

Living together unmarried essay sample

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Love, flowers, food, music, stress, and happiness all combined into one day – a wedding day. While many people may fantasize about that perfect wedding day with the perfect dress or tux and a decadent cake, most aren't ready to commit to what comes after.

Some call it living in sin, others call it living in bliss, but these days it's almost expected that a couple will live together without marriage.

Cohabitation, once rare, is now the norm. Filipino family life has changed drastically as marriage is losing ground and more couples live together without tying the knot. Instead of using terms such as ' husband and wife' or even ' spouse,' businesses and advertisers speak of ' partners' and ' companions'. Instead of getting married, couples talk about being together. Couples who live together without marriage are called ' domestic partners' – which may be people of the same or opposite sexes. A major social change has occurred during our lifetime like the acceptance of other changes in sexual and family values such as divorce, homosexuality, abortion, coed college dorms, coed gym classes, etc. But the reality is that living together without marriage can be great if both parties are truly aware of what they really want and actually stick to it, and that is a BIG IF. When it comes to this topic, there are so many opinions, facts, research, and statistics that either in favor of living together before marriage or choosing to wait until the knot is tied.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (DEVELOPMENT)

Today, cohabitation is a common pattern among people in the Western world. “ More than two-thirds of married couples say that they lived together before getting married. In 1994, there were 3. 7 million cohabiting couples”

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(Wikipedia, n. d.). This is a far cry from a few decades ago. “ Before 1970, cohabitation was illegal. Living together outside of marriage was uncommon, but by the late 1990s at least 50% to 60% of couples lived together premaritally. According to the census, the number of unmarried couples living together increased tenfold from 1960 to 2000” (Wikipedia, n. d.). Nowadays, it is seen as a normal step in the dating process. In fact cohabitation is increasingly becoming the first coresidential union formed among young adults. People may live together for a number of reasons. Cohabitants could live together in order to save money, because of the convenience of living with another, or a need to find housing. Lower income individuals facing financial uncertainty may delay or avoid marriage, not only because of the difficulty of paying for a wedding but also because of fear of financial hardship if a marriage were to end in divorce.

The extremely high costs of housing and tight budgets of today’s economy are also factors that can lead a couple to cohabitation. Today sixty percent of all marriages are preceded by a period of cohabitation. Researchers suggest that couples live together as a way of trying out marriage to test compatibility with their partners, while still having the option of ending the relationship without legal implications. Cohabitation shares many qualities with marriage, often couples who are cohabitating share a residence, personal resources, exclude intimate relations with others and, in more than 10% of cohabitating couples, have children. Many young adults believe cohabitation is a good way to test their relationships prior to marriage.

FACTS AND FIGURES

According to figures from a census, the number of unmarried opposite-sex couples sharing a household more than doubled between 2000 and 2010- jumping from 3. 8 million to 7. 5 million and this marks a sevenfold increase from 1970. This growing figure now accounts for 12% of the households. In some large cities, a third or more of couples living together are not married. Surprising as these figures are, they may vastly underestimate the problem. Data from the National Center for Marriage and Family Research shows that almost 60% of women ages 19-44 have at one point lived with an unmarried partner of the opposite sex.

Living together while unmarried is trendy in other Western nations too. In Britain, an estimated 80% of couples live together before getting married. Australia is just behind at 77%. The reason given by many couples who cohabit is that they believe they will increase the chances of success when they eventually marry. However, research has shown that this idea is a fallacy. And it flies against God's intention that men and women be sexually joined together only in marriage. Here's what some of the research reveals:

“ Although most theories of marital choice predict that cohabitation would increase the stability of later marriage for those couples who marry, evidence to date suggests the opposite; couples who cohabit before marriage seem to end their marriages at significantly higher rates than couples who never lived together before the wedding” (Demography, August 1995, p. 438).

Some studies put the divorce rate at 50% higher for couples who cohabit; others put it as high as 80%. In America roughly 40% of cohabiting couples break up before marriage. Many couples apparently move in together intending to marry later. “ One study revealed that 70% of women moved in with a man with marriage on their minds” (Adams, S. & Young, B., *The 10 Commandments of Dating*, 1999, p. 110).

Many people who choose to live together before marriage show that they are reluctant to commit to a relationship and want to keep their options open. Apparently they value their autonomy and individuality. However, these temporary living arrangements subject any children involved to an unstable home life. “ Over a quarter of unmarried mothers are cohabiting at the time of their children’s birth, and many other cohabiting families have children from other unions” (Adams, S. & Young, B., *The 10 Commandments of Dating*, 1999, p. 38).

