



Kids, February is often considered the month of love and romance, especially the 14th day, which is Valentine's Day. This month we want you to look at Bible texts that deal with the word **love**.

1. Which is the first of the "fruits of the Spirit" mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23? _____
2. Can you name the "love chapter" in the Bible? _____
3. Do you know how many times the word "love" is mentioned in the Bible? _____
4. How many sins does God's love cover? (1 Peter 4:7-10) _____
5. When Jesus was on earth, a prominent lawyer came to Him with this question: "Teacher, which do you think is the most important commandment?" In his answer in Matthew 22:37-39, who did Jesus say we should love first? _____ Second? _____
6. When you hear this biblical phrase, "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16), what do you think it means? _____
7. When your dad or mom says to you, "I love you!" how does that make you feel? _____
8. In what way can you grow in your love for God and your parents and/or siblings? _____

Answers for #1-5: 1. Love; 2. 1 Corinthians 13; 3. Approximately 800; 4. A multitude of sins; 5. The Lord your God; love your neighbor as yourself

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MONEY AND MARRIAGE

by Gordon Botting



"What a day!" Joshua and MaryEllen both would have agreed with this statement, except they would have added more adjectives such as fantastic, marvelous, wonderful, etc. You see, it was their wedding day and everything happened just as they had planned and hoped for.

Unfortunately, in all the planning and romance of a wedding, one aspect of marriage is often forgotten — and that is a true understanding of personal finances. It begins with the high cost of the special day. The average cost of a wedding today is more than \$26,000 (less if you don't drink or dance). Joshua and MaryEllen are certainly not the first couple to discover that a wedding is both a financial commitment and an emotional milestone. To pay for their special day, 40 percent of brides and grooms lean on plastic, or their parents raid their retirement accounts or take out home equity lines of credit. (FYI: The same \$26,000 invested at 6% would grow to over \$150,000 in 30 years.)¹

However, even more important than the wedding expenses are understanding and putting into practice good principles of money management. To help couples who are planning to be married and also those who are already married, here are some simple rules that can get you started.

Before You Say "I DO"

• **Come Clean on Your Finances.** Share everything — tax returns, TSA portfolios, bank statements, and any other

relevant financial information.
• **Discuss Your Financial Future.** Do you and the love of your life share mutual money

Stewardship is a total life-style. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality and finances.

management goals? Have you worked out a household budget together? Which of you will be best able (has the time and the know-how) to handle the day-to-day finances and pay the regularly occurring bills? What plans do you have for consistent savings for daily maintenance needs as well as future education, family, or retirement?



- **Swap Credit Reports.** Opening the mail after you have been married a few weeks and finding that your beloved is over their head in school loans and charge and credit cards can quickly change the happiness thermometer. Remember, once two people are married, it is no longer his or her debt, it is “our” debt. Before you get married, think seriously whether your fiancé’s debt is, or should be, a deal breaker.

- **Reveal Your Assets and Your Liabilities.** Do either of you come to this marriage with appreciating assets, such as an apartment, condo, or house? What will you do with inheritances, investments, and retirement accounts? Be straightforward in asking questions about how much your fiancé owes on furniture, appli-

ances, automobile, and technical equipment.

- **Get Those Documents Together.** It’s never too early to prepare a simple will or a trust, or have health care directives and power of attorney forms. Make the arrangements to have both you and your future spouse on all previous and new bank accounts, investment funds and insurance policies. A number of these forms are available free at www.alllaw.com/forms.²

After You Say “I DO”

- **Make God Your Partner.** Since our Heavenly Father is the creator and sustainer of all things in our world, it would make perfect sense to include Him in your money management. Returning a faithful tithe and giving generously to your church budget and other offerings indicate your understanding that He is the owner and that you as a couple are His managers. Determine from your first day of marriage to be wise stewards of your money.

- **Set Up An Emergency Account.** Before you do any other thing with your money, set aside a “rainy day” account of

\$1,000. This will save you from having to rely on credit cards for financial crises. This \$1,000 will cover three major items: vehicle and household maintenance and medical emergencies.

- **Develop a Financial Plan.** Together, decide what is important to your financial future. Develop short-term goals (next twelve months), mid-term goals (next five years), and long-term goals (next 20 years).
- **Have a Spending Plan.** This you cannot ignore. Having a budget will be your lifeline and liberator and will help you make

financial ends meet. Remember to include a personal allowance for each of you, and always have a catch-up line in your budget for miscellaneous items.

- **Save, Save, Save!** Your first goal (after setting up your emergency account) should be to save enough to live on for three months, just in case one of you should get sick or lose your job. Another good savings idea: always match your employer’s 401k or 403b contribution.

References:

1. *Money*, May 2005, page 126.
2. Concepts from *Cheapskate Monthly*, June 1999.

The High Price for Saying “I Do”

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|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What percentage of the average wedding cost goes to the reception? <table border="0"> <tr> <td>a. 56%</td> <td>c. 25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. 42%</td> <td>d. 20%</td> </tr> </table> 2. What percentage of brides and grooms are going to pick up the tab for a wedding? <table border="0"> <tr> <td>a. 27%</td> <td>c. 15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. 24%</td> <td>d. 7%</td> </tr> </table> 3. What percentage of women think it is a mistake to marry someone who will be a “financial burden?” <table border="0"> <tr> <td>a. 33%</td> <td>c. 19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. 26%</td> <td>d. 13%</td> </tr> </table> | a. 56% | c. 25% | b. 42% | d. 20% | a. 27% | c. 15% | b. 24% | d. 7% | a. 33% | c. 19% | b. 26% | d. 13% | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What percentage of men believe it will be a problem if the wife out-earns them? <table border="0"> <tr> <td>a. 53%</td> <td>c. 37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. 46%</td> <td>d. 34%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. b. 42% (25% goes to flowers, apparel, and photography) 2. a. 27% (same percentage for bride’s parents only) 3. a. 33% (26% of men think it would be a mistake) 4. d. 34% (53% of women think it would cause problems) <p>References:
 <i>Money</i>, May 2005, pg. 126.
 <i>Family Money</i>, March/April 2000, pg. 12.</p> | a. 53% | c. 37% | b. 46% | d. 34% |
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