Playing House: Fornication

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday March 17th, 2024

Text: Hebrews 13:4 Scripture Reading: Mark 10:6-9

### Intro

1. **Hebrews 13:4:** Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
2. \*Forbes came out with a recent study on divorce on 01/08/2024:
   1. For decades, the divorce rate in the U.S. was 50%.
   2. The good news? Divorce rates are down to about 40%. Far more people get married over the course of each year than get divorced.
   3. The bad news? Less marriages are happening! More people are choosing to live together more than any other time in history. The age of 1st marriages has increased to 30 for men and 32 for women.
   4. The statistics aren’t good for people who choose to live together first: Couples Who Live Together Before Marriage Are More Likely to Divorce. 57% of couples who didn’t cohabit prior to marriage had a marriage that lasted over 20 years. 46% of prior cohabitors have a lasting marriage.
3. How many of you remember the children’s playground song where you use the name of a boy and a girl whom you think are attracted to each other and want to embarrass them?
   1. (Using “Jack” and “Jill”) “Jack and Jill, Sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G, First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in a baby carriage!”
   2. Think a minute about that order: first comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby.
   3. How times have changed!
   4. In our culture today and the world over, the verse would go something like: first you hook up, then you move in together, love has nothing to do with it, and you can have a baby any time you want, or not (or in any order)!
   5. How sad is that?! How far that is from God’s wonderfully perfect plan for His creation!
4. While browsing through other CoC websites I came across this letter to a church of Christ:
   1. Hello, I have been dating my boyfriend for almost three years now. We absolutely love each other and have talked about getting married in the future a good bit. We are in no rush to get engaged yet because we are both still in school and don’t have the money for that yet. I am not too proud to say that we have done sexual things before marriage. I am starting to feel very guilty about it all, but I love him so much, and I know that he loves me, so my question is: Why is it so bad to have these sexual interactions if we both love each other and know that we will be married in the near future? Why is it okay to have sex after marriage whenever you want but not at all before marriage when you know that you will be married to them sometime soon? I just don’t understand why it is all of a sudden fine to have sex after marriage. I feel as though this is a way for us to show our love and I am confused as to why we shouldn’t be doing that just because we can’t afford to get married yet. I hope to hear back from you soon. Thanks so much.”
   2. And another one…“My daughter and her fiancé have engaged in premarital sex. When I confronted her about this and gently told her that they needed to repent to God, her reply to me was, “In my eyes, we are already married, so I did not sin.” Her reasoning is that a piece of paper does not make a marriage.”
5. I liked the CoC website’s (La Vista Church of Christ) answer and wanted to share this question to demonstrate the concepts the world has towards dating and marriage.
   1. It is our duty to give answers – I Peter 3:15 *(Defense: G627 apologia: answer, defense)*
      1. Those answers need to come from the word of God – I Peter 4:11
   2. The world may ask why marriage is still valid, “It’s just a piece of paper, isn’t it?”
      1. Marriage is a joining by God and is a covenant that a man and woman make before God and witnesses. “Yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant” (Malachi 2:14). This deals with divorce, but shows it is a covenant.
      2. “From the beginning of creation” (Mark 10:6)
6. Those who live in fornication are “playing house” and are outside the blessings God has designed for them in marriage!

#### Why is Fornication a Sin?

* 1. Fornication is a sin because God said so – Hebrews 13:4
  2. Definition of terms:
     1. “Sin” means breaking a law or acting as if there was no law – I John 3:4
     2. “Fornication” is an older English word for sex outside of marriage.
     3. I Corinthians 6:18: KJV: “fornication;” NAS95: “immorality” *(G4202 porneia:* illicit sexual intercourse [including adultery and incest]; fig. idolatry; fornication).
  3. What God has said about fornication:
     1. It is unrighteousness – *I Corinthians 6:9-10*
     2. It is sin – II Corinthians 12:19-21
     3. It is a work of the flesh – Galatians 5:19-21
     4. It should not be associated with Christians – Ephesians 5:3
     5. It is disobedience – Colossians 3:5-7
  4. God has said it is sin and those who practice it will be judged and condemned!

