

## Current Concerns: Living Together Right or Wrong?

In this time of “live in” boyfriends and girlfriends, it is no wonder that many are confused about marriage. The world has long tried to destroy marriage and justify itself in its evil deeds while Christianity has uplifted marriage to the lofty plain that it deserves. The world has cried that marriage will be defeated and that it will not survive but like all things created and sanctioned by God, marriage is here to stay and is a viable part of society.

Nevertheless, some have chosen to live contrary to God’s law concerning marriage and have advocated that marriage is no longer needed being outdated. Or by some perverse rationale, they reason: “You wouldn’t buy a pair of shoes without trying them on. So, don’t get married without first trying out your mate.” It is often the case that those who cry such foolishness are the very ones who cry that they do not want to be treated like animals or inanimate objects. Yet, this is the very thing they are advocating. Dear reader, we are not talking about a pair of shoes, we are talking about humanity. Let us never be guilty of treating one we are considering to marry as if they are a pair of shoes!

In 1983, *Newsweek* reported that only 16% of college students considered it harmful “for a man and woman to live together before marriage” while 61% said it would be “helpful.” With such views, questions concerning “living together” must be answered.

## FORNICATION

Fornication is a broad term and means illicit or unlawful sexual intercourse. It would include such things as adultery (sex with someone other than one’s spouse), homosexuality (sex between persons of the same gender), bestiality (sex between a human and an animal), promiscuity (sex with various partners), paedophilia (sex with a child), and prostitution (sex for money or hire). Thus, fornication is sexual activity outside of its proper place—marriage.

Within the proper context of marriage, sexual activity is sanctioned by God. The Bible says, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). However, sexual activity outside of marriage is fornication. Listen to what God says about fornication:

Being filled with all unrighteousness, **fornication**, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. —Romans 1:29-32

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

—1 Corinthians 6:9

Now the works of the flesh are manifest,

which are these; adultery, **fornication**, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. —Galatians 5:19-21

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; **fornication**, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

—Colossians 3:5-6

Please notice the association that fornication has with other sins. However, the point is clear. Fornicators will not inherit eternal life.

## MARRIAGE

When God created man, He created him with certain appetites such as the sexual urges. God, also, originated a way to fulfill those desires. For the sexual desires, God instituted marriage—one man for one woman until death. An examination of the topic of marriage in the Bible reveals that there are four purposes which God ordained in marriage:

**COMPANIONSHIP:** In the beginning, God decreed that it was “not good that man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Thus, God created an help meet for him—a woman to be his companion. Someone to share his joys and his sorrows.

**BODILY SATISFACTION:** Sex hunger is as natural and honorable as food and drink hunger if it is kept in its proper place—marriage. The Bible says, “Marriage is honourable in all, and **the bed undefiled:** but whoremongers and

adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). Paul wrote, “to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Corinthians 7:2). In marriage, a man and a woman can be intimate and, yet, remain spiritually and morally pure.

**REPRODUCTION:** Marriage is where the home begins for God blessed the first union and said, “Be fruitful and multiply...” (Genesis 1:27-28). In this light, “children are an heritage of the Lord and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Psalm 127:3-5).

**TRAINING OF CHILDREN:** Since marriage is for reproduction, it is only natural that marriage be used for the training of those that are procreated. A home with a father and a mother is the best place to raise children. Thus, Paul exhorts parents to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). When raising children with morals and values, we bless our children, ourselves, and the world in which we and they live.

When Jesus spoke of marriage, He taught, “that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female . . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4-6).

The “one flesh” in this passage and others have reference in part to the sexual relationship of a husband and his wife. Sex is fully commended in marriage and fully

condemned outside of the marriage relationship.

## DOES IT WORK?

If living together or cohabitation is for the purpose of trying out one’s mate, then a natural question would be, “Does it work?”

*Psychology Today* reported in 1988: “Yale University sociologist Neil Bennett and colleagues found that cohabiting women were 80 percent more likely to separate or divorce than were women who had not lived with their spouses before marriage.” In 1989, the *National Survey of Families and Households* related: “Unions begun by cohabitation are almost twice as likely to dissolve within 10 years compared to all first marriages: 57 percent to 30 percent.”

The very purpose for living together declares its most basic weakness. If its purpose is sexual, then it is opposed to God and morality. If its purpose is a trial for marriage, then it lacks commitment. This lack of commitment causes it to fail from its onset.

Living together sets up a relationship for failure. There is no real or clear commitment. It involves no legal or social responsibilities. There is no public pronouncement nor pledge. It is for the moment while marriage is “until death do us part.” ■

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International Bible Studies  
Tract Series