

IS IT ALWAYS WRONG TO ENGAGE IN PREMARITAL SEX?

What used to be a growing trend is now an established practice in our ungodly society for young people to engage in premarital sex. The so-called sexual revolution has greatly promoted this practice and despite the threat of the aids virus the world's philosophy concerning sex is that "sex is all right as long as it is safe sex." Just how widespread is this practice? Some statistics from an article entitled "Shacking Up Up Sevenfold" in the August, 1994 issue of National and International Religious Report will serve to answer this question:

Three and a half million unmarried couples were living together in 1993, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That's almost seven times more than in 1970. ("Fast-Fact: Shacking Up Up Sevenfold." National & International Religion Report, Aug. 22, 1994)

The attitude toward premarital sex as being wrong has also shifted as disclosed in an article of the Family in America, August 1991 issue:

Whatever else college students are learning these days, it does not appear that most are learning to abhor fornication. More of today's college men and women consider sexual promiscuity to be immoral than did those of the mid- 1970's. Their behavior, however, tells a different story. While 65% of the college men surveyed in 1965 admitted they had had premarital sex, nearly 80% of those surveyed in 1985 said they had. Among college women the increase was even sharper. In 1965 29% reported having had intercourse before marriage, but 20 years later the figure had more than doubled to 63%. This change in behavior is matched by an attitude shift. In the 1965 survey of college students, 33% of the males and 70 % of the females thought premarital sex was wrong, but by 1985 those figures has declined to 16% and 17%. ("Campus Carnality. " Family in America, Aug. 1991)

Because of the world's philosophy regarding premarital sex and the number of people involved in it, this has led multitudes of young couples to live together out of wedlock and to bear children. Some try to justify this sinful relationship by saying, "everybody's doing it." Some say they are trying to determine if they are compatible before marriage and follow a financial philosophy of "try it and see if you like it before you buy it." The tax penalty on married couples has also helped to foster this kind of practice and relationship.

Some couples may ask, "if we love each other and plan to be married soon, what can be wrong with sex before marriage?"

To Answer the Question Concerning Premarital Sex

I. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BASIS IS FOR DETERMINING WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG

The basis of morality is not the morals of a society. It is not whether many or a few accept a particular practice or reject it. It is not whether it stands to reason or not. It is not whether it is a legal practice or an illegal practice. If the whole world accepts homosexual practices it won't make them right. If the whole world accepts abortion practices it won't make them right. And if every couple engages in premarital sex it won't make them right either. Morality or what is right or wrong is based upon what the Word of God says.

II. WE NEED TO SEE WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY ON THIS SUBJECT AND WHY HE SAYS IT

A. God condemns premarital sexual relationships as a specific sin to be avoided.

Notice "fornication" is the Biblical word used to describe what our society calls premarital sex. This word describes sexual intercourse between individuals outside of the marriage relationship. Numerous Scriptures point out that this practice is sinful. Fornication is against God's will (I Thess. 4:3,4). Fornication is a sin to abstain from Col. 3:5).

Fornication is a sinful practice that excludes people from heaven (I Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:5) and therefore it is something to be repented of (II Cor. 12:21). Fornication is against the purpose which God has for our bodies (I Cor. 6:13) and the Bible says that God will judge fornicators or those who indulge in premarital sexual relations (Heb. 13:4). Therefore believers are admonished to flee from fornication (I Cor. 6:18).

I have known of couples who engaged in premarital sex and I believe God's judgment has fallen upon them in various ways. Some have lost their virginity to someone who selfishly used them and cast them aside. Some have contacted the aids virus and multitudes have venereal diseases such as genital herpes for which there is no cure.

B. God has a reason for condemning premarital sexual relations.

Behind each of God's laws and directives there is a moral principle and reason for God's people to learn. These laws are given to us for our good and well-being because God loves us. They are not given to deprive us of something that we need or would benefit us.

God has a reason for condemning premarital sex. He loves us and wants to protect us from being hurt and running into problems later on in life. Many who engage in premarital sexual relations have to pay for it for the rest of their lives.

III. WE NEED TO SEE WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO MAKE A PURITY VOW AND BE OBEDIENT TO GOD IN THIS MATTER

Some couples may reason, "since we love each other and plan to be married soon, what can be wrong with sex before marriage?" Engaging in premarital sex is presuming upon the future because nobody knows if he will have another tomorrow (Prov. 27:1). Oftentimes couples who have premarital sex because they plan to be married have lost their fiancée's through accidents and this has left them regretting that they were no longer virgins.