#### The Harm of Fornication

#### It can keep you out of Heaven **(I Corinthians 6:9-10)**

#### People tend to forget that God decides who enters Heaven – II Corinthians 5:10

#### We are not in the position to tell God what He will accept – Isaiah 29:16

#### Isn’t this the line teenagers try to give their parents?

#### “You don’t understand! Times have changed!”

#### Is that the line you are giving God? *(Isaiah 40:8; I Peter 1:24-25)*

#### After doing as they please, people think that God will welcome them into Heaven with open arms.

#### God is love, but God is also just – Romans 11:22

#### We will be judged by what we do – Romans 2:5-11

1. It is degrading
   * 1. Sex without a marriage bond cheapens the relationship to something animalistic – **Romans 1:24:** Sexual immorality “dishonors” one’s body!
        1. When men cease to strive for better, they tend to become animals *(some people even say, “it is only instinct!”)*
        2. Spoken of false teachers – II Peter 2:12: “unreasoning animals.”
        3. Notice the warning: They will speak evil of things they don’t understand!
     2. Marriage is done by humans – more than animalistic instinct!
        1. But marriage isn’t only done by men – **Mark 10:6-9:** God is involved!
        2. How is God involved? God joins.
        3. Marriage is a covenant – Malachai 2:14: God, husband, wife!
        4. *Ephesians 5:22-33:* Marriage analogy defines the marriage relationship between a man and a woman, Christ & the church. God is involved!
        5. All is done before God! (Mark 10:6-9: From the beginning of creation)
2. It doesn’t last
   * + 1. When people decide to have sex without marriage, the emphasis is on sex – the sensual feelings (pleasure).
          1. You can see it in this woman’s note: “Why is it so bad to have these sexual interactions if we both love each other and know that we will be married in the near future?”
       2. The problem is feelings are unstable, they don’t last; thus a relationship built on sensual feelings will not last – unless the feelings are replaced by something stable.
          1. Couples who plan to get married break up all the time. A future-plan, even by fiancés, doesn’t mean it will last. *(Personal: I was engaged before, for 2 years, before I found my wife. Things didn’t work out.)*
          2. What the studies show:

Cohabiting couples have a rate of separation that is five times that of married couples, and, in the event of separation, cohabitors have a rate of reconciliation that is only 33% as high as married couples (Binstock, 2003).

* + - * 1. Contrast

Married love – **Song of Solomon 8:6-7:** Seal over the heart

Unmarried sex – **Proverbs 5:3-6:** Unstable

* + - 1. *This doesn’t mean that it’s all roses once a couple is married, but it’s where it starts! For a marriage to last and work, it takes both spouses to be committed.*

1. It prevents love from developing
   * + 1. Paul warns about this in regards to prostitution – **I Corinthians 6:15-18**
          1. Sex creates a bond between the man and woman.
          2. But when a bond is formed in an unstable relationship (outside of marriage), it damages a person’s ability to form and keep relationships.
       2. Sex without marriage damages a person’s ability to truly love.
          1. People call sexual feelings and sexual acts “love.”

In marriage, these are the by-products of real love.

But sex alone is too shallow.

Notice the lack of mention of sexual feelings in I Corinthians 13:4-8

* + - * 1. When people focus on physical feelings and physical acts, they don’t spend the time needed to create a deeper lasting bond.

A person looking for it can get sex anywhere.

But it is harder to find someone willing to commit their lives to you.

* + - 1. Because of the shallow nature of sensual relationship, people break up frequently. *(Marriages only founded upon feelings don’t last either)*
         1. They then form new relationships, which also don’t last.
         2. After a while they become calloused to bonding because they “know” it isn’t going to last anyway so their harmful practice continues.

