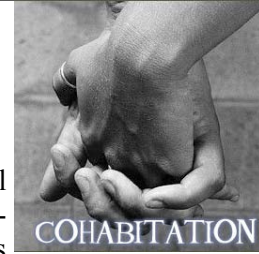


## Moral Issues

### Cohabitation



Statistically, cohabitation before marriage is on the rise in our current generation. The practice of “shacking up” (as some call it) is becoming common place in the world and such trends have a tendency to influence the church. Consider what the Bible says about such a practice.

**Marriage is the only suitable relationship to share a bed.** Hebrews 13:4 says, “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Any sensuality and sexuality outside of the marriage relationship is condemned, not endorsed by God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21). Should God’s followers care more about what they think or what God thinks about their decisions (see Colossians 3:17)?

**“Flee sexual immorality.”** Those are the concise words of the inspired apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:16. Like Joseph with Potiphar’s wife, run away from sexual temptation (Genesis 39:11-12)! Further, our Lord encouraged His disciples to pray “...do not lead us into temptation” (Matthew 6:13). How can we say we are “fleeing” the temptation of sexual immorality while putting ourselves in a house with someone we admire of the opposite sex? Can we realistically ask the Lord to “not lead us into temptation” while simultaneously defying the prayer by living with others where there is sexual attraction?

**Consider your example to others.** 1 Timothy 4:12 says, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in

*word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”* The Christian must always consider their “example” in their every act. If our attitude demonstrates a lack of concern for our “example” we will be “despised” in the eyes of believers. What kind of example does it set to a 15-year old teen from church if they see an older Christian they admire walk into a strip bar? What will that 15-year-old assume about you? It does not matter if you drink one single drink and sit their blind-folded the entire time it will easily compromise your influence. Likewise, what does one generally assume about another when their boyfriend/girlfriend stays the night in their home/apartment? We can make self-justifying claims but the truth is our influence has been compromised and example has been weakened. Sadly, whether we acted on our impulses or not we may be a stumbling block to others as they imitate our poor discretion (1 Corinthians 8:9-11).

**Look for the way of escape.** 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 warns and then promises, “*Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*” Many claim their “circumstances” necessitate living together. Yet, will we pay so much attention to financial and relational concerns that we ignore

the spiritual considerations? Is there not someone else (a parent, relative, member of the church) who can take you or your friend into their home to avoid such a threatening situation?

**Rebuke and expose sin rather than hiding it.** In Joshua 7, Achan commits a sin and his entire family is punished (7:24-25). Why? Quite simply: they knew about his stolen goods being hid under their tent and did not expose their father’s sin to all of Israel. Likewise, if we know of Christians in sinful situations we have a duty to expose and rebuke such sin, even in our families. Unfortunately, many like to sweep it under the carpet and keep it “hush-hush” or just “don’t ask questions” (usually because we know the answers). Such actions not only bring reproach upon the one guilty but upon all those who know of the sin and refuse to follow Paul’s clear instructions regarding brethren guilty of unrepentant sin. Note them and “avoid them” (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Romans 16:17).

By the way, if you think living together will make a better marriage more likely, think again. The divorce rate is significantly higher for those who cohabit before marriage compared to those who do not! Once again proving God’s way is the best way to a full and happy life (2 Peter 1:3).

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\*\*For statistics and/or a free sermon on this subject contact us!