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CLASS NAME: Prep for Marriage – Ring Rights | Lesson 8: Living Under a Rock: The Curse of Cohabitation
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Are You Living Under a Rock! Playing House, It Makes Secular Sense!

Living under a rock is a famous English idiom that means, “***being oblivious or ignorant to what happens in the outside world***”. Unfortunately, this English idiom applies to the biblical sense as well. Couples who choose to cohabit appear oblivious to the biblical consequence of living with a mate before marriage. In some instances, many seem to have no idea of the generational curses they have uploaded into their marriage and onto their children with such a seamlessly innocent act as sharing living space.

Cohabitation is defined as “***a living arrangement in which an unmarried couple lives together in a long-term relationship that resembles a marriage.***” However, the definition itself is what draws attention to the illusion, and the word that stands out the most within the definition is the word *resembles*. Living with someone in cohabitation *resembles* marriage, but it is not the real thing. Why would anyone want to resemble something when they can have the real thing? Frankly, it’s easier. No strings attached—or so they say. Nevertheless, we can understand the allure of living with someone before marriage.

In some ways, cohabitating before marriage makes sense today. With the increase in the cost of living as well as utilizing “living together” as a litmus test to evaluate if the person you are with is “**the one**” before making the big plunge makes good ***secular sense***. Society today understands why some choose to cut the cost of living in half as they determine if marriage is really for them in the first place. Let’s face it,

you are saving money, splitting rent, cutting grocery costs, raising kids together, adding financial security, never feeling alone, and let's not forget unlimited sexual access brings all the benefits of marriage, less the commitment. However, the acts of resembling or creating a façade of marriage and not actually *receiving the rights of marriage* clearly have disadvantages.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place!

Between a rock and a hard place is one of the most difficult places to be in a marriage. However, it is an even harder place to be in if you cohabitate unmarried. The adage, "Between a rock and a hard place," *is to be faced with two equally dangerous or difficult choices or circumstances*. We would like to define biblically what those two dangerous choices are when you sign your name to a mortgage or rental lease with a significant other to whom you are not married.

To be clear, cohabitation is not explicitly defined in the Bible. But that is how the devil misleads his prey...*unmarried couples*. He pounces on any area that can be exploited as a "grey area". When the truth of the matter is, there isn't a "grey area" in the word of God, no, not at all. In fact, it is blatantly clear what God commands for and within marriage. What is really at play, is that the enemy preys on the ignorance of those that are seeking marriage. The adversary is counting on unmarried individuals and cohabitating couples such as some of you, not reading the word of God. He is tickled pink, knowing that you won't take the time to get to know the Lord better, through his laws and decrees written in the Bible. He's betting on it! If you took the time to read the laws and decrees in the Bible surrounding "acting married" when you are not...whew! You would stop dead in your tracks if you knew what you were *really* inviting in your bedroom.

Living Together

The trickery of wordplay

1. Living Together - the state of living together and having a sexual relationship without being married.
"Couples increasingly prefer cohabitation to marriage"

Most couples still don't want to call a spade a spade. The inconvenient truth of what couples *really* are doing behind closed doors is a tough pill to swallow...for some. So, to keep couples in sin, the enemy often utilizes misleading statements and renames "sin" with a different prettier name that most couples can accept, words like "living together" come to mind. This keeps unmarried couples living together in

“sin” under the guise of preparing for marriage. Guard your hearts, friends, and couples, the enemy doesn’t want you to learn this part! **Don’t be easily misled and do not be condemned. Be convicted to do something better from this day forward.** We pray that each of you, whether you are in these circumstances or not, learns those that “**ease you**” into sin; even your cohabitating mate, the one that has professed their love to you...is taking up the mantle of the enemy. Ouch! We know this may be tough to hear, but to love you is to tell you the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it may make you feel.

This means, your mate may unknowingly or knowingly invite false doctrine into your life, by leasing a property with you, purchasing a home with you, having children out of wedlock with you, sharing living expenses with you, costs often balanced through marriage (light bills, electric bills, car loans, and other investments) ties you to sin **through** your living arrangements.

