



PROFIT SHARING

*The Chapman Guide to
Making Money an Asset in Your Marriage*

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Profit Sharing: The Chapman Guide to Making Money an Asset in Your Marriage

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Introduction

Could we survive without money? Well, it depends on where you live. My academic background is anthropology, the study of cultures. There are a few primitive cultures in the world where people live without money. The men hunt for meat, while the wives and children work the gardens. Everyone in the village shares the food. When a couple gets married, the men of the village build them a thatched-roof house. Clothing, such as it is, is made from the skins of animals. Thus, the basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter are met without any need for money.

However, if you are reading this book, you do not live in this kind of moneyless society. In the modern industrial world, most couples do not build their own houses, grow their own food, or make their own clothing. We are a society of specialists: Some of us build houses, others make clothing, and others produce and distribute food. We each receive money for the work we perform. With this money,

we then buy from others the things we desire. This system of production and distribution is complex, but for the most part, it works fairly well. In the United States, most people manage to obtain food, clothing, and shelter.

Why then is money often the number-one source of conflict in American marriages? The poorest couples in America have abundance compared to the masses of the world's population. I am convinced that the problem does not lie in the amount of money that a couple possess but rather in their attitudes toward money and the manner in which they handle it. The problem is not really money; it is their relationship with money. If they could find a more wholesome perspective on money—that is, change the way they think about money—and find a positive way to handle money, then money would cease to be an area of conflict and would become an asset to their marriage.

This is a book on marriage and money. For over thirty years as a marriage counselor, I have been listening to couples argue about money. Here are some of the complaints I frequently hear:

- ☪ “He could get a better job if he would try.”
- ☪ “She spends more money than we both make, and we both have good jobs.”
- ☪ “I never know how much money we have because he won’t let me see the checkbook.”
- ☪ “He makes investments that are foolish. He has lost thousands of dollars.”
- ☪ “Her parents keep giving her money; I don’t like that.”
- ☪ “Why can’t we save something? We’ve been married for ten years and don’t even have a savings account.”
- ☪ “All I ask is that she record the checks that she writes. Balancing our checkbook is a nightmare.”
- ☪ “He doesn’t understand that when you put things on a credit card, eventually you have to pay for them. We’re ten thousand dollars in debt, and all we’re able to pay each month is the interest.”

- ☪ “She bought a \$300 dress. Do you know how much food \$300 would buy?”
- ☪ “He pledged \$5,000 to the church building fund. I don’t know where he thinks that money is going to come from.”
- ☪ “She keeps telling me that she grew up with a different lifestyle. Well, I’m sorry. I’m not her father. I don’t go to work in a shirt and tie every day.”
- ☪ “He bought a new car and didn’t even discuss it with me.”
- ☪ “How can we afford to invest when we don’t have enough money to buy the baby’s milk?”
- ☪ “She keeps buying lottery tickets. Do you know the chances of ever winning the lottery? It’s like throwing our money out the window.”

Perhaps you could add a few comments yourself—things you’ve said or heard your spouse say

regarding money. The purpose of this book is to help the two of you learn to work as a team in obtaining and managing money so that you are working together rather than against each other. Teamwork produces profit sharing. Each of you is a benefactor. Money becomes not a battleground but a means of helping you obtain things that will enhance your marriage.

I have purposefully kept this book short because I know that you are busy. I hope that the brief time you invest in reading the book will produce huge dividends in your marriage.

1



IT ALL BEGINS WITH ATTITUDE

*B*efore we look at the various dynamics related to handling money in marriage, we must first of all put money into its proper perspective. Some couples live as though the accumulation of money and the acquisition of material possessions are the focus of life. These couples live to get. A new purchase brings momentary pleasure. Between acquisitions, they experience emotional lows while anticipating the next moment of pleasure. I don't need to tell you that such an attitude does little to create marital satisfaction.

Jesus lived a rather simple lifestyle, but he impacted human history more than any person who

has ever lived. I shall never forget the day I read this statement spoken by Jesus: “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”¹ It changed my perspective on money forever. It also resonated with my experience. Hundreds of well-to-do couples have sat in my office over the past thirty years and made statements like this: “We sold our souls for the acquisition of *things*, and now we are bankrupted spiritually and emotionally. We have things . . . but life is empty.”

RELATIONSHIPS, NOT THINGS

Real satisfaction is found not in money (any amount of it) but in loving relationships with God, our spouse, our children, and our friends. Loving relationships are our greatest asset. This is most often realized in moments of crisis. Many times I have stood outside the room of a hospital intensive-care center when a child was in critical condition because of an automobile accident or a life-threatening illness. What matters to the parents at that point is not how much money they have or the size of their house, but the friends who come to stand with them in the midst of deep pain. In the experience of physi-

cal and emotional crisis, all humankind stands on level ground—some have friends and some do not. Money is no replacement for friendships.

