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Which First-Marriage or a Diploma?

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IF YOU are wearing a gleaming diamond on third finger, left hand or have given the big promise to the man in your life, chances are one question is uppermost in your mind. Should you marry while you are in college or wait until after the diploma is in your hand?

This is an individual problem, believes Dr. Reuben Hill, of the Department of Economics and Sociology. It is a good idea to look at yourself and see how eligible for marriage you are.

Readiness for marriage is a pair question, says Dr. Hill. The couple as a unit, not individuals, is the prominent factor. Ask yourself these questions. Have you and your fiancé proven that the match can withstand crises during your engagement period? Can you overcome quarrels? Has each of you seen the other at his worst without a change of feeling? Has your betrothal reached the point where it is possible to predict the actions of the other and understand them?

**Similar Backgrounds**

If your yes answers rate high, you probably fulfill another important qualification—that of possessing similar backgrounds and philosophies of life. Then if you are matured enough, if you have had enough broadening experiences of which chronological age is only a rough indication, your chances of success in marriage are great.

Were the old adage, two can live as cheaply as one, true, money matters might not be such a critical problem. But because the cost of living figures two times one, or slightly under, it presents a rugged barrier to many college marriages.

The G.I. Bill of Rights has given the subsidy that made hundreds of college marriages possible. Even with this most couples find outside assistance necessary. High prices run the monthly living costs up to almost $150. To tackle this, either the husband or wife must work part-time, or the couple has to dip into savings, borrow, or accept gifts.

**Parental Subsidy**

What financial arrangements can be made for couples who have no G.I. income? The idea of parental subsidy is not new. A hundred years ago it was common for a father to give his son land, stock, equipment and to help him build a house to insure a monetary basis for marriage. Why can’t this old scheme be dressed in modern fashion?

A dowry system in which both members receive assistance in the early years of marriage is a possibility. If this system were applied to college, both parents might continue paying the normal expenses of sending their son or daughter to college. Pooling this aid would permit the college wedding. Foresighted parents could finance the plan by taking out insurance policies for their children which would come due in their early years of adulthood.

**Sound Financial Plan**

If you’re planning to be married, it’s wise to have a sound financial plan, advises Dr. Hill. Three important factors for you to consider are health, an ending of the outside subsidy and a baby. A marriage which is not organized to take care of at least two of the factors...
hitting together is precarious. The chance of three occurring at once is rare. Many sunshine college marriages have not prepared for even one of the possibilities.

But modern college matrimony does not call for the elaborate setting mother might have considered necessary at the time she was married. Thirty years ago the groom was expected to offer a job, savings, furniture and a position in the community. His bride was complete with trousseau, hope chest and homemaking experience. The depression changed the standard to where a furnished apartment, no savings and both halves of the couple working proved satisfactory. The war presented a third, more flexible type of marriage which in many cases was as successful as previous types.

**Judge its Merits**

A new norm probably is developing for the undergraduate marriages which will be different from the other three. The way we can judge its merits is on what it produces in companionship, loyalties, kind of parents and how it integrates professional with married life.

If you're planning a college wedding, here's another important point. How much does a diploma mean to you? Are you able to accept that the coming of a baby will interrupt and probably prohibit your graduation? Remember that financial reasons can cause one or both of you to quit.

Maryann Jones Dunigan, child development senior, finds it possible to combine homemaking with a full schedule. Housekeeping takes no more time for her than the activities she carried before her marriage.

The Dunigans have found that with both of them in school it is best to divide the tasks of cooking and cleaning. They enjoy this sharing responsibilities of the home and intend to carry it over after college. One of the benefits of a college marriage, Maryann believes, is starting with common interests instead of half of the partnership interested in the job, the other in the home.

The attitude of the parents is an important consideration, Maryann advises. If they oppose the college marriage, the situation is more difficult.

**Sharing Responsibilities**

Betty Baldridge Maifield, home management senior, agrees that sharing the responsibilities of homemaking is important in the college marriage. She finds that carrying a full schedule plus several outside activities keeps her constantly on the go. But despite fewer minutes to relax, she considers marriage well worth it. Although she was accustomed to cooking and housekeeping at home, she hadn't realized how much time they would take. Betty advises that prospective brides understand that homemaking may be more of a job than they think. Planning time management is a great help, she adds.

Nancy Alexander, applied art senior, decided to wait until after graduation for marriage. Outside financial assistance would be necessary if she were married. Nancy feels that if she were old enough for marriage, she also would be old enough to be independent. Financial freedom would mean that one half of the couple would have to quit school to work. Both wish a diploma.

One criticism of college marriages is that the man has not yet demonstrated his earning capacity. But is a woman interested in choosing a meal ticket or a companion for life partnership? A college woman has the background to support herself if necessary. Therefore she can choose for a marriage mate a personality, not a $10,000 provider.

**Questions to Consider**

Dr. Henry A. Bowman, on the faculty of Stephens College, in his book *Marriage for Moderns* advises couples to consider undergraduate marriages from these questions. “What is to be gained? What are the risks? What is to be lost?” He believes that on this basis a reliable decision can be made.