This is all done with misleading statements such as:

- “let’s live together first to see if we are compatible”
- “let’s save money for the wedding”
- “It’s like we’re married anyway”

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 New International Version

¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, **masquerading** as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself **masquerades** as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants also **masquerade** as servants of righteousness. **Their end will be what their actions deserve.**

Frankly, most couples from our experience, cohabitating couples especially have long engagements and quick divorces. Why? Cohabitating couples are more interested in their own living arrangements and are not conscious of God’s living arrangement in their lives. Remember, where God does not reside...sin does. To be more direct, the act of fornication masquerades as a more acceptable term as “**living together**”. Whether live-in girlfriends and boyfriends are aware of it or not, your future fiancé/fiancée is fooling you into missing out on everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10
New King James Version

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor ^[a]homosexuals, nor ^[b]sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners **will inherit the kingdom of God.**

Cubic Zirconia Masquerading as a Diamond

Sin masquerading as love and marriage

Ask yourself do you want the **Cut, Color, Clarity, and Carats** of a diamond marriage, or do you want a look-a-like, cubic zirconia marriage? If you want marriage, then please be on the lookout for sin masquerading as love.

You may have heard this wordplay before in secular society:

Vernacular Term	Truth by Definition
Friends with Benefits	Fornication. Sex without a relationship or prostitution.
Situationship	Lack of exclusivity, Lack of Clarity, Undefinable relationship where sex before marriage is the only deal on the table.
Entanglement	The act of adultery. An Orgy is signified as multi-partnered sex.
Wifey, Hubby, Bae	A false title, identifying one as off-the-market (either signifying her or him as a potential wife or husband) implying the presence of spousal duties, sex disguised with the hope of marriage.
Work-Wife or Work-Husband	An emotional affair, hidden under the title of friendship. Attempting to provide legitimacy using the term "husband or wife".

Those who are dating suffer from these terms the most. We encourage you to know that your Father in Heaven would **never** devalue you. God loves you so much that he would never lead you into uncertain terms. Potential mates or suitors that come from God would **only** have a definable relationship with you. One that can be seen day or night. To be clear, a mate sent by God would never keep you in limbo, never have you guessing where you stand, and they would never make you wait...in fact, the man or

woman God intended for you is more than willing to wait for you! We encourage you not to play second fiddle to anyone, especially in marriage. ***If you start your marriage in which you are not a priority, that will be the basis your marriage will be built upon.*** You are essentially training your mate to put you last. Your Father in Heaven has plans for you and if you knew what God has planned for you, you would be **more** selective of who you say, “I do” to.

Jeremiah 29:11
New International Version

“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.

Remember this, the enemy knows that those without knowledge are not only living under a rock but are destroyed due to a lack of knowledge. It’s like running a red light because you didn’t see it. The consequences are the same. Either you will get a ticket or worse, get into a terrible accident. Keep this in mind if you won’t learn from your mistakes...Satan will.

Hosea 4:6
Amplified Bible

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge [of My law, where I reveal My will].

Because you [the priestly nation] have rejected knowledge,

I will also reject you from being My priest.

Since you have forgotten the law of your God,

I will also forget your children.

Why don’t some cohabitating couples learn from the mistakes of their predecessors? You may ask, which predecessors. You know them very well, the marriages or the lack of marriages of those who came before you, who surround many of our family dynamics. Our parents, our aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents even our siblings, have unhealthy common-law relationships but nothing to show for it on Earth or in Heaven. In the modern family of color, there are many instances where sex before marriage rocked the stability of the family structure...now known as divorce. Causing children to be born out of wedlock, cheating spouses, or marriages that have no spark, leaving more broken families than we can

count! Ask yourself this, ***what if you take a census of those that have never seen or been a part of a healthy marriage, and ask what they would have done differently in their lives to be successfully married; what do you think they would say?***

They might say:

- “Ask more questions?”
- “Why won’t he marry you?”
- “Why didn’t she say, yes?”
- “When will he make an honest woman out of you?”
- “Don’t rush in”
- “Make sure you’re doing it for the right reasons”

Yep, all good responses. However, we are sure they would say what countless couples have said, that did not take our advice about cohabitating before marriage-**don’t do it!** Simple, isn’t it? Yet so many take the path of least resistance not knowing it will not pay off in the end. However, the fact remains that the acts of resembling marriage and not receiving the rights of marriage leave you empty-handed (without a ring) in the end.

The Many Reasons Given to Cohabitate

Ask yourself silently to yourselves, “Do I fall into one of these categories”?

