



Marriage, the union of one man and one woman, is a personal, but not private, relationship with great public significance. Marriage is good for the couple; it is also provides the optimal conditions for bearing and raising children. Marriage makes an essential contribution to the common good. Some specific benefits are identified below.

Marriage and Health

- On average, husbands and wives are healthier, happier and enjoy longer lives than those who are not married.
- Men appear to reap the most physical health benefits from marriage and suffer the greatest health consequences if they divorce.
- Married mothers have lower rates of depression than single or cohabiting mothers, probably because they are more likely to receive practical and emotional support from their child's father and his family.

Marriage and Wealth

- Married couples build more wealth on average than singles or cohabiting couples.
- Married men earn more money than do single men with similar education and job histories.
- Married women are economically better off than divorced, cohabiting or never-married women.

Marriage and Children

Children raised by their own married mother and father are:

- Less likely to be poor or to experience persistent economic insecurity
- More likely to stay in school, have fewer behavioral and attendance problems, and earn four-year college degrees
- Less vulnerable to serious emotional illness, depression and suicide
- More likely to have positive attitudes towards marriage and greater success in forming lasting marriages

Marriage and Crime/Domestic Violence

- Married women are at lower risk for domestic violence than women in cohabiting

or dating relationships.

- Boys raised in single-parent homes are more likely to engage in criminal and delinquent behavior than those raised by two married biological parents.
- Married women are significantly less likely to be the victims of violent crime than single or divorced women. Married men are less likely to perpetrate violent crimes than unmarried men.

Marriage and Society

- The institution of marriage reliably creates the social, economic and affective conditions for effective parenting.
- Being married changes people's lifestyles and habits in ways that are personally and socially beneficial. Marriage is a "seedbed" of prosocial behavior.
- Marriage generates social capital. The social bonds created through marriage yield benefits not only for the family but for others as well, including the larger society.