

# Marriage and Divorce Fact Sheet

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Divorce is costly and damaging in many ways. God hates divorce NOT those who have been divorced. He hates divorce because He knows the devastating affect it has on people, families, churches, society and government. Marriage is the GOLD STANDARD for raising children.

The facts that follow are not listed in any particular order or priority. They are simply facts that need to be considered whether they apply to you personally or not. Each fact will be followed by the source in parentheses.

1. Divorced people are TWICE as likely to have alcohol-related problems than those that are married. (Umberson, 1987, Reports of Problem Drinking)

2. Married Couples are Less Likely to be Violent (From the National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-88)

- 3-4 % of married couples
- 13-15 % of unmarried cohabitating couples with no plans to marry

3. Married Women are Safer (The Case for Marriage, page 152)

Single and Divorced Women:

- 4-5 times more likely to be victims of crimes of violence
- 10 times more likely to be raped
- 3 times more likely to be victims of aggravated assault

Than Wives

4. Married Men are Safer (The Case for Marriage, page 152)

Bachelors:

- 4 times more likely to be victims of crimes of violence
- Than Husbands

5. In Britain, the Serious Abuse of Children in Stepfamilies Was Six Times More Likely than for Children of Intact Married Parents (Robert Whalen, Broken Homes and Battered Children, 1994)

- Fatal Abuse of Children in Canadian Study Revealed that “Children **two years** of age and younger are **70 to 100 times more likely to be killed** at the hands of their stepparents than by their biological parents.”
- Fatal Abuse of Children in British Study Revealed that “fatal abuse of children of **all** ages occurs **three times** more frequently in stepfamilies than in intact married families.”
- “Neglect of children...is **twice as high** among separated and divorced parents.”

- “The rate of sexual abuse of girls by their stepfathers is at least six or seven times higher...than sexual abuse of daughters by their biological fathers who remain in intact families.”

6. Families in the United States Where the Father is Absent Make Up:

- 63% of youth suicides
- 71 % of all high school dropouts
- 75% of all adolescent substance abuse patients
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions
- 85% of all persons incarcerated in prisons
- 85% of children exhibiting behavior disorders
- 90% of all homeless and runaway children

7. In Wisconsin, Juvenile Incarceration Rates for Children of Divorced Parents are 12 Times Higher than for Children in Two Parent Families (1993 data from Wisconsin Dept. of Health and Human Services and U.S. Bureau of Census, Current Population Survey.)

8. Absent Biological Father and Criminal Behavior (Backgrounder, Page 6)

- “A (1998) U.S. longitudinal study which tracked over 6,400 boys over a period of 20 years (well into their adult years) found that **children without biological fathers** in the home are **roughly three times more likely** to commit a crime that leads to incarceration than are children from intact families.”
- “Daughters raised outside of intact marriages are approximately **three times more likely to end up young, unwed mothers** than are children whose parents married and stayed married.”

9. Premarital Sex Among Children of Divorce (Dr. Judith Wallerstein, The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce, page 189)

“Early sex was very common among girls in the divorced families and has been described in several national studies. In our study, one in five had her first sexual experience before the age of fourteen. Over half were sexually active with multiple partners during their high school years. In the comparison group, the great majority of girls postponed sex until the last year of high school or their early years of college.”

10. Children with Married Parents Do Better

- Half as likely to drop out of high school
- More likely to go to college and graduate
- Half as likely to have a teen birth
- Less likely to have emotional problems

11. Poverty and Divorce

- Children 0-6 years old living in poverty:
  - Overall – 1 in 10 live in poverty
  - Living in Female-headed Households – 1 in 3 live in poverty

- Percent of Families with Children Living in Poverty by Family Structure** (Heritage Center for Data Analysis based on data from 1995 Survey of Consumer Finance, Federal Reserve Board):
  - 7.7% First Marriage
  - 6.6% Step Family
  - 28.3% Cohabiting Couple
  - 30.5% Widowed
  - 32.4% Divorced/Separated Single Parent
  - 59.6% Never-Married Single Parent
  
- One Parent families are twice as likely to live in poverty as two parent families** (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994 p 82)
  
- Impact of Divorce on Income of Families with Children** (1993 avg. ann. Income, “The Dynamics of Childhood Poverty, Mary Corcoran and Ajay Chaudray)
  - \$43,600 for two-parent household before divorce
  - \$25,300 for custodial parent household after divorce

“Child poverty rates are very high primarily because of the growth of single-parent families. When parents fail to marry and stay married, children are more likely to experience deep and persistent poverty, even after controlling for race and family background. The majority of children who grow up outside of intact married families experience at least one year of dire poverty (family incomes less than half the official poverty threshold). Divorce, as well as unmarried childbearing, plays a role: Between one-fifth and one-third of divorcing women end up in poverty following divorce.”  
(Why Marriage Matters, p 9)

- Median Household Wealth of Persons aged 51-61, by Marital Status** (James P. Smith, Marriage, Assets, and Savings, Rand Corp., 1995)
  - \$132,000 - Married
  - \$42,275 – Widowed
  - \$35,000 – Never Married
  - \$33,670 – Divorced
  - \$7,600 – Separated

12. Children are two times more likely to drop out of high school in a one-parent family (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994 p 41)

13. Married Men and Women Live Longer... And So Do Their Children! (Lillard, L.A. & Waite, L.J. 1995 Til Death Do Us Part: Marital Disruption and Mortality.)

- The parents’ divorce lowered the life expectancy of the adult children by 4 years.
- 40 years olds from divorced homes were three times as likely to die from all causes as 40 year olds whose parents stayed married.”

Adult Children from Divorce parents are:

- 70% more likely to have circulatory problems
- 56% more likely to show signs of mental illness
- 27% more likely to report chronic aches and pains, and
- 26% more likely to rate their overall health as poor.