The possibility of pregnancy is always present as well in premarital sex because there is no totally-safe contraceptive. Many couples have been faced with unwanted pregnancies and this had led them to add worse sin unto sin in seeking abortions. Some couples have been forced into a marriage relationship without any real love because they engaged in premarital sex and pregnancy occurred. The so-called "shot-gun wedding" used to follow this sinful issue. Now women are often faced with the arduous task of raising a child as a single parent.

The risk of contracting some form of venereal disease runs high also among those who engage in premarital sex. Usually those who practice fornication do so with multiple partners and this is the reason why some of these diseases are at epidemic proportions. Consider the risk factor as stated in the following article:

AIDS is a bullet; behavior is the trigger. Casual sex, multiple partners and intravenous drug use are killing us, the dean of Vanderbilt University School of Nursing told more than 200 UMC educators during a human sexuality education conference in Nashville. Teenagers are expected to be the next high-risk group to contract the virus. The number of adolescents in the final stages of **AIDS** has doubled. Teenage runaways are especially at risk. Statistics show that more than 50% of teenagers have had sexual intercourse before the age of 18, and 70% to 80% by the age of 20. Half of all sexually transmitted diseases are contracted by people younger than 25. ("Teens in Danger of Aids Virus." The Communicator's Companion)

IV. WE NEED TO DISCERN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAKING LOVE AND BEING IN LOVE

Bible-kind of love is not carnal and does not use others for one's own satisfaction. It does not jeopardize one's own testimony or the reputation of another. To engage in premarital sex is to put a physical relationship before a spiritual relationship which is characterized by genuine love.

Oftentimes girls fail to discern that guys want to make love when there is no love involved. A survey among college students who engaged in premarital sex revealed that 95% of the guys were involved for pleasure alone with no sense of love for the girl. In other words it was not out of love for her but out of lust for her body.

Jack Hayford gives 10 reasons why sex sins are worse than others:

Jack Hayford discusses 10 reasons sex sins are worse than other kinds of sin: (1) They stain the deepest part of a person's identity. (2) They exploit the deepest aspects of our emotionality. (3) They pollute the fountainhead of our highest creativity. (4) They produce guilt that cripples our confidence in God's forgiveness. (5) They expose us to the risk of begetting and conceiving an unsupported child. (6) They compromise the foundation of life's deepest human relationship. (7) They increase the probability of multiplying the spread of disease. (8) They give place to appetites that can only beget further unnatural behavior. (9) They break trust with the whole body of Christ. (10) They assault the pure lordship of Jesus in our lives. ("Why Sex Sins Are Worse Than Others" by Jack W. Hayford. Charisma & Christian Life. Oct. 1989.

For those who would cast aside Biblical mandates and imagine there is no consequences for the practice of fornication, they might do well to consider the findings of one study on this issue:

A recent study found that women who lived with their spouses before being married were 80 percent more likely to separate or divorce than those women who had not. Especially liable to divorce or separate were those women who have lived with the future spouse for three years or more before the marriage. The study was done in Sweden, but research also shows the results to be applicable to the United States. It is thought that couples who cohabit premaritally are not as committed to the values and interests of marriage as those who do not. ("Marriage" Practice makes Imperfect?" by Holly Hall. Psychology Today, Jul/Aug. 1988. Page 15)

V. WE NEED TO FOLLOW GOD'S DIRECTIVES IF WE HAVE BEEN DISOBEDIENT IN THIS MATTER

Oftentimes a person who has committed the sin of fornication may feel like there's nothing he or she can do to correct the situation. They may feel like second-rate individuals who could never be forgiven or used in God's service. But the Word of God declares that there's forgiveness for all sins for those who come to Christ in repentance (I Tim. 1:15; Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13; 3:13).

The Bible also teaches us there's forgiveness for the child of God who confesses his sins and forsakes them (Prov. 28:13; I Jn. 1:9; 2:1,2).

So what should a guilty person do? A Christian needs to confess his or her sin to the Lord, claim God's promise putting their sin under the blood of Jesus, and then get on with a life of service for God.