Some believe—erroneously—that children do well as long as they live in a home in which there is a male and female, whether married or not. But the evidence doesn’t support this; “ Children living with cohabiting partners and in stepfamilies generally do less well than those living with both married biological parents” (The American Prospect, April 8, 2002).

In spite of these troubling facts and figures, many American singles still seem to believe that a marital “ test drive” is the preferred choice before committing to marriage. An NBC poll found that “ 66 percent of young people ages 18 to 32 believe that you should first live together before you get married” (Adams, S. & Young, B., pp. 104-105).

BIBLICAL VIEW

Many couples now live together without marrying. Cohabitation is called a trial marriage or domestic partnership. The New Morality, sexual liberation and “ free love” movements have popularized premarital and extramarital sexual relations.

The Bible has its own stand regarding the issue about living together without marriage or known as cohabitation. While the Bible does not make an explicit statement about living in sin, that is not to say that the Bible is completely silent on this issue. Rather, we have to put several Scriptures together and glean from them the principle that any sexuality outside of the marriage of one man and one woman is definitely sin. There are numerous Scriptures that declare God’s prohibition of sexual immorality. These are all taken from the Holy Bible:

“... they must also not commit any terrible sexual sins.” (Acts 15: 20)

“ I have heard terrible things about some of you. In fact, you are behaving worse than the gentiles. A man is even sleeping with his own stepmother.” (1 Corinthians 5: 1) “ You also say, ‘ Food is meant for our bodies, and our bodies are meant for food’. But I tell you that God will destroy them both. We are not supposed to do indecent things with our bodies. We are to use them for the Lord who is in charge of our bodies.” (1 Corinthians 6: 13)

“ Some of those people did shameful things, and in a single day about twenty-three thousands of them died. Don’t do shameful things as they did.” (1 Corinthians 10: 8)

“ I am afraid God will make me ashamed when I visit you again. I will feel like

crying because many of you have never given up your old sins. You are still doing things that are immoral, indecent, and shameful.” (2 Corinthians 12: 21)

“ People’s desires make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds.” (Galatians 5: 19)

“ You are God’s people, so don’t let it be said that any of you are immoral or indecent or greedy.” (Ephesians 5: 3)

“ Don’t be controlled by your body. Kill every desire for the wrong kind of sex. Don’t be immoral or indecent or have evil thoughts. Don’t be greedy, which is the same as worshipping idols.” (Colossians 3: 5)

“ God wants you to be holy, so don’t be immoral in matters of sex.” (1 Thessalonians 4: 3)

“ We should also be warned by what happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby towns. Their people became immoral and did all sorts of sexual sins. The God made an example of them and punished them with eternal fire.” (Jude 7)

“ That’s why a man will leave his own father and mother. He marries a woman, and the two of them become like one person”. (Genesis 2: 24)

Since the only form of lawful sexuality is the marriage of one man and one woman, then anything outside of marriage, whether it is adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, or anything else, is unlawful, in other words, sin. Living together before marriage definitely falls into the category of fornication – sexual sin.

” Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.” (Hebrews 13: 4) The verse describes the honorable state of marriage. It draws a clear distinction between that which is pure and honorable – marriage – and that which is sexually immoral – anything outside of marriage. As living together outside of marriage falls into this category, it is definitely sin. Anyone living together outside of lawful marriage invites the displeasure and judgment of God.

We also can’t deny the fact that when we say “ living together” means having sexual relation which is definitely wrong. Premarital sex is repeatedly condemned in Scripture, along with all the forms of sexuality immorality. The Bible promotes complete abstinence outside of (and before) marriage. Sex before marriage is just as wrong as adultery and other forms of sexual immorality, because they all involve having sex with someone you are not married to. The Bible tells us to flee immorality, not expose ourselves to constant temptations to immorality. Then there is the problem of appearances. A couple who is living together is assumed to be sleeping together – that is just the nature of things. Even though living in the same house is not sinful in and of itself, the appearance of sin is there. The Bible tells us to avoid the appearance of evil, to flee from immorality, and not to cause anyone to stumble or be offended. As a result, it is not honoring to God for a man and a woman to live together outside of marriage.

CHURCH VIEW

ROMAN CATHOLIC

The Catholics believe that whether we are a man or a woman, God has a plan for each of our lives. For many, that plan includes the joining of man and a woman in the sacramental bond of marriage. This bond is a sacred covenant of love involving a man, a woman and God. St. Paul expresses that this bond of marriage between husband and wife symbolizes the bond that exists between Christ and his church. This sacred covenant cannot be dissolved throughout one's early life. Therefore, each person entering into that special covenant of marriage needs adequate preparation to be certain that one is ready to marry.

