

Family Activity Worksheet

House on the Rock Family Ministries

January 9, 2010

“New Challenges – Financial”

For richer or poorer ...

Arguments over [money](#) and how money is managed may seem inevitable in any relationship. After all, it's hard enough to make the right financial choices without taking into [account](#) someone else's feelings and ideas. It can be even more difficult when you are both coming from different financial angles and pasts. So if your styles of dealing with money are different, here are 4 tips for overcoming financial stress in [marriage](#).

- Be frank in discussing how you and your families handled money and how it went when you were growing up. It's important for both of you to understand where the other is coming from. You want to be frank enough to know what the actual financial situation was and what the family spending habits were - i.e. living paycheck to paycheck and spending rather than saving, or hoarding every dime and being exceptionally frugal whether the money was available or not
- Discuss honestly how that history and past experience may influence your spending and saving decisions. Be sure to discuss whether or not you can both understand where the other is coming from and you need to see if either of you can recognize patterns of behavior
- Discuss honestly your long and short-term goals. For example, we have a savings account devoted to vacations and we deposit something from every paycheck into that savings account whether it's 10 or 100 dollars.
- Discuss where you each envision being twenty years from now - the frugal husband may be thinking of when you have [children](#) and saving enough to allow one of you to be at home with the kids for a few years, a new home purchase or other - the [wife](#) may be thinking of all the nice things she'd like to add to the house during a renovation

These tips may not resolve your financial frustrations in one fell swoop, but they can bring you both in touch with where the other is coming from and potentially help you achieve a compromise that reduces the [financial](#) strife in your marriage.

How do you and your spouse avoid financial strife in your marriage?

Financial difficulties, and the stress that accompanies them, are the leading causes of divorce. Nearly every marriage goes through monetary trouble, but is divorce the solution? I don't think so! My conviction is that, if you and your spouse can get through all that debt and all those bills, the process will actually make your marriage better.

***Pebbles of Truth** is a ministry of House on the Rock Family Ministries (www.hotrfm.org). This worksheet is designed to complement the Pebbles of Truth radio feature heard on WJTL Saturday, January 9, 2010. If you missed the spot, or want to hear it again, you can listen to it on our website <http://www.pebblesoftruth.com>.*

Divorce is also the number one reason for people filing bankruptcy. A big debt can certainly break up your marriage, but what benefit can a divorce have on your finances? Many couples don't even discuss money issues, plan a budget, or set back savings. Why would divorce be the answer to this communication problem? A divorce can be expensive and will thus propel you further into debt. But the most costly part of the divorce process will be losing the love of the person you vowed to remain loyal and devoted to. Your marriage vows included "for richer, for poorer" -- not "for richer and richer."

You need to spot money problems early and attack them together to avoid disaster. Casting stones, belligerence, and screaming at a spouse does nothing to eliminate financial stress and, instead, takes the focus from solving the problem at hand. Don't let your debt run your life; step up to the plate and assume control of your finances. The key is to work together on a realistic and reasonable budget based on the goals that have been set. Track your spending, and make your dollars go further by sticking to this budget once it is in place. You will have a step by step formula for figuring out where the most important place to utilize your money will be. You can then determine what expenses you can cut back on or hopefully eliminate.

Begin a savings account. I have a habit of telling my clients to open a savings account on the other side of town. The reasoning behind this is: the temptation to draw out funds is will not be increased by convenience. Even better than that, use an automatic withdrawal system to set aside a pre designated amount from each paycheck. The best strategy is to try it out with a small sum at first, then increase the amount periodically for as long as you can. Unexpected bills and emergencies are unavoidable. It's good to be financially prepared for them by keeping some money set back.

Use the money Jesus has blessed you with wisely, as he doesn't want us to be slaves to debt. We must trust in God, because he knows what we can handle. He will continue to bless us with more if we prove smart and able to handle his prized possessions. When we trifle with the possessions and blessings we've already been given, the Lord usually takes them away.

Do not panic over financial stresses. Don't presume that placing blame on your spouse or even contemplating divorce is the answer to the crisis. Sit down together, take a deep breath, and grab that legal pad to put the issues in writing. To ascertain your needs, visualize your situation. Call creditors and talk to them about hardship programs. Take a part time position to tide you over.

Contact a credit counselor who can help you make better financial decisions from here on out. By seeking counsel from a professional you will share the burden of overcoming your financial troubles. Facing them alone will make things more challenging and costly.

Joe Larson is one of the certified [Christian credit counselors](#) for Family Life Credit Services, a nationwide [Non-profit debt relief](#) agency since 1986. The goal of FLCS is to strengthen and encourage families and individuals through Christian faith-based financial counseling. They offer financial educational materials free of charge as well as the opportunity to work with a certified counselor in your area of need.

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