

# Timely topics; timeless truths

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## *Living together*

April 24: Intelligent design  
May 1: Gender identity  
May 8: Secret baptism  
May 15: Close communion  
June 5: Dual (or duel) citizenship  
June 12: Social media  
*June 19: No study – Campbell and Schultz (King) farewell*  
June 26: Living together  
*July 3: No study – July 4 weekend*  
July 10: Tattoos



## Introduction

What are your reactions to the following statistics?

- Percent of all births to unmarried women in the United States is 40.5%<sup>1</sup>
- In a 2014 CDC study/interview of a cross-section of American women . . .
  - by age 20, 26 percent of interviewed women had cohabited in 2006–2010.
  - by age 25, over one-half of women (55%) had cohabited in 2006–2010.
  - by age 30, 74 percent of women had cohabited in 2006–2010.
  - by age 25, women with less than a high school diploma had the highest probability of cohabiting (76 percent).<sup>2</sup>
- From a November 1, 2014 article at NPR: More than 65 percent of first marriages today are between couples already living together.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CDC, May 16, 2022

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr064.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2014/11/01/358876955/millennials-navigate-the-ups-and-downs-of-cohabitation>

## Why do people cohabit?

Take 60 seconds and write down reasons an unmarried couple might tell you for which they decided to move in together.

## What the Scriptures say

Read through the following Scripture verses. What do these verses teach us about living together?

### Genesis 2:18,21-24

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is a suitable partner for him."

<sup>21</sup> The LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. As the man slept, the LORD God took a rib and closed up the flesh where it had been. <sup>22</sup> The LORD God built a woman from the rib that he had taken from the man and brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup> The man said,  
Now this one is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh.  
She will be called "woman,"  
because she was taken out of man.

<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will remain united with his wife, and they will become one flesh.

### Matthew 19:4-6

[Jesus] answered, "Haven't you read that from the beginning their Maker 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup> and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate."

**What does this teach me?**

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**1 Corinthians 7:2,8,9**

But because of sexual sins, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. <sup>8</sup>I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain as I am. <sup>9</sup> But if they do not have self-control, they should marry, because it is better to marry than to burn with desire.

**Hebrews 13:4**

Marriage is to be held in honor by all, and the marriage bed is to be kept undefiled, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.

**Ephesians 4:17-19**

So I tell you this and testify to it in the Lord: Do not walk any longer as the Gentiles walk, in their futile way of thinking. <sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, due to the hardness of their hearts. <sup>19</sup>Because they have no sense of shame, they have given themselves over to sensuality, with an ever-increasing desire to practice every kind of impurity.

**1 Corinthians 6:18-20**

Flee from sexual immorality! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-5**

Indeed, this is God's will: that you be sanctified, namely, that you keep yourselves away from sexual immorality. <sup>4</sup>He wants each of you to learn to obtain a wife for yourself in a way that is holy and honorable, <sup>5</sup>not in lustful passion like the heathen, who do not know God.

Summarize what God's will is regarding marriage and cohabitation.

## Should I say something?

Read the following passages and think about how they relate to our discussions today.

### **Ezekiel 33:7-9**

But I have appointed you, son of man, to be a watchman for the house of Israel. So whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you are to warn them from me. <sup>8</sup>When I say to a wicked man, "Wicked man, you shall surely die," if you do not speak to warn the wicked man against his way, that wicked man will die because of his guilt, but I will also hold you responsible for his blood. <sup>9</sup>But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he will die because of his guilt, but you will have saved your life.

### **Galatians 6:1**

Brothers, if a person is caught in some trespass, you who are spiritual should restore such a person in a spirit of humility, carefully watching yourself so that you are not also tempted.

How do the previous passages pertain to our discussion today?

## How should I say it?

Read the following scenarios and discuss a plan of how you would approach the situation. (Some things to consider might include: how and when to approach the couple; what Scripture to point to; what tone to take in your discussions.)

- a) You move into a new neighborhood. A very nice young couple with a new baby lives across the street. You find out they are not married.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b) Your 23-year-old daughter announces she is moving out of your home to live with her boyfriend a mile away. She went through a WELS grade school and a Lutheran high school but has been "searching" a bit spiritually since she went off to college. The boyfriend is unchurched and hasn't shown interest in even visiting your church with her.

- c) A young, engaged couple who are fellow members at your church and whom you've known well for a long time moves in together. They're planning their wedding, which is in eight months. They have sincerely pledged to have separate bedrooms and remain chaste, yet they will be in the same house for eight months until their wedding because it's cheaper.
  
- d) Your cousin, who grew up in a Christian home, is having a baby shower. She is living with her boyfriend, who is not churched, and they have no plans to marry. You receive an invitation to the baby shower to be held at her mother's house.
  
- e) A young couple in your church has moved in together. You don't know the couple or the families that well; however, it has been five months and you don't think the church is addressing the situation.
  
- f) You have a coworker who's openly critical of the Bible's teachings and those who follow them. She lives with her boyfriend. They are about 40 years old, and you've tried at times to talk with her about Jesus but have met much resistance.
  
- g) An elderly couple in your church whose spouses have both died will be moving in together. They do not "burn with passion" but want daily companionship and support.

## For further reading

ElHage, Alysse. "For Kids, Parental Cohabitation and Marriage Are Not Interchangeable."

<http://family-studies.org/for-kids-parental-cohabitation-and-marriage-are-not-interchangeable/>

Schuetze, John. "Scriptural Principles as They Pertain to 'Live-in' Arrangements." Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary essay file.

<http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/3096/SchuetzeScriptural.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

"Test-Driving Marriage." Series by Focus on the Family.

<http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/preparing-for-marriage/test-driving-marriage/test-driving-marriage>

The National Marriage Project.

<http://nationalmarriageproject.org/>