

Living Together?



Discuss

- What is the best relationship advice you've ever received?
- Why is it important to follow good advice from others in relationships—marriage, friendships, dating, family?

Tough, But Timely Topics

Tips On Love

Our Goal

The goal has been and is that you end up with

- A better knowledge of what God's Word has to say about each topic.
- Learn how we should respond as Christians to some of the current trends in our culture.

The Commonality of Cohabitation Statistics

- Over 12 million unmarried partners live together in 6,008,007 households. – *U.S. Census Bureau. "American Community Survey: 2005-2007."*
- The number of cohabiting unmarried partners increased tenfold between 1960 and 2000. – *U.S. Census Bureau. "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2000."*
- The number of cohabiting unmarried partners increased by 88% between 1990 and 2007. – *U.S. Census Bureau. "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2007."*
- The majority of couples marrying today cohabited first. – *Bumpass, Larry and Lu, Hsien-Hen. 2000. "Trends in Cohabitation and Implications for Children's Family Contexts in the United States." Population Studies, 54: 29-41.*
- About 75% of cohabiters plan to marry their partners. – *Smock, Pamela. 2000. "Cohabitation in the United States." Annual Review of Sociology.*
- 55% of different-sex cohabiters do marry within five years of moving in together. 40% break up within that same time period. About 10% remain in an unmarried relationship for five years or more. – *Smock, Pamela. 2000. "Cohabitation in the United States." Annual Review of Sociology.*
- 41% of American women aged 15-44 have cohabited at some point. – *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2002. "Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States." Vital Health and Statistics, 23; 22.*
- In 1995, 24% of women aged 25-34 were cohabiting, compared to 22% of women aged 35-39, and 15% of women aged 40-44. In every age group, the percentages have increased since 1987. – *Bumpass, Larry and Lu, Hsien-Hen. 2008. "Trends in Cohabitation and Implications for Children's Family Contexts in the United States." Population Studies, 54: 29-41.*
- 10.7% of the unmarried population report living together with unmarried partners. – *U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey: 2005-2007.*

Question 1. Why do people choose to cohabitate?

- “I want to get marriage right.”
- “I want more opportunity for sexual intimacy.”
- “Finances – I can’t afford to live alone.”
- “Test drive – He/she may be the one. Let’s try this and see what happens.”

— The simple fact is that cohabitation has become acceptable within our society to the point where it has become the norm rather than the exception even promotes it in itself.

Question 2. How has living together decreased the divorce rate?

- Those who live together before marriage are less likely to marry each other than those engaged who do not cohabitate.

— Forty percent of couples who live together will end their relationships before marriage. - *Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin, “The Role of Cohabitation in Declining Rates Marriage” Journal of Marriage and the Family (2007) 83 913-927.*

- Those who live together before marriage have higher separation and divorce rates over time.

— The Journal of Marriage and Family reported marriages that are preceded by living together have 50 percent higher disruption rates than marriage without premarital cohabitation. - *Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin, “The Role of Cohabitation in Declining Rates Marriage” Journal of Marriage and the Family (2007) 83 913-927.*

— The Universities of Chicago and Michigan reported that those who cohabit before marriage have substantially higher divorce rates than those who do not; the recorded differentials range from 50 to 100 percent. - *William G. Axinn and Arland Thornton, “The Relationship Between Cohabitation and Divorce: Selectivity or Casual Influence?” Demography (2002): 358.*

— Researchers from Yale University, Columbia University and the Institute for Resource Development at Westinghouse revealed the divorce rates of women who cohabit are nearly 80 percent higher than the rates of those who do not. - *Neil Bennett, et al., “Commitment and the Modern Union: Assessing the Link Between Premarital Cohabitation and Subsequent Marital Stability,” American Sociological Review 53 (1988): 127-138.*

— The University of Wisconsin at Madison researchers report that cohabiters perceived greater likelihood of divorce than couples who did not cohabit before marriage and the longer couples live together outside of marriage, the higher likelihood of divorce. - *Elizabeth Thomson and Ugo Colella, “Cohabitation and Marital Stability: Quality or Commitment?” (Study of more than 13,000 adults) Journal of Marriage and the Family 54 (2006): 266.*

Proverbs 14:12 “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”

- There is a path that appears to be the obvious choice, but it actually leads to destruction.
- We now have more than enough research to see that is the case with cohabitation.

Stats and Scriptures and Changing Minds

- In general “If you are living together it becomes too easy to walk out when things get rough.”

Question 3. What does the Bible have to say?

- Every time the Bible talks about God-approved sexual intimacy it is always within the confines of a marriage relationship with a man and a woman.

Hebrews 13:4 (ESV) Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Hebrews 13:4 (MSG) “Honor marriage and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between husband and wife.”

- God wants to guard the sacredness of that intimacy as something that is only reserved for the marriage relationship.
- The ceremony of marriage in public and the consummation of the marriage in private, when done God’s way, creates a supernatural bond.
- God’s Word on Premarital Sex
 - “Sexual immorality” and “fornication”
 - Any sexual activity outside of the marriage relationship.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should **avoid** sexual immorality.”

1 Corinthians 6:18 “**Flee from** sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.”

Colossians 3:5 “**Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”

- Why God Says, “No”.
 - God wants what’s best for us.
 - And the Bible reveals His good plan if we will only be obedient to it.
- Why People Say “No” to God’s Best
 - People fear that they are going to wed the wrong person, the wrong spouse, and so they look for ways to ensure that they will get it right.
 - Or they do not trust that God knows best.
 - When you marry a person you are not marrying the person that they are; you are marrying the person that they are going to become over the years.
- “Me, Too!”

Question 4. What if we just live together but don’t sleep together?

Proverbs 6:27 “Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?”

Matthew 6:13 “And lead us not into temptation.”

- Flee!
 - My favorite movie (sort of)
 - J and Mrs. P.
 - We are commanded to not merely resist the temptation, but to flee from it.
 - This is not a passive response, but is an active and passionate run in recognition of the entangling power of the flesh and a desire to please the Lord.

- It would be extremely naïve to think that living with someone of the opposite sex would not present definite temptations toward explicit sin, especially when engaged with that person in a romantic relationship.
- How inappropriate it would be to pray “lead us not into temptation” when we willingly reside in a tempting environment.
- For this reason, wisdom would strongly suggest that one not cohabit. As Jesus has said in regards to temptation, “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38).

Question 5. How should we respond to those who live together?

- It depends
 - If it’s a Christian, someone who is a Christ-follower, a church member who has placed themselves under the spiritual authority of the elders of this church, we are to try to lovingly address the issue.
 - Explain why this is a sin that needs to be avoided.
 - Show how, as a member of Christ’s church, this action and lifestyle can and will dilute and discount the value of marriage
 - Point out how it sends mixed signals to the community about what this church believes about the institution of marriage and our desire to live pure lives.
 - So there are times when we need to confront a Christian who is living a lifestyle that is contrary to what the Bible teaches.
 - But if it’s a coworker or it’s a relative who is not a Christ-follower, then our task is to love that individual and to encourage them in the truth.
 - It is not your job to act like there is nothing wrong with this behavior and lifestyle.
 - It’s not our place to encourage them in this immorality.

- Home for the Holidays
 - Blood is thicker than Scripture?
 - It is appalling at how we Christians often compromise our Christian convictions for our children.
 - Convictions?
- Here at Central

If You/We Really Want to Follow the Lord

A Picture of Life

All Things Are Possible

Matthew 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God *all things are possible.*”

Genesis 18:13-14 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?' ¹⁴*Is anything too difficult for the LORD?* At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*