

Voices: Who is the breadwinner?

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I spend a lot of my week counseling married couples. There is a reason for this. Satan hates marriage. He does not want anyone to make any commitment except to please oneself.

The Bible forewarns: "Those who marry will face many troubles in this life" (1 Corinthians 7:28).

If we follow the Lord and seek him above all things, we can overcome every trouble, every trial. In Christ, we can do all things.

Every couple has struggles. The happiest marriage you can think of has trouble, conflict, stresses, hardships, disappointments, friction, conflict, needs, bills, health issues, communication and intimacy issues, and unmet dreams.

Each person thinks they are the only ones facing such things. They look out their window at a family playing in the yard with a nice car in the driveway. They drive down the street to see another couple their age or younger in a much bigger home. They return from the mailbox with a handful of bills they can't pay.

The husband turns to the wife and says, "You're spending too much."

She is hurt, because she cuts every corner she can and does without so many things her peers easily obtain.

The wife turns to the husband and says: "You're not making enough money. In fact, I make more money than you."

He is humiliated.

What they do not see is even the wealthy spend more than they have. Athletes with million-dollar contracts file for bankruptcy almost daily.

The No. 1 cause of divorce once was in-laws. Today, the No. 1 cause of divorce is money, or the lack thereof. We want. We think our wants are needs. When our wants and needs aren't met to our satisfaction, we become dissatisfied and turn on the ones we love, the ones who love us most.

Love and money

A lady from another church called to meet with me. This happens often. Maybe I'm easier to reach, or more likely, they are embarrassed for their pastor to know their struggles. If they only knew, pastors face the same problems as those in the pews. So, no embarrassment ever is warranted.

The woman told me she is thinking of leaving her husband. She makes more money than he does. They live paycheck to paycheck at best. Often the paychecks can't cover the month's bills.

Her mother told her to ditch the guy. Her best friend told her the same. They both told her the wife never should be the breadwinner, and life should be easier. She should be able to take trips, buy things, live in a nice home and have a life of bounty. She wanted my opinion.

Several times in sharing her plight, she had to stop to compose herself. The one thing she kept telling me: "I love my husband. What's more, he loves me like no one has ever loved me in my life. I am just sick of the struggle."

I prayed before I answered. Two things came to my mind. One, this woman has something money cannot buy.

Marilyn Monroe—the biggest, wealthiest star of her era—said all she ever wanted was to be loved. She was used by many—movie producers, athletes, businessmen, even a president—but never really loved.

I believe Marilyn would trade all she had to have what this young wife had found—a husband who truly, unconditionally loved her.

Love and provision

The second thing that came to my mind: Who is the breadwinner?

Sometimes husbands make more money. Sometimes the wives make more money. But truly, God is the Giver of all we have.

Speaking of bread: During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the government gave out bread to the poor. People would stand in line to get their family's portion.

Sometimes the man went. But he wasn't the breadwinner or the bread provider. He was the bread picker-upper.

Sometimes the wife went. She wasn't the breadwinner, nor the bread provider. She was simply the one who picked up what was given.

Everything we have comes from God. Sometimes the husband picks it up. Sometimes the wife, but God is the One who provides it.

Love and grace

I walked around the porch of our cabin on our farm the other day. I just began to thank God for giving me a job, for giving me a wife, for giving me a house, for giving me a farm, for giving me our cows, for letting me preach, for giving me books to write and companies to publish them, and

for giving me you to read what I write.

Everything we have comes from God. Rejoice in God. Be thankful for what and for who he gives to us. He is the Bread of Life. God is all we need. Everything else simply is grace.

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