1. It is physically harmful
   * + 1. Promiscuity raises the chances to contract a sexually transmitted disease (STD).
       2. Many STD’s have no cure and are contagious and can be transmitted to the next person! **(I Corinthians 6:18-20: Our bodies are temples)**
       3. Many people have brought STD’s into a marriage relationship because of past sins. It is not unforgiveable but creates an extra hardship in the marriage.
       4. Fornication has more than mental side-effects, but also physical!
2. It is selfish
   * + 1. Sex without marriage is a selfish act.
          1. **Ephesians 2:3:** Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
          2. **Titus 3:3:** “disobedient…enslaved to various lusts & pleasures.”
       2. People want the benefits of marriage without the responsibility! (“Playing House!”)
          1. The way many teenagers & young adults want to live their lives – no responsibility.
          2. It demonstrates immaturity – no real commitment.
       3. Children are the natural reward or consequence of sex.
          1. Married couples may attempt to control the spacing and number of children, but if a child comes unexpectedly, he/she is seen as a blessing – Psalm 127:3
          2. If a child comes to an unmarried couple it is typically seen as a disaster. *(Abortions, single parenthood, children suffer)*
       4. Couples who have sex without being married are strongly motivated by self-gratification – **II Peter 3:3:** Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts.
          1. It is a relationship of convenience.
          2. They have less tolerance for unhappiness. They can just leave, when there is no consequence to just walking away.
          3. In contrast, there are penalties for leaving a marriage.
       5. In a marriage you have someone to depend upon to help you through hard times – Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
       6. There is not reliable support when the other can walk away (no bond or commitment to stay!) *This doesn’t mean all couples walk away, but they can.*
3. Fornication is sin and harmful physically and eternally!

## Conclusion

1. Fornication is sin, and so is “living together” or “Co-habitation” before marriage.
   1. Fornication – sex between unmarried partners.
   2. Adultery – sex between partners where at least one is married.
   3. One cannot participate in these acts and be a part of God’s kingdom – I Corinthians 6:9-10: It will cost one their soul if they don’t repent and give it up!
2. God is not being cruel, giving men and women the appetite for sex and then denying them the satisfaction of it. God created mankind with a desire for sexual intimacy…
   1. What God has stated is that sex is designed for pleasure in a committed, covenant relationship called marriage – Matthew 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-9; Hebrews 13:4
   2. God gives us a desire to eat, but that doesn’t mean we put just anything in our mouths (we desire food: edible, healthy, tasty food, not harmful things).
   3. The satisfaction of sex is for a husband and wife – Genesis 2:24 (Mark 10:6-9)
3. It is a sin that can be forgiven! If you have or are now engaged in such activity, you can repent, and God will forgive! Seek for that intimacy in a marriage relationship!
   1. If not a Christian, it begins with the right relationship with God – Acts 2:38; 22:16
   2. The Corinthians saints had engaged in sinful activities that would cost them their souls in I Corinthians 6:9-10. Notice vs. 11: “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” When they became Christians, their sins were forgiven!
   3. If you are a Christian, don’t let Satan tarnish your reputation and hinder your soul from Heaven. Repent and turn to God! (I Peter 2:11; 4:1-2; I John 2:17)
4. Don’t be fooled into the lie of the world that to “play house” is acceptable, but “Flee sexual immorality” *(NKJ: I Corinthians 6:18)* and seek the blessings God has in store for you in marriage!
5. If not a Christian, you can have your sins taken away by obedience to the gospel; Repent and be baptized! (Acts 2:38)
6. If you are a child of God with sin in your life, you can be forgiven if you confess your sins and seek forgiveness! (I John 1:9)
7. Whatever your request, let it be known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!

**\*Sources:**

* <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/legal/divorce/divorce-statistics/#sources_section>
* <https://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/cms/why-is-sex-so-bad-if-we-are-going-to-get-married-soon-anyway/>
* <https://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/cms/my-daughter-claims-she-doesnt-have-to-get-married-to-have-sex/>