argue with you over how we spend our money. | _____ 26. |

Fully Engaged Statement #109

We plan to keep our finances separate.

This is an issue that you will get many opinions on both sides of the issue. For example, Dr. Phil's advice is: **"Joint accounts are a bad idea, especially if you're on a budget.** For a joint account to work, both people have to be highly responsible with their finances. Very few people have the ability to be that financially disciplined."

But from a Christian perspective, Larry Burkett, the late Christian radio host and author of over 70 books on financial management, when asked if a couple intends to marry but plans to keep separate bank accounts, gave this advice, "They are not ready to get married. When God says in Genesis 2:24 that a man and a woman become "one flesh," He's not just talking about the physical sense. God created marriage as the highest, most honored, most intimate relationship of all human relationships. As such, the husband-wife relationship takes precedence over blood-kin ties. Now that's remarkable. That means a man is closer to his wife than his own mother from whom he was born, and that a woman is closer to her husband than the children she will bear from her own body. Unwillingness to join all assets and bank accounts after marriage is a danger signal that unresolved trust issues are yet lingering in the relationship." In another book when asked about separate accounts he says, "Let me

encourage you to never maintain separate anything, including checking accounts. When you develop a his money/her money philosophy, it usually leads to a him-versus-her mentality in a marriage. The only reason to maintain a separate account is for business purposes; for instance, to manage the accounting for travel expenses associated with a commission sales job."

In Bishop John Kinney's pastoral letter, **Marriage in Christ: The Sacrament of Faithful, Lifelong Love**, he discusses the main issue, going from "me" to "we." "It is also troubling that in many marriages the spouses continue to keep their financial affairs separate from each other, each clinging to individual credit cards, checking accounts and savings. They don't realize that progressing from **me** to **we** can be stymied without also moving from *mine* to *ours*."



The following checklist for couples is a reminder to change your name and/or status once married, to help make that transition from "me" to "we."

- W-2 (woman) change marital status and name
- Driver's License (woman)
- Social Security Card (woman)
- Checking Accounts
- Savings Accounts
- Credit Cards
- Auto Insurance and Title
- Safety Deposit Box
- Life Insurance Beneficiaries
- Medical Insurance (add spouse)
- Wills
- Mortgage
- Renters/Home Owners Insurance
- Change of Address

NOTE: A CERTIFIED COPY OF YOUR MARRIAGE LICENSE MIGHT BE REQUIRED

Fully Engaged Statement #20

I believe it will be important to get my spouse's approval on purchases over an agreed upon amount.

Respond (circle) with **AGREE**, **DISAGREE** or **UNCERTAIN/UNDISCUSSED** to the following statements, and indicate why in the space provided. When finished, exchange your answers, discuss with your fiancé.

1. We have agreed on the amount that one of us may spend without first consulting the other. **A D U**

2. We agree about what we can afford. **A D U**

3. We have determined which one of us will be primarily responsible for the management of our family finances. **A D U**

4. We have agreed to save a regular amount of money from each paycheck before making large purchases. **A D U**

5. We know each other's goals and believe they are compatible. **A D U**

6. We have similar values concerning money and property. **A D U**

7. We have exchanged all information about our financial liabilities and assets. **A D U**

8. We have discussed life and health insurance and have decided on how to proceed. **A D U**

9. Whatever financial resources I bring into marriage remain my property. **A D U**

Fully Engaged Statement #127

In our marriage, managing the budget will be both our jobs.

Answer the following questions individually and then compare answers.

1. How did your parents divide the responsibilities of the family finances? (Check which one did what.)

| | Mom | Dad | Both |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Paid Bills | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Balanced the check book | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Talked to salesman, e.g. insurance | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Decided on major purchases | ___ | ___ | ___ |

2. How are you like your parents in regards to finances (e.g. miser, spendthrift, planner, impulse buyer, charge everything, only pay cash, etc.)?

How are you different? _____

3. What skill(s) and/or strength(s) do you expect to bring into your marriage in the area of finances?

4. What conflicts do you foresee in your marriage in the financial area? _____

5. Write down three guiding rules about money that you will always follow:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Fully Engaged Statement #12

Our household will have a working budget in place.

A sample budget

Monthly Income and Expenses Worksheet

INCOME PER MONTH

Salary _____
Interest _____
Dividends _____
Notes _____
Rents _____

TOTAL GROSS INCOME _____

EXPENSES PER MONTH

1. Tithe _____
2. Taxes _____

NET SPENDABLE INCOME _____

3. Housing _____

Mortgage (Rent) _____
Insurance _____
Property Taxes _____
Electricity _____
Gas _____
Water _____
Sanitation _____
Telephone _____
Maintenance _____
Other _____

4. Food _____

5. Automobile(s) _____

Payments _____
Gas & Oil _____
Insurance _____
License _____
Taxes _____
Maintenance _____

6. Insurance _____

Life _____
Medical _____
Other _____

7. Debts _____

Credit Card _____
Loans & Notes _____
Other _____

8. Entertainment & Recreation _____

Dining Out _____
Trips _____
Babysitters _____
Activities _____
Vacation _____
Other _____

9. Clothing _____

10. Savings _____

11. Medical Expense _____

Doctor _____
Dentist _____
Medications _____
Other _____

12. Miscellaneous _____

Toiletry, Cosmetics _____
Beauty, Barber _____
Laundry, Cleaning _____
Allowances, Lunches _____
Subscriptions _____
Gifts (inc. Christmas) _____
Special Education _____
Cash _____
Other _____

TOTAL EXPENSES _____

INCOME VS. EXPENSES

Net Spendable Income _____
Less Expenses _____
Unallocated Surplus Income _____

Fully Engaged Statement #55

We have a plan to manage our current debt.



