

## Why Marry?

Let's be honest. Marriage is a big step. It is a statement to all those around you that you are in a permanent relationship. It is a promise to your wife that you will work through problems. It is commitment to your kids that you are going to be there. Marriage **IS** a big step. When you are married, you don't get to choose to leave. Instead, you are choosing to work through the hard times, even if it is very uncomfortable.

## Being a Man

Sometimes marriage looks like a giant leap into the unknown. It may even scare some guys who seem pretty tough otherwise. Real men understand the truth. They know that they need to do what is right by the partner they are living with. If the woman you are dating or living with isn't the one you want to marry, it is time for you to do some hard thinking.

Marriage is not for the weak. It is the place where young men prove that they have what it takes to be a man. But marriage also has many other benefits. Studies have shown that when you get married you will likely:

**Stay Together & Cheat Less:** Cohabiting couples are less secure in their relationship. In fact, cohabiting couples cheat on their partners much more often than married partners. Staying together and having a healthy relationship is most possible when you are married.<sup>17</sup>

**Be Happier:** Married people have much higher levels of happiness than unmarried people.<sup>1</sup> In general married people tend to appear to feel better about themselves and their lives when they live in a marriage relationship.

**Live Longer & Parent Better:** Marriage protects against loneliness.<sup>5</sup> Married people live longer and have better mental health. Marriage also enhances a parent's ability to parent.<sup>6</sup>

**Have Fewer Fights:** Married couples fight less.<sup>4</sup> Of course one of the best features of marriage can be that you have found someone who loves you, even when you are being irrational or erratic. You have someone who will overlook your faults, or provide either a safe sparring partner or an excellent sounding board.

**Have More Money:** Marriage provides for a better financial picture because it increases individual earnings and savings.<sup>2</sup> Married men are more successful in work. They get promoted more often and receive higher performance appraisals. Married women earn more than their single counterparts. Sharing a home, health care and other benefits, insurance breaks, and automatic inheritance rights give married couples legal and monetary advantages.

## Most Marriages Last

Almost 60% of marriages last 20 years or longer.<sup>16</sup> With hard work, lots of learning, and some compromising you will be a role-model to your children and family. Take the challenge of making your marriage last!

## Great Things about Marriage

Marriage has been studied many times and there are many advantages to being married rather than living together. Here are just a few:

## Married People...

- ... are happier!<sup>1</sup>
- ... are better off financially.<sup>2</sup>
- ... are more successful at work.<sup>2</sup>
- ... have a better sex life.<sup>3</sup>
- ... fight less.<sup>4</sup>
- ... tend to be better parents.<sup>6</sup>

## Living Together: It is Not the Same Thing

Couples that chose to live together would tell you that they are just as committed to each other as married couples; however, statistics don't confirm their statements.

**Affairs happen twice as often** with individuals that are living together than those who are married.<sup>7</sup> Living together brings a greater risk of sexually transmitted diseases, because men who are living with their partners are four times more likely to be unfaithful than husbands. **The rate of sexually transmitted diseases** among couples who live together is **six times higher** than among married couples.<sup>8</sup>

Children suffer the most. The poverty rate among children of couples who live together is five times greater than the rate among children in married households.<sup>10</sup> Children ages 12–17 are six times more likely to exhibit **emotional and behavioral problems**<sup>14</sup> and 122 percent more likely to be expelled from school.<sup>15</sup>

## It's about Love

If you really love your partner, standing in front of witnesses and publicly declaring that love is the most powerful way to show that your commitment is real. It is time to prove that you are willing to do what it takes to make things right. It is time to start protecting your girlfriend against the dangers of living together. It is time to start experiencing the many benefits of marriage. It is time to prove that you are a man.

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