

CHURCH CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER 2023



THE SIGNIFICANT SOMETHING

Poverty. It seems every politician wants to address it and has ideas for how to alleviate it. Often those ideas involve giving people more money through government-sponsored, taxpayer-funded programs.

Poverty is certainly an issue Christians should pay attention to, especially since poverty so often is generational, meaning if one generation is in poverty, it's likely that succeeding generations will be, unless something significant happens to break the cycle. Giving more welfare unfortunately too often just entrenches poverty.

But there is a "significant something" that can break the cycle and is almost fool-proof in ensuring that a person or even a family avoids poverty. Research done by the Brookings Institute shows that there are three steps, if done in order, result in avoiding poverty in the vast majority of people, regardless of ethnicity, race, or economic background.

Brookings calls this the "Success Sequence," which consists of 1) graduate high school; 2) get a full-time job; and 3) get married before having children. According to Institute for Family Studies, "the latest research shows that 97% of young people who follow all three steps are not poor as adults....In comparison, half of adults in their 30s who missed all three steps (52%) are in poverty."¹

Organizationally, we would add a couple of subpoints in the sequence. First, prayerfully and carefully vet the person you are thinking of marrying. Doing so can help to ensure a marriage that will go the distance. Second, once you are married, do everything you can

Please Pray...

Pray that we as God's people will serve Him and His Kingdom well as His ambassadors.

Pray that we as God's people will be the salt and light that is so needed in our communities.

Pray that we as God's people will be known for our good works and that God will be glorified through us.

Pray that pastors and Bible-believing churches in our state will be faithful to God and the truth of His Word.

Pray that God's people will be faithful in their marriages and will raise up a generation that loves and serves God.

Pray that our governing officials will know and do what is right.

¹ <https://ifstudies.org/success-sequence>

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STRENGTHENING,
PRESERVING & PROMOTING
MARRIAGE, FAMILY, LIFE &
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

"For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

- Mat. 5:45b



to stay married to that person, especially if there are children involved. These subpoints are important and biblical, but even without them, the "Success Sequence" has the basic essentials.

That said, given the numbers from the research, one would think politicians concerned about poverty would be all over the "Success Sequence," funding it and promot-

ing it widely. One would think this should receive wide-spread support, but sadly it does not. This is extremely short-sighted and means more taxpayer money going to government welfare programs and, more importantly, perpetuating more people in poverty.

Why does the "Success Sequence" not get political support? We suspect it's the sequence itself—not the first two steps, but the last one that many struggle with. That step is certainly the one that way too many elected officials object to. A majority of them are uncomfortable asserting that child-bearing should be within marriage. That sounds too much like making a "moral judgment."

Wisconsin state budgets continue to overlook the "Success Sequence." This is, again, short-sighted. Imagine the difference in our state over even the next ten years, if more and more young people get the message that they can avoid poverty and pretty much live the American dream if they finish high school, get a full-time job, and marry before having children. But many young people will never hear about the "Success Sequence" because too few people talk about it, and the state hasn't devoted any resources to it.

The state may continue to ignore the research and fail to promote the "Success Sequence," but we can teach and share the sequence with the young people in our sphere of influence, especially since the "Success Sequence" is basically God's plan—get educated and trained, work, and marry before having children. As always, God's way really is the best way. Doing life His way is the "significant something" that can break a generational poverty cycle.

WHY IT MATTERS

Jesus reminds us that God's goodness extends even to unbelievers as noted in Matthew 5:45. We serve a good God Who loves His creation and blesses even those who do not acknowledge Him. Even unbelievers are both happier and healthier when they follow God's plans. When people practice the "Success Sequence," everyone benefits, especially children. Promoting the gospel needs to be our top priority, but surely God is pleased when we also communicate the goodness of His plan for marriage and family and when the law and policies of our land promote the same.

Wisconsin Family Council (WFC) is a 501 (c)(3) organization that has been advancing Judeo-Christian principles and values in Wisconsin since 1986. We have largely done this by informing Wisconsin citizens, policymakers, and churches about the important legislative and cultural issues so they can be involved in strengthening, preserving, and promoting God's plan for marriage and family, the sanctity of human life, and religious freedom in our state.

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