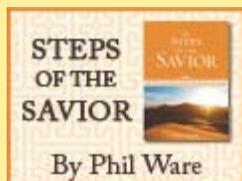


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10 Reasons Not to Get Married

by Les & Leslie Parrot

Ask most engaged couples why they are getting married and the answer is automatic: "Because we are in love." But you'll find the motivations for matrimony are far more complex. Some reasons for marrying improve your chances of success, while others work against it. What follow, briefly, are ten terrible reasons for marriage—reasons that researchers term "deficits."

1. Love at first sight seems like a romantic reason for marriage, but it's not a good predictor of marital success. Such feelings alone provide a weak foundation for a long-lasting relationship.
2. Rebounding also hinders the chances for marital longevity. People fall in love more easily when they're on the rebound. Research has found that people suffer low self-esteem after a breakup and are far less discriminating in choosing a partner because they are trying to cope with their loss.
3. Rebellion leads some into a marital mismatch. Getting even with parents, for example, by marrying someone they do not like is always costly. As with marriage on the rebound, the wedding is a response to someone else rather than to one's partner.
4. Loneliness can drive a person into a hasty marriage. The problem with this motivation is the lonely people will end up lonely in marriage if the relationship doesn't have much more of a foundation to stand on.
5. Obligation sometimes substitutes for love when considering marriage. Some partners marry because one of them feels too guilty to break it off. A woman who marries a man because she believes her loyal devotion will help him quit drinking and live up to his potential could be an example of this. Such marriages often don't work.
6. Financial advancement is a marriage motivator for some. Many young divorced mothers consider remarriage because they are exhausted from the struggle of supporting and caring for their small children. Men, too, can marry to advance their careers. The person going into marriage for economic reasons, however, is not a likely candidate for marrying well.
7. Sexual attraction and guilt over sexual involvement are popular but

weak reasons for marriage. Sex is not a sufficient reason to marry and seldom leads to lifelong happiness. In fact, the sexual chemistry between two people often blinds the partners to important relational qualities.

8. Premarital pregnancy is a growing problematic reason for marriage, and a great deal of research has identified a consistent relationship between it and divorce. Ironically, teenage women who marry to avoid single parenthood often become single parents after all. It is difficult to be encouraging about young, pregnancy-inspired marriages, and some churches have been reluctant to sanction them unless the young couple is unusually mature.
9. Escape is perhaps the most damaging motivation for marriage. Some people marry to escape an unhappy home situation, but hoping a new person or a new environment will be better is a terrible basis for marriage. Usually the person who marries to escape will eventually “escape” one marriage for another and then another.
10. Pressure from parents, peers, and society pushes some singles into marriage.

The Most Important Marriage Motivator

We married, not out of a deficit, but out of a motivation that researchers say is the most important: companionship. To love and be loved by another person is perhaps the single most satisfying experience on earth. Many benefits of companionship can be enjoyed without marriage, but marriage provides the structure for experiencing this phenomenon most deeply.

Marriage provides a configuration, a form, an institution for two souls to walk together through life. Our prayer is that you and your partner are getting married for all the right reasons.

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Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from the new book *Getting Ready for the Wedding* (Zondervan, 1998) by Les and Leslie Parrott, available at your local bookstore or by calling 800-727-3480.

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