

Marriage and Poverty*

“Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.” Proverbs 3:13-14

Social science research shows that marriage is one of the greatest protections against poverty:

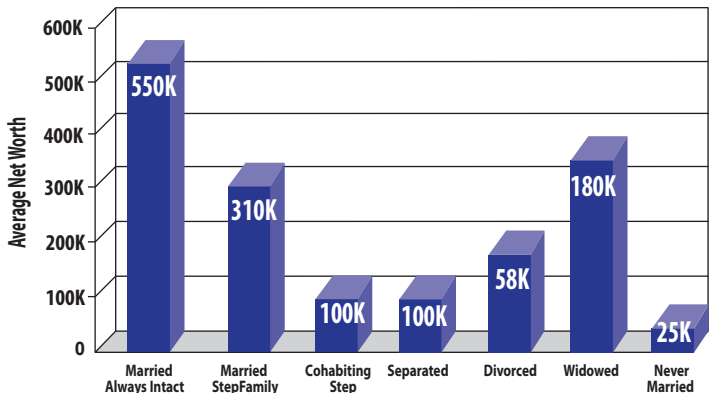
- The poverty rate for all children in married-couple families is 11.6 percent. By contrast, the poverty rate for all children in single-parent families is six times higher at 74.7 percent.
- Overall, restoring marriage to 1960 levels would remove more than 3 million children from poverty nationwide. The U.S. child poverty rate would fall by nearly a third.
- Married men, on average, earn 27 percent more than non-married men who are similar in race, age, and education.
- Children raised by never-married mothers are seven times more likely to be poor when compared to children raised in intact married families.
- Marriage increases the income of single African-American women by 81 percent and single white women by 45 percent; African-American men also see an increase in income after marriage.
- Marriage between the biological single parents of impoverished children would move 80 percent of them above the poverty line.

Marriage is important for the financial well-being of families. What can you do to make sure yours lasts forever? How can you improve the changes your grandchildren will grow up in an intact married family?

This chart shows that intact married households have the greatest net worth of all household structures. Economic stability for both parents and children is much more likely when mom and dad are continuously married. The main way for us to combat poverty and financial inequality in the United States is to strengthen the culture of marriage.

Average Net Worth of Households with Children by Family Structure

Source: Adolescent Health Survey, Wave 1, Adolescents Grades 7-12.



For links to the research behind these statements, please visit www.marri.us/churchbulletins

*It bears emphasizing that these patterns hold for the groups involved, not for all the individuals who make up each group. There is naturally a wide variation among individuals.



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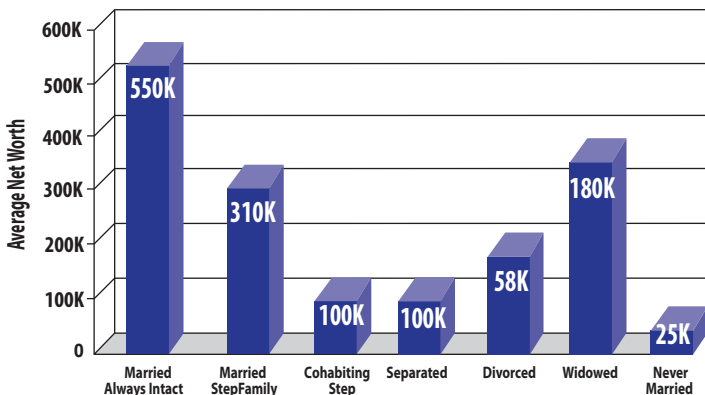
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