- Convenience
- Testing the relationship for compatibility
- Financial Reasons
- Child/Children out of Wedlock
- Fear of being alone or fear of starting over
- Fear Statements – “Well we’ve been together this long...”

Understand this, if it is convenient if it is easy and most of all if it pleases the flesh but does not please God, ***then you are not in right standing with the Lord.***

Between A Rock...

If you have experienced baptism, meaning a full-body immersion for the remittance of your sin, this means you have been granted **indwelling** of the Holy Spirit into your life. Indwelling means **when the Holy Spirit by the action of baptism by a believer; God then takes up permanent residence in the body of a believer in Jesus Christ**. Thus, being washed clean of the “old man” (sin) or the flesh, sinful desires, sinful practices, and walking anew thus possessing Christ-like character in body and in action which leads you to have access to Heaven. God gives you the ability to gain eternal life, which is the very nature of Christ, for He is eternal. Most importantly, it is the act of living with God in your daily life and God living within you.

However, when you commit sin, fornication, or sex before marriage you are living in active sin. Remember this, **God and sin cannot reside in the same place**. This means, that the moment you allow sin into your temple (your body) God puts up the spiritual “deuces” sign, packs up, and leaves your temple for Holy accommodations. When God leaves all his favor, and all his protections leave too, leaving you and your partner exposed to attacks of the enemy. Remember where sin resides so do Satan and all his devices. To be clear, it is not the act of living together or “shacking” so to speak but the act that creates temptation behind closed doors. However, be realistic with yourselves and recognize that you may have the best of intentions to live with your mate and not have sex before marriage but in the end, the flesh will win if God is not at the center of your decision. God would never allow you to lean on your ‘flesh’ for support because he knows that the flesh is weak. The Bible expressly explains Jesus’s belief in the book of **Matthew**:

Matthew 26:41

New International Version

⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, **but the flesh is weak.**”

A Hard Place...

To trust your flesh is a dangerous and hard place to be in. It is one that we would never recommend both as premarital and marriage counselors and as fellow Christians attempting to make it through the same challenges and temptations that you do. Guess what, it isn’t easy, but everything is possible with God! Furthermore, sex before marriage compromises yourself and your significant other. You are basically telling your mate you aren’t worth the wait. Then to add insult to injury you desecrate the very temple he or she is intended to be for the Lord, condemning yourselves to death **only** if there is no repentance. **Keep in mind, that this lesson is not to**

condemn you, **if you feel condemned that is the enemy**. ***Rebuke the adversary, in the name of Jesus, and ask him to exit his unlawful seat in your headspace.*** Today's lesson is in place **only** to bring you knowledge and understanding. Nothing more and nothing less. However, **condemnation makes you feel unforgivable, whereas conviction means you have a chance for forgiveness because you have a conscience.** It is a great thing to be convicted by the spirit of the Lord. So please lean into your conscience and turn away you're your own spiritual condemnation. Simply, do better because you know better. Furthermore, it also means that you understand you have sinned and stepped out of alignment with the Lord, but by a change of action through repentance, you can and **will** be redeemed. Amen!

However, you can change but only if you want to...the truth is, some don't. Some cohabitating partners make empty promises to the Lord, by saying, ***"we'll only have sex this last time."*** Only to willfully have premarital sex again and again. Often by pressuring their significant others with statements such as this:

- ***"We're getting married, what's the difference?"***
- ***"It's mine, why can't I have it?"***

Pressuring their mates by making them feel that they won't move forward with marriage if sex is off the table, or that they will simply find someone else to have sex with if you aren't up to the task. It is especially difficult if you are in a cohabitation relationship. ****If you walk away feeling despondent, depressed, or worthless, after this again that is the work of the enemy.***

If you willingly walk away wanting to change your behavior, invite the Holy Spirit into your life as your source that is the character of God. We do want to caution you, that we have met very few live-in couples that don't have active sex lives. To reiterate, living together is not a sin but **sex before marriage is**. To believe that you will simply not act on your sexual desires is a tempting thought, however, it is an unfortunate fantasy that has dire consequences for you and the person you *say* you love.

