

Living Together Unmarried

By Moe & Paige Becnel

- Are you in a live-in relationship?
- Does it feel right or comfortable to you?
- Is it what you were expecting of a fulfilling relationship?
- What do your children or your partner's children think about the situation?
- Have you considered that there may be negative consequences to your environment?

BEFORE YOU SHUT US DOWN, please know that our comments are not intended to condemn anyone or create guilt. Rather, we desire you and your children to experience the "abundant" life that God desires for us all.

Jeremiah 29: 11 says, ***"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD , "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."***

God has great plans for you, and your family. He also has principles that make relationships work best.

We will be bold here and tell you that living together is not God's design. Where there is no commitment - neither by you nor by your partner/ fiancé – your relationship will only go so far.

The Bible states that pre-marital sex is contrary to what God intended for marriage.

(Read **1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 8-9**)

Marriage is such a precious blessing that God inspired the Apostle Paul to describe marriage as a picture of Jesus Christ's relationship with the church (**Ephesians 5:22–33**)

Now whether you choose to believe that or not, at least consider the following thoughts. First, please realize that your family will not blend in this environment. Here are some of the reasons:

1. There is lack of complete commitment between the adults in the relationship. For whatever reason(s), the adults have chosen to not fully commit to each other. That issue is seldom discussed in the relationship because it is a sensitive subject, but as long as there is an underlying thread of non-commitment, there can be (and probably is) a lack of fulfillment in the relationship. The issue of commitment is seldom discussed by the couple for fear of being perceived as "pushing" the other person to make a commitment.
2. Children have been hurt by the break-up of their biological family. In remarried blended families, children often hesitate to connect because they anticipate this new marriage will also fail as the last one..
When children perceive the lack of commitment between adults in a cohabitating relationship, they are hesitant to connect to the relationship. The reason is that if they give their heart to someone and that person leaves, they have to go through the same pain of a divorce, even though there are no divorce papers to be filed. We knew a 16 year old boy who saw his lonely Mom crying one night. She was experiencing her fifth relationship failure, including several divorces. He told her, *"Mom, every time a man leaves you, he leaves me, too."*
Your children may not tell you how they feel, but they are protecting their hearts from more pain. If they have been through divorce, they have been hurt by at least one of their parents.

Who guards the children's hearts? The fact is that they guard their own hearts --- it is self-preservation!

Your children know you love your partner/ fiancé. If they would tell you negative things about the environment or your partner, they risk you choosing your partner over them, and that is too much risk for a child.

So children often play it safe, perhaps saying what you want to hear (or saying nothing), but all the while their hearts are feeling something very different.

We suggest parents help children work through their pain and anxiety by using "confidential allies", such as close friends you can trust, school counselors, church children's' pastors, youth pastors, or professional counselors to find out what your children are thinking and feeling.

Marriage is not something that can be "tried-out" to see if it will work before you marry. Marriages that work are those whose partners are committed to each other, and committed to making it work.

We believe that most problems in marriage and family relationships are spiritual. Thus, if we are building our home according to God's design, with God's principles in the center of the home, our homes will be filled with love, peace, and joy.

We encourage you to get committed! Love is a choice, not a feeling. A successful marriage is a strong bond between two people when both are committed to love, nurture, encourage, and serve each other, and each other's children.

Again, we promise you that our message is never to offend or to condemn, but to give truth, because truth sets people and families free.

Live the Abundant life God your Father wants you to have!

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