The church does not believe that cohabitation before marriage is a moral or acceptable preparation for this sacred bond. Rather, the church sees cohabitation as a threat to the marital happiness that engaged couples so desperately seek. Cohabitation as an actual threat to marital happiness has furthermore been borne out in recent research studies done by today's social sciences, as will be quoted in the following section.

They even made pastoral letter to encourage couples contemplating marriage not to live together before their wedding day. Moreover, that pastoral letter is a challenge to all Catholics to support engaged couples as they prepare for a lasting marriage. Those were intended to stimulate further reflection in the hearts of believers addressing Judeo-Christian marriage as a special vocation to be lived in an increasingly secular world. Perhaps most important, the letter is an invitation to all engaged couples and those contemplating engagement to realize that the church seeks the same end that the engaged couples seek: a commitment of love expressed in the vows

by the bride and groom on their wedding day to be strengthened continually day by day throughout their lives as a married couple.

The marriage preparation offered by the church is not to be seen as a list of rules and regulations, but rather as an investment into the lives of the engaged couple and the life of the church.

The church recognizes that marriage and family are vital components of a society. Thus, good marriage preparation is an investment into the future of the individual, the engaged couple, the future children born of that union and of the entire body of Christ.

PROTESTANTS

The Roman Catholic Church is totally opposed to the people cohabiting (living together without being married). Sexual intercourse outside of a marriage is a serious sin and couples who sin in this way cannot receive communion in church. Some Protestant churches accept cohabitation although they hope that the couple will choose eventually to be married in church.

A recent poll conducted by Life Way Research found that 58 percent of Protestant pastors would perform marriage ceremonies for cohabitating couples; 31 percent would not, and 10 percent were not sure.

“ Under most state law, cohabitating couples have no legal protection from such things as abandonment, adultery, property protection, or financial support, so marriage is clearly the best legal option to protect the person you love. So if a pastor refuses to marry the couple based on moral grounds,

the couple is robbed of the benefits of marriage in a sense. However, social science research shows that cohabitating couples actually sabotage their chances for a lifetime of happiness by their premarital cohabitation. So if a pastor marries the couple based on the fact that marriage is a better (both legally and spiritually) union for the couple without explaining these facts, the couple is robbed of the understanding of how cohabitation sabotages a marriage.

The benefits of doing things in the proper order cannot be underestimated and ought to be explained. When couples understand the implications of their actions, in choices of marriage or cohabitation, they can make better decisions for themselves and their partner. Pastors can come alongside and bring wisdom and counsel to the couples' decision, and use the question 'Should I perform your marriage?' as an entrée to leading them and their future together closer to the foot of the cross, where their marriage will thrive permanently." (Lynne Marie Kohm, John Brown McCarty Professor of Family Law, Regent University School of Law)

ARGUMENTS

Some couples think living together before marriage can help you prepare for the future. You can learn about each other's habits and lifestyle and get used to living together. Others think that living together before marriage is a sin. The great debate about living together has been going on for some time now, but there's still no definitive proof about which is better. What do you think? Should you live together before marriage? Why or why not?

There are some who take no stand at all because they tend to understand also the culture of the persons involved. They don't feel like judging others because maybe they know that there is something behind all the decisions and doings of men. But most people do have their stand regarding this issue, basing on what they believe are right and what they think are moral/immoral. Some do say they are in favor of living together unmarried but others take the other side and stand for not favoring the said issue.

FOR

Some people believe that living together unmarried is totally of great help. They view it as a stepping stone in the evolution of a relationship and it's a practical way to give both the mundane realities of marriage a test-run and deal with the exorbitant expenses of modern living. They tend to consider some positive factors that they believe would be a great help for them. First, they consider it as a testing period or a trial marriage. The rationale here is that by living together a couple may discover whether or not they are compatible. This way the individuals believe that they can avoid the mistake of marrying someone with whom they are fundamentally mismatched. Second, couples believe that they can save more money by moving in together and not putting in mind the additional expenses for their wedding. Third, knowing that they have grown so close to each other, they decided to live together. This is often a slow, progressive process. The movement from dating to preparing meals together, to sleeping together, to staying over more often to eventual cohabitation is more of a developmental process rather than a conscious decision.

