

FOR RICHER, FOR POORER THE VALUE OF MONEY IN MARRIAGE

by Dr. Valerie Correa

Security, balance, investment, trust... These words have equal footing in the financial world as well as the world of marriage. How money is managed in a marriage greatly affects a couple's sense of security, balance, investment and trust in their relationship.

Financial matters are one of the leading areas of disagreement between married couples. Money influences a couple's sense of safety, allows for needs to be met, creates a lifestyle, provides for a future, and shows affection. No wonder we are so drawn to that little green piece of paper.

When you get married, you are bringing your relationship to money with you. Your past, present, and future are relevant to this relationship. How your parents and family handled money affects your own perspective on money, how you handle money as an adult influences your patterns now, and your idea of how much money you want in your life affects your future. Money does matter.

As you have been planning this wedding it is inevitable that money has worked its way into conversations between you and your fiancé. As your bank accounts have dwindled, your argu-

ments increased. How much to spend on flowers becomes an exercise in budgeting, frugality and restraint. All of your dreams of wedding day, the importance of the occasion and the rising cost of everything challenge the couple to see how money will impact them together.

Don't dread these dilemmas, they are good opportunities to organize and form financial identity as marital partners. Ask each other these questions with one another. You will negotiate the best bargain for your marriage.

ARE YOU PRIMARILY A SAVER OR A SPENDER? If you are a spender, what do you see as a luxury, what do you see as a necessity? If you are a spender, what do you often indulge on? If you are a saver, what are you saving for? If you are a saver, how do you feel after you have purchased something? What does financial security mean to you? What would it look like? What does financial risk mean to you? What are your financial risks? **HAVE YOU EVER FELT SHAME WHEN IT COMES TO MONEY?** Have you ever had a secret about money? How did your parents spend money? How was money discussed or displayed in your home? Are you more financially independent or dependent with your family? How will your family's money relationship impact your marriage? **HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CURRENT WAY OF MANAGING MONEY?** What are your financial goals (one year, five, ten, twenty years, etc.)? How do you want to live? Do you want to buy a house? What type of home? How are you saving for it? Do you want children, or do you have children? What type of lifestyle do you want for your children? What do you want to provide for them? What do you want them to learn about money? What age do you hope to retire? What do you want retirement to be like? How are you budgeting for that future? **WHAT ARE YOUR FINANCIAL GOALS AS A COUPLE?** How are you going to share money? Do you have debt? How did you get it and how is it going to get paid off? How do you handle money when you are stressed? What stresses you out about money? What purchase are you most proud of? What purchase are you most looking forward to? **WHAT ARE YOUR WORRIES ABOUT MONEY?** What are your worries about your mate and money? What do you need from your partner to trust them about money? What do you need from your partner to feel fair about money? What do you need from your partner to feel in control about money? What do you need from your partner to feel financially secure? What do you need from your partner to feel financially cherished? How can you improve your relationship to money? **HOW WILL YOU ORGANIZE FINANCES?** How do your views about money compliment one another?

Recommended help: *You Paid How Much for That? How to Win at Money Without Losing at Love.* Jenkins, Stanley, Bailey, and Markman. 2002. Jossey-Bass. Any book from Suzie Ornan. Meet with a financial planner.

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