Imaginary Bricks

Do you remember the childhood story, "The three little pigs"? The fable is about three pigs who build three houses of different materials. A Big Bad Wolf blows down the first two pigs' houses, made of straw and sticks respectively, but is unable to destroy the third pig's house, made of bricks. Well, what if there was the 4th house in this childhood fable? One in which one of the pig's homes was built with imaginary bricks. Think for a moment, if you were the child hearing this story, you might say to yourself, "who would build a house with imaginary bricks". However, as premarital coaches, we have watched so many couples attempt to do just that. Cohabitation without marital commitment is building a home with

imaginary bricks. There is no foundation, there is no coverage, and it leaves you and your cohabitants susceptible to attacks from the enemy.

Cubic Zirconia Marriage

The appearance of marriage is not the same thing as being married

Ask yourself to you want the Cut, Color, Clarity, and Carats of marriage, or do you want a look-a-like, cubic zirconia marriage. When you put it under the microscope it's never the real thing.

Biblical Receipts

Proverbs 3:33 New Living Translation (NLT)

³³The LORD curses the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the upright.

The Consequences of Cohabitation

*According to statistics gathered by US Attorney Legal Services, living together before getting married doesn't accomplish the goal that couples think that it will. A couple who does not live together before getting married has a 20 percent chance of being divorced within five years. **If the couple has lived together beforehand, that number jumps to 49 percent.***

*If the couple chooses to live together as an alternative to being married at all, the likelihood that the relationship will break up within five years is 49 percent. **At the 10-year mark, a married couple has a 33 percent chance of breaking up. For the unmarried couple who is living together, the likelihood of a breakup is a whopping 62 percent.***

Just another Monday

*“Perhaps the saddest thing a recently-married couple told me was this: “Because we lived together before marriage, the day we got back from our honeymoon felt like ‘**just another Monday.**’” Premarital cohabitation sucks the novelty, joy, and surreal feeling out of the weeks, months, and years following the big day. Nothing’s really new except the jewelry on your fingers.”*

The Dangerous Lure of Living Together Before Marriage, Author - Steve Hoppe

Hopes Unfulfilled

*“In every measure of consolidation, intimacy, and commitment, couples who are living together feel less closeness than married couples. Fewer share resources and 18 percent are not dating their partners exclusively. More than twice as many are not sure if their relationship is permanent. **The low commitment levels in cohabiting are particularly tough on females. Women agreeing to move in with a partner typically look for a deeper, more committed relationship, but according to studies, their hopes are often unfulfilled.**” *Christian Headlines Today**

Trying Before Buying

Why Buy the Cow When You Can Get the Milk for Free?

We have all heard the many sayings when it comes sampling the best of women before asking for their hand in marriage. It is an insulting term and invalidating statements like these cause women to stay in relationships as the hopes of marriage are dangled over their heads until they comply with the needs of their live-in mates. Often, after many years of sexual **sampling**, a would-be male suitor becomes bored when a covenant

commitment has not been made. Not inspired to change, not driven to fight for what is essentially laying right in front of them they become comfortable in complacency. We have all heard the many heartless comments and jokes said behind the heads of live-in girlfriends. ***“The old ball and chain, it’s cheaper to keep her”***. The sayings are many, but the kept promises of marriage are few. Statements such as, ***“Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free”, “you can have your cake and eat it too” or “test drive the car first before you buy it,”*** demeans and devalues the gift that God has called women to be.

Test the Test Drive Theory

Test Drive Theory - The theory that you must test drive a car (live with someone) before committing to purchase (marriage).

- **The Test Drive**- after you have test driven the vehicle you have utilized the vehicle’s resources without committing to purchase. (Fuel, convenience, etc.)
- **Devalue**– Once the vehicle is driven off the lot the car immediately depreciates in value.
- **Miles**- Most of the time a potential buyer does not want to own a vehicle that has high mileage.
- **New versus Used**– Let’s face it; if given the choice between a new car and a used vehicle most people would prefer to purchase a new car, free of blemish.
- **Insurance**– During a test drive, the vehicle has no protection to ensure its quality.
- **“As Is”**- Meaning you take it or leave it. Whatever damage was placed by the previous owner you take it that way and assume the risk, and you cannot seek reimbursement. There is no accountability and there is no recourse for repair for the current owner.

Do You Want to Be Tested Like This? God calls us to test the spirits not the spirits testing us!