Unfortunately, in situations such as this, couples have reflected upon the reasons for their decision to live together, and they have very often developed a strong sexual dependency. Fourth, in a relationship where the bond of physical intimacy becomes so strong, the couple finds it next to impossible to live apart. They can begin to use sex as a way to convince themselves that the relationship is going fine. When sexual intimacy becomes the predominant way of communicating, it even stifles a couple's discovery of the attitudes, hopes and desires of the other person. Fifth, the need for companionship and the fear of loneliness are so strong that either one or both parties decide they cannot wait for marriage because they feel they need to be with each other all of the time. Sixth, a couple may live together because they fear a permanent commitment. By living together, they know that if they do split, it is not quite the same as a divorce.

They want to keep their options open, and they want to keep from getting hurt too badly. Seventh, moving in with someone may allow the person to escape from another difficult living arrangement (e. g., with parents, roommates, friends). Some wish to prove their independence by moving in with their boyfriend or girlfriend. Eighth, younger and less mature couples have a naive romanticism about setting up a home. This idea can become so strong that waiting for marriage seems impossible. Lastly, they have that idea that they need to know each other first because of the realization of having babies in the future.

AGAINST

People don't feel like living together unmarried because they consider a

wedding as a sacred doctrine that should be experienced by two people who love each other before deciding to live together and have a family of their own. There are also some reasons that the people taking this stand consider. One of the most common is basically based on religion. If you are religious then living together unmarried means you are living in sin. Second, you lose the whole excitement of being married. They have always heard about the excitement people feel after getting married because suddenly everything is different. The last factor will be the thought of both of you that you are just playing house. I've seen this with some of my friends and I feel sorry for them.

They start living with someone while they're just dating and it becomes a fake marriage of sorts but lacks the excitement and thrills that come with an actual commitment. I have also noticed that these couple often become tired of one another and their relationship never progresses. They never become engaged and often break up after a year or more of living together. Others also believe that people who just live together without getting married will lead to broken relationship. Others do end up having a broken family and the most affected of them all are the children. ETHICAL/MORAL VIEW

Taking my stand in this issue is quite easy for me. I consider cohabitation as something that is not really a help to the couple who wishes to have a happy ending. There are many reasons that for me seems to be just a fallacy.

People believe that living together will tell them if they are right for one another which is basically not true. We are like comparing apples to oranges. Just because one tastes good or bad to you doesn't mean the other will taste

the same. Marriage is a totally different proposition than simply living together. Marriage is built upon a promise before God to remain faithful to one another. Living together involves no such promise. You could fail at living together with someone you may have succeeded with in marriage.

It all depends upon how much both people are relying on God for assistance and love. By the way, the divorce rate of couples who live together first is significantly higher than for those who do not. If your partner will not commit to you for life, don't deceive yourself into thinking that he or she will be willing to make that commitment at some later point. Marriage is a promise to stay together. Living together for many couples lasts about 18 months, give or take. At the end of that year and a half, you still have no idea how your partner might have done if you both had taken the plunge and made a lifetime commitment to one another. Now you will never know. You settled for the easy way in and the easy way out. Your shot at true love with that person gets blown away with the wind if you decide to shack up first. Living together prepares people to find reasons not to get married. Marriage, on the other hand, is based on unconditional love and a lifetime commitment. It is not an "audition" for marriage like you have with cohabitation. All of us are imperfect and bound to slip up at various times during the audition. Talk about conditional love.

It's "I love you" now.... and "I will really love you" once you prove you are worthy. Some live together to show if they are sexually compatible which is also not true. We are human beings. We both have a soul. Sex between human beings was designed to be physical, emotional, and spiritual. God

designed it in such a way that sex outside of marriage will never produce what they would call a “ spiritual orgasm.” That is why it leaves you still feeling empty after the physical orgasm has gone away. Without a spiritual union through Christ, sexual compatibility is only measured in a superficial way. It is the total package.... body, soul, and spirit. No wonder people without that union are often drawn to continue experimenting sexually to try to satisfy their hunger for a spiritual union in sex.

That hunger can be satisfied, but only in marriage and only when both the husband and the wife are believers in Christ. People just tend to act as if they are married ones. Deep down, they know in their heart that marriage is far more than a piece of paper. It is a promise before God to love and cherish their spouses for life. They also believe that they can love one another without getting married. This can't be true because God said so. You were created by God in His image. He consists of three Persons in One God.... Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You too are a being that is three in one.... body, soul, and spirit. You have no idea how much love can fill your heart for your partner until you receive God's love in Christ and get on the “ marriage train” for life.

SOURCES:

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