“Countering the Culture of Premarital Sex and Cohabitation”

The Church and Sexuality Conference
Come live with me and be my love,
And we will some new pleasures prove
Of golden sands and crystal brooks,
With silken lines, and silver hooks.
There's nothing that I wouldn't do
If you would be my POSSLQ.
You live with me, and I with you,
And you will be my POSSLQ.
I'll be your friend and so much more;
  That's what a POSSLQ is for.
And everything we will confess;
  Yes, even to the IRS.
Some day on what we both may earn,
  Perhaps we'll file a joint return.
You'll share my pad, my taxes, joint;
You'll share my life - up to a point!
And that you'll be so glad to do,
Because you'll be my POSSSLQ.
The Reality of Cohabitation
(Info from Glenn Stanton)

- Since 1960, the number of cohabitation couples in the US has increased 15-fold. (400,000 to over 7.5 million)
- The majority of marriages today are preceded by cohabitation (over 60%).
- The percentage of cohabiting couples has increased about 50% since the mid-1990s.
- In 2010, 75% of non-high school grads have cohabited; 50% of college graduates have.
- Cohabitation is more common among the non-religious, the divorced, and those who have experienced childhood divorce, fatherlessness, and high levels of marital discord among their parents.
Two Motivations of Cohabitation

• Low view of marriage - it’s only a piece of paper

• High view of marriage - we don’t want to mess up like our parents did
  
  • According to Pew, Millennials have “the strongest desire to marry” of any generation alive today

  • Less than 1/4 of first-time cohabiters today have no interest in ever marrying.

  • The other 3/4 see cohabitation as a step toward marriage.

  • 62% of young adults believe that cohabiting before marriage is a good way to avoid divorce.
Is Test-Driving Your Marriage Smart?

- More than half of cohabiting couples see their live-in arrangement as exactly that; a test-drive of the relationship before marriage.

- Social Scientists have coined a term: “the cohabitational effect”

- Research done at two leading schools of sociology of family — Universities of Chicago and Michigan— explain that,

- “Expectations of a positive relationship between cohabitation and marital stability . . . has been shattered in recent years by studies conducted in several Western countries including Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, and the United States.

- Cohabiters are from 50 to 80 percent more likely to face divorce than couples who do not live together before marriage.
Is Test-Driving Your Marriage Smart?

- UCLA study found that not only are marriages preceded by cohabitation more likely to end in divorce, but they are more unhealthy relationships than marriages not preceded by cohabitation.

- Marriages preceded by cohabitation have more adultery, alcohol and drug abuse, and attitudes of independence than non-cohabiting marriages.

- Jay Teachman calls pre-marital cohabitation one of the most “robust predictors of marital dissolution” — making living together before marriage one of the worst things a couple could do for their marriage.
Why the Cohabitation Effect?

1. Lack of Commitment
   - “Men who cohabit with their wives are, on average, a good deal less dedicated to their wives even once they are married! It is quite notable that this difference was not observed at all in females.

   - Lack of commitment is driven by cohabitation being a deeply ambiguous relationship, with nearly everyone having a different understanding of what the relationship is and where it’s going.

2. Cohabitation Teaches Unhealthy Relationship Skills
   - Poorer problem solving skills
   - More relational manipulation based on lack of relational solidity
Cohabitation: Relationship on the Guy’s Terms

- Women tend to see cohabitation as a road to marriage.
- Men tend to see it more as hanging out and having fun. Access to cooking, sex, and domestic care.
- Female cohabitators are 3X more likely than boyfriends to speak of “love” as the foundation of their relationship.
- Males are 4X more likely to explain that sex was an important objective in their relationship.
The Importance of a Father

- For many female cohabitors, “their daddies were just not on the scene.”
- Fathers need to be intentional to prepare their daughters for this culture.
  - Be present.
  - Be connected.
The Word of God

- Genesis 2:18-24
  - Quoted by Jesus (Mark 10:7; Matthew 19:5)
  - Quoted by Paul (1 Cor. 6:16; Ephesians 5:31)
- 1 Corinthians 6:15-18
How Do We Serve?

1. Begin with the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ!

2. Be intentional about building a culture of discipleship in our churches. Pour into young couples and college students.

3. Teach Biblical manhood and womanhood in the church.

4. Go after the men in our churches. Teach them how to be godly husbands and fathers.

5. Model before our people what a godly marriage/parenting looks like.
How Do We Serve?

6. Teach our people the Word of God as it relates to Biblical sexuality and marriage. A good starting place is Genesis 1-3.

7. In the church, call sin out. Speak the truth in love.

8. Teach the need for genuine repentance.

9. Teach that grace and forgiveness is available through Jesus Christ.

10. Don’t marry a couple without performing premarital counseling.
Resources

• “The Ring Makes All the Difference: The Hidden Consequences of Cohabitation and the Strong Benefits of Marriage” by Glenn Stanton

• FamilyLife Today did a 3-part series with Glenn Stanton (listen or read the radio transcripts)

• Focus on the Family also has a section on Cohabitation

• Articles by Dr. Albert Mohler and Dr. Russ Moore

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