1 John 4:1 New King James Version (NKJV)

Love for God and One Another

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits**, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Only the adversary seeks to diminish your value by comparing your importance to objects or things. You were created by a King and have an inheritance as a child of a King. Women and men of God are worth the wait!

However, it is imperative that women in cohabitation relationships know their worth most of all!

1 Peter 2:9 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁹But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Future Forfeited

The real tragedy is that many couples who seek to live together before marriage do not truly understand what they are giving up. Most couples face boredom sexually, cheating, and divorce that not only affects their marriage but the marriages of children. Furthermore, without a covenant, there is no protection for your children therefore they forfeit their familial inheritance. ***It is such an insurmountable wager to neglect the well-being of your children, please know the consequences far outweigh the impact. Under the old covenant, those bring the after-effects to their children's children up to the 10th generation.***

Deuteronomy 23:2 New King James Version (NKJV)

²"One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

Putting your children's children future at risk is selfish but it also shows a sincere lack of faith. It shows that you and your relationship lack the ability to trust in God that he knows what is best for you. This lack of faith causes a manmade relationship that siphons love and robs your household of everlasting life.

Nothing that loves you should ever rob you of virtue, happiness and prosperity. To move out of order from the will of God shows a faithless relationship that despite its intention looks for proof to establish itself in the eyes of man without ever providing commitment. Think of this if he or she can't commit to God can that same mate really commit to you? The answer is no. Coexistence based on fear gives an outward appearance of marriage not the character of God within your relationship.

1 Samuel 16:7 New King James Version (NKJV)

7But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have ^[a]refused him. For^[b] **the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**"

The Fear Factor

An unwillingness to start over or fear of loneliness has caused many to move out of the will of God attempting to master their destiny. As we stated earlier in the lesson so many cohabitating couples face long engagements, no fruit of marriage, and in most cases high divorce rates soon after finally tying the knot. For us, it has become an unfortunate sight to see relationships shatter once the couple says, "I do". The thrill is gone before the marriage even begins. We all know when the person we choose isn't right for us, yet still, many fail to trust in the Lord with all of their hearts to guide our paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight."

"Treating cohabitation as marriage "insurance" is a very unstable foundation, one built partially on fear and partially on selfishness. It's saying that, if you meet all my needs and serve me well, then I will marry you".

- If you make me feel loved, then I'll marry you.
- If you satisfy me sexually, then I'll marry you.
- If you treat me with respect, then I'll marry you.
- If you make me happy, then I'll marry you.
- If you fulfill my needs, then I'll marry you.

- If you like what I like, then I'll marry you.
- If you make something of yourself, then I'll marry you.
- If you don't do things that get on my nerves, then I'll marry you.

Before You Live Together: Will Living Together Bring You Closer or Drive You Apart? Dr. David Gudgel

Isaiah 4:1 New Living Translation (NLT)

4 In that day so few men will be left that seven women will fight for each man, saying, "Let us all marry you! We will provide our own food and clothing. Only let us take your name so we won't be mocked as oldmaids."

Ring Rights!

If you love it, put a ring on it!

Both men and women must understand that sex and the ability not to engage in sex should not be the sole reason you are getting married. Both genders pressure their mates for intimacy out of an abundance of fear. **While others in cohabitation relationships want the benefits of marriage without the actual Ring Rights.** This is unfair to both parties and if you love each other, you should be able to sacrifice your flesh for the greater good of the covenant in marriage.

It is an unnatural dependency to live on lust instead of love. You or your mate should never feel pressured to engage in sex before marriage. You should also never feel that you will lose your relationship if you forgo sex before marriage. This is the embodiment of **Soul-Ties** where the spirits of others are fighting for center stage in your marriage bed. The bible states to get married if these strong desires persist.

1 Corinthians 7:9 New Life Version (NLV)

⁹But if you are not able to keep from doing that which you know is wrong, get married. It is better to get married than to have such strong sex desires.

However, we caution you again that this should not be the sole reason you want to marry your significant other.

Great Sex in Marriage is God's Design

Great sex in marriage is God's design. That's how great sex works! Sex is supposed to be intimate physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And here's the neat thing: the more spiritually and emotionally close we feel, the more the physical kicks in and the more sex feels great! **To Love, Honor & Vacuum – Top 10 Reasons to Get Married: Author Sheila Wray Gregorie**