Here's a quiz to help you find where you are on saving, spending, and paying.

Mark "yes" or "no" by each one.

1. I pay only the minimum balance on bills.
2. I have depleted my savings to pay bills.
3. I pay bills after the due date or skip payments regularly.
4. After reaching my credit limit I apply for new cards.
5. I take a cash advance from one card to pay for another.
6. I charge small items (under \$10) because I don't have the cash available.
7. I write post-dated checks so payments won't bounce.
8. I frequently worry about unpaid debts.
9. I have had 3 or more late payment warnings from creditors in the last 12 months.
10. I need to work overtime or get a 2nd temporary job in order to meet all my financial obligations.
11. I DO NOT have a 3-6 month cash reserve for emergencies.
12. I don't have any idea how much debt I have.
13. If one of us lost our job, we would be in immediate financial trouble.
14. We never or seldom talk about money.
15. We have an attitude of "My Money" and "Your Money."

If you had 2 or more "Yes", there are major financial issues you need to address. Don't be afraid to seek professional help.

Here's another quiz

Find out where you stand on money matters: (hint – This exercise works only when you answer the questions honestly, regardless of discomfort.)

1. Have you shared your budget and bill-paying decisions with each other?
2. Have you established long-term goals (saving for retirement, college, house purchase, etc.)?
3. Have you established short-term goals (bills to pay off, purchases to make, emergency funds/investments to grow) and made up a schedule to evaluate and set new ones together?
4. Have you set up a combined budget – and plan to follow it pretty closely (in contrast to cleaning up the mess at the end of the month)?
5. If you won \$5,000, would you both generally agree on how to spend it (bill-paying, investments, vacation, a luxury item, etc.) or would a battle royal ensue?
6. Do you discuss issues that come up (in contrast to avoiding the subject because it always leads to arguments)?
7. Are you both familiar with all of each other's accounts and charges, their balances and payment schedules (instead of one partner having sole financial knowledge)?
8. Do both of you have relatively equal discretionary income and access to money when the need arises?
9. Do you both practice full financial disclosure with each other (in contrast to purchases, etc., kept secret from each other)?
10. Have you examined each other's wills and insurance policies to see where necessary changes need to be made after your wedding?

Some advice from Christian financial counselor, Larry Burkett:

Credit cards are not the problem. It's the MISUSE of credit cards that gets people into trouble . . . I don't object to couples using credit cards as a matter of convenience, but I do think they should be used under the following strict rules.

1. A working budget must be a prerequisite to the use of credit cards. Without a budget, there is no meaningful context to determine if a particular purchase can be afforded. It's so simple: No budget, no cards.

2. Both partners should agree to use credit cards only to purchase items provided for in their budget. In other words, unplanned or impulse purchases will lead to trouble.

3. Balances of each credit card should be paid in full at the end of the month, with no exceptions.

4. The first time these rules are violated, the couples should cut up the card(s) and throw them away.

Fully Engaged Statement #158

I am concerned about compulsive spending in our relationship.

Impulse Buying

Impulse items are unnecessary purchases made on the spur-of-the-moment.

These purchases are usually rationalized by, **"It was on sale," "I was planning to buy it anyway," "I've always wanted one," "I just couldn't resist it,"** or **"I owe it to myself."** Often they are made with a credit card because the cash isn't available. The net result is a little-used item and an unnecessary debt.

"Impulse purchases" are not restricted to small items. They range from homes, cars and trips to unscheduled luncheons. Cost is not the issue; necessity is. Every purchase should be considered in light of the budget.

Discipline is the key to controlling "impulse" buying.

Here's a handy trick to curb impulse buying — place your credit card in a Tupperware container. Fill the container with water and put it in your freezer. If you find something you have to have and putting it on your credit card is the only way to buy it, come home and take the container out of the freezer to defrost. (Microwaving is really not an option at this point. Stores usually don't accept a piece of melted plastic.) This may take 4 to 6 hours. This way you have time to rethink your pending purchase and consult with your spouse. I've never had a store not hold an item for me for that short of a time, and there are many, many times I've called the store back to release the items after I thought it over!

Need Help?

Within the Diocese of Saint Cloud: Caritas Family Services of Catholic Charities offers financial counseling. Services are provided based on a client's ability to pay. As a United Way Agency, no one is refused financial management services because of inability to pay. Financial assessments, budget and debt repayment, help with creditors and financial goal setting counseling is also available. For more information call (320) 650-1550.

For other dioceses: Please contact your local Catholic Charities Office. Thank you.