If you believe that more money and more material possessions will bring you marital happiness, you have the wrong attitude. Money can be used to provide more creature comforts, but money will not create a successful marriage. It is righteous living, love, patience, gentleness, and compassion that build meaningful relationships. It is treating each other with dignity, respect, love, and care that creates a happy marriage. This can be attained in the poorest of circumstances as well as in the homes of the affluent. If you are telling yourselves, “We’ll be happier when we get more money,” you are deceiving yourselves. Some of the happiest couples I know live near the poverty level. I am not saying that they do not aspire for more; they do. But they are under no illusion that more will automatically bring greater happiness.

In fact, quite the opposite can be true. I remember Paul Brown and his wife, Jill, (not their real names) who came to my office, separated and

hurting. “We’ve got it all,” Paul said, “and now all of it means nothing. We left God out of our lives; we didn’t have time for friends. I worked two jobs. We’ve got our 4,500-square-foot house; we’ve got the cars; we’ve got money in the bank; but in the midst of it all, we’ve lost each other. I’d give it all away today if we could go back and start over in the little apartment where we lived when we first got married. In those days we had nothing, but we were happy. Today, we have everything, and we’re miserable.” With a great deal of counseling, Paul and Jill rediscovered each other. They did, in fact, lower their standard of living and raise their level of happiness. However, they could have saved themselves twelve years of miserable affluent living if they had found a proper perspective on money earlier in life.

The desire to have more material possessions is not necessarily an evil desire. The problem comes when we allow money to become the focus of our lives. The Scriptures say, “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced

themselves with many griefs.”² Such sorrows are not the result of having money or not having money, but of *loving* money. When obtaining money becomes the motivating force of our lives, we set ourselves up for “many griefs,” such as the loss of marital intimacy. When, on the other hand, we keep money in its proper place, it becomes an asset to the marriage.

JOINT OWNERSHIP

The second aspect of money about which many couples need a change of attitude is the area of ownership. In marriage, it is no longer “my money” and “your money” but rather “our money.” In the same manner, it is no longer “my debts” or “your debts” but rather “our debts.” If, before you marry, one of you owes \$5,000 on an educational loan and the other owes \$50 to a local department store, after the wedding you are collectively in debt \$5,050. When you accept each other as partners, you accept each other’s liabilities as well as each other’s assets.

That is the reason full disclosure of assets and liabilities should be made by both partners before

marriage. It is not wrong to enter marriage with debts, but you ought to discuss those debts beforehand and agree upon a plan and schedule of repayment. Most couples have some debts when they come to marriage, and a full disclosure by each will help them to face marriage realistically.

I have known couples who failed to discuss this area sufficiently before marriage and realize after the wedding that together they have a debt so large that they already feel a financial noose around their necks. What a tragedy to begin marriage with such a handicap. In my opinion, a large debt without a realistic means of repayment is sufficient cause to postpone the wedding.

In the same way, your assets are now joint assets. She may have \$6,000 in a savings account and he may have only \$90, but when they marry, *they* have \$6,090. If you do not feel comfortable with this oneness, then you are not ready for marriage. The very motif of marriage is unity, oneness, togetherness. When it comes to finances, you must move toward unity.

There may be cases in which, because of very large estates or children from a previous marriage, the couple would be wise to retain individual ownership of certain properties or assets. But for most of us, the principle of unity implies joint savings accounts, checking accounts, property ownership, and so on. We are now a team, and we want to express our unity in finances as well as in other areas of life. Since it is *our* money, it means that neither of us will try to control the finances. Instead, we will manage our finances together as a team, using the best of our past experience and wisdom.

Certainly, one spouse may regularly write the checks for the monthly bills and balance the checkbook, but the other partner needs to have full access to all financial matters and freedom to express opinions and negotiate decisions. When one partner tries to control the finances to the exclusion of the other, that person becomes a parent, and the partner, a child. One wife said, “I am ashamed to say this, but it illustrates the problem: Every time I need a pair of hose, I have to go to my husband and say, ‘May I have five dollars to buy a pair of hose?’ It’s

horrible. I feel like a child.” Such an arrangement does not strengthen the marital relationship and will inevitably result in numerous conflicts.

If you and your spouse embrace the two realities discussed in this chapter—(1) our relationship is more important than the amount of money we have, and (2) whatever we possess belongs to us jointly—then you will have laid the foundation for making money an asset in your marriage.

PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

1. In the past, what has been your attitude toward money? What changes do you need to make in your attitude?
2. Are you willing to embrace the concept that your marriage is more important than the accumulation of money and material possessions? Would you be willing to verbalize this to your spouse?
3. Are you willing to embrace the idea that all your money and possessions now belong to

both of you equally and that all your debts are now “our debts”? Would you be willing to verbalize this to your spouse?

