



Pre-Marriage Counseling on Finances

[A couple could go over this on their own and have a follow-up meeting with their counselor(s) as needed. This could also be streamlined for a counselor-led meeting.]

'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' [.] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. (Matthew 19:5-6 quoting Genesis 2:24)

Money is the number one cause of stress in marriage and divorce. Because money touches every area of our lives, it exposes our differing viewpoints. The stress does not come from money itself, but rather the differing values that it can represent. Instead of fighting over the details of handling money, it's much more productive to explore each other's values in a respectful manner.

Part of the adventure of getting married is getting to know your future spouse on a deeper level. Understanding your fiancé's upbringing and temperament helps you to see why he or she might value certain things or react a certain way in different situations. Take some time with your fiancé to talk through these questions.

Reflecting on Your Financial Upbringing

While growing up, was your family: poor, lower-middle/working class, middle class, upper-middle class, or upper class? How did growing up in this way affect your values?

While growing up, how responsibly do you feel your family handled money: irresponsibly, somewhat responsibly, or completely responsibly?

Where do you feel you personally fall on that scale?

There's a good chance your financial mindset and habits are a lot like those of the people who raised you. Instead, you might have a mindset or habits opposite from theirs because of some strong negative association. We aren't defined by our upbringing, but we are, for better or worse, heavily influenced by it.

Financial Temperaments

There is no better or worse type of financial temperament. These temperaments can change over time and in different contexts. Every temperament has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Would you describe yourself as more thrifty or extravagant?

Would you describe yourself as more concerned or carefree?

Would you describe yourself as more conservative or risk-taking?

Would you describe yourself as more settled or ambitious?

Important Details

What debts will you bring into the marriage and where did they come from?
Credit cards? Auto loans? Property loans?

Do you owe the IRS? Your parents or friends? Do you have child support or alimony payments?

As a couple, will you carry balances on credit cards or other high interest loans?

Do you know your credit score? What is it and why?

Where do you want to live? What is the plan to pay for it? Do you have a limit on what you are willing to pay based on a percentage of your combined income?

Do you want children? How many? Do you both expect to keep working or will one of you stay home to raise children? If so, for how long?

Do you have savings? How much? What are you saving for?

How do you feel about giving to your local church? To the poor? How will you come together to decide on what to give?

After getting married, will you have a joint account? Separate accounts? Or both?

Generally, it is recommended to have a joint account for transparency and unity. If desired, you could set up separate “spending money” accounts.

As a couple, will you be committed to doing well financially and spiritually? If yes, then how will you accomplish that?

For more resources, see www.faith-finances.com.

Read *Faith and Finances: A 21st Century Biblical Guide for Growing, Protecting, and Using Your Money*.

Take the *Building Faith and Finances* financial course.

