



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on July 24, 2012

Social Scientists Find Traditional Marriage a Cure for Poverty

While many Americans who take the traditional Judeo-Christian values of America seriously have extolled the virtues of a happy marriage, economists and social scientists — many of them studying the situation from a secular point of view — are now [coming to the same conclusion](#). These experts agree that single parenting accounts for much of modern poverty. Robert Lerman of the Urban Institute, for instance, believes that unmarried status accounts for 40 percent of the poverty in single-parent families.



Statistics show that married men tend to work harder and make more money than unmarried men. Dr. Bradford Wilcox of the National Marriage Project explains,

[Married men] work about 160 hours more compared to their similarly credentialed peers after they transition into marriage in that first year of married life. Men who get married and stay married tend to be better workers. They work harder, they work longer hours, they think more strategically, and as a consequence, they tend to earn more money.

Dr. Wilcox noted that married women also benefit: “Women who get married and stay married by the end of their lives have a lot more in the way of assets — whether it’s a home or some kind of retirement account.”

Dr. Jennifer Morse of the Ruth Institute agrees, adding, “The family is absolutely necessary for the market to function.... The substitutes to the family are expensive and ineffective, and taxpayers end up paying the price.”

The Heritage Foundation reports that married men earn, on average, \$8,000 more per year than their unmarried counterparts who are living with women, and that the yearly household income for married couples is \$12,500 higher than for couples simply living together. Additionally, married couples are a whopping 700 percent more likely to own a home than are unmarried couples, and are also more likely to own stock and bonds. Married couples are also significantly more likely to have savings accounts and much less likely to default on home loans.

Despite these statistics, more and more couples are living together without marriage, and consequently, the rate of children born out of wedlock is now 41 percent and rising every year. Since 1990, the percentage of births to unmarried white mothers with college educations has tripled.

Social scientists say that it is marriage, not just living together, that matters. And the effects on single-parent families are more than simply economic. Not having a married father in the home can have a profound effect on the children, often leading to delinquency and then more serious crime. The Family Life Institute reports that the juvenile delinquency rate of children who have always lived with a single parent is 22 times greater than with children who have always lived in a two-parent family. Between



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these two extremes, the children of married but separated parents have a juvenile delinquency rate five times greater than those in married and intact families; additionally, the juvenile delinquency rate of children of divorced parents is 12 times greater than that of children in married and intact families.

A great many studies have linked the married status of children's parents to children's health, suicide rates, test scores, and other measurable data. It seems clear that of immeasurable benefit is the security and happiness of children having both mother and father living in a loving relationship and working through the problems of life as a team.



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