4. As an act of affirming these attitudes, perhaps the two of you would like to sign and date the following statement:

We recognize that money will never bring us happiness, that our relationship to each other is more important than what we possess. We further agree that all our possessions belong to us jointly and that all our debts are shared. We will work as a team to manage our finances in such a way as to enhance our relationship.

Husband

Date

Wife

Date

Additional Resources

MONEY AND FINANCES

Crown Financial Ministries

P.O. Box 100

Gainesville, GA 30503-0100

Phone: 1-800-722-1976

Web site: www.crown.org

A wealth of resources covering all aspects of money management, including personal budget coaching, financial advice, seminars, workbooks, online articles, and an e-newsletter.

Larry Burkett, *The Complete Financial Guide for Young Couples: A Lifetime Approach to Spending, Saving, and Investing* (Chariot Victor Publishing, 1993)

This book covers establishing a workable budget, knowing how much insurance to purchase, recognizing economic dangers in a marriage, exploring investments, and teaching children about finances.

Howard Dayton, *Your Money Map: A Proven 7-Step Guide to True Financial Freedom* (Moody Publishers, 2006)

By revealing key biblical principles of finance through the journey of a married couple, Matt and Jennifer, *Your Money Map* steers you toward the clear biblical basics of money management and through seven financial “destinations” that anyone can reach.

Howard Dayton, *Your Money Counts: The Biblical Guide to Earning, Spending, Saving, Investing, Giving, and Getting Out of Debt* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1997)

In *Your Money Counts*, you will learn that the Bible has a lot to say about money. Indeed, the Bible is a blueprint for managing your finances. You will also discover the profound impact handling money has on your relationship with God.

CREATIVE SPENDING

Ellie Kay, *Half-Price Living: Secrets to Living Well on One Income* (Moody Publishers, 2007)

A recent online survey found that 86 percent of working moms said they would stay at home if they were financially able to do so. Popular author and speaker Ellie Kay used both her financial expertise and her experience as a mom to write this step-by-step plan on how to downsize from two incomes to one.

Margaret Feinberg, Jason Boyett, Katie Meier, and Josh Hatcher, *Cheap Ways to . . .* (Relevant Books, 2003)

The authors offer fun, innovative ideas designed to help you make your resources stretch a little further while avoiding or escaping the pitfalls of mass consumerism and credit-card debt.

LIVING WITHIN YOUR MEANS

Howard Dayton, *Free and Clear: God's Roadmap to Debt-Free Living* (Moody Publishers, 2006)

Becoming debt free may seem an impossible dream, but it is actually an attainable goal. Howard Dayton, past president of Crown Financial Ministries, overcame his own struggle with debt by applying God's principles to managing his finances, principles he lays out in this practical and encouraging book.

SAVING AND INVESTING

Austin Pryor, *The Sound Mind Investing Handbook: A Step-by-*

Step Guide to Managing Your Money from a Biblical Perspective
(Sound Mind Investing, 2004)

Investment advisor Austin Pryor has carefully created the “next step” guide that helps you put godly principles of finance into motion. Each user-friendly lesson is written in everyday English and filled with helpful visual aids. You’ll learn what investing is and why it’s actually quite simple, important steps to take to prepare yourself financially before you invest, what mutual funds are and why they make investing easier than ever before, and how to use your personal investing temperament and present season of life to make decisions and limit your risk.

Larry Burkett, Ron Blue, and Jeremy White, *The Burkett & Blue Definitive Guide to Securing Wealth to Last: Money Essentials for the Second Half of Life* (B&H Publishing Group, 2003)

In this book Ron Blue and the late Larry Burkett, primary trailblazers and leaders in Christian financial teaching, provide direction for building a financial portfolio that will provide for your family and help you to honor God.

CHAPTER 1

1. Luke 12:15.
2. 1 Timothy 6:10.

CHAPTER 2

1. Genesis 1:28.
2. Genesis 2:15.
3. Exodus 20:8-10.
4. William J. Bennett, *The Book of Virtues* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 347.
5. Proverbs 13:19.
6. As quoted in George Sweeting, *Who Said That?* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995), 452.
7. 1 Timothy 5:8.
8. Proverbs 6:6-11.
9. Proverbs 13:4.
10. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.
11. Colossians 3:23-24.

CHAPTER 3

1. James 1:17.
2. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: McMillan, 1952), 180.
3. James 1:5.
4. R. G. LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1972), 263.
5. Matthew 6:25-33.

— *About the Author*

Dr. Gary Chapman is the author of the perennial best seller *The Five Love Languages* (more than 3.5 million copies sold) and numerous other marriage and family books. He is currently working with best-selling author Catherine Palmer on a new fiction series based on *The Four Seasons of Marriage*; the first book, *It Happens Every Spring*, is available in bookstores and online. Dr. Chapman is the director of Marriage and Family Life Consultants, Inc.; an internationally known speaker; and the host of *A Growing Marriage*, a syndicated radio program heard on more than 100 stations across North America. He and his wife, Karolyn, live in North Carolina.