

Question Night - May, 2013

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I. Does God's grace cover someone who chooses to live together before marriage as long as they are sincere?

- A. We will increasingly see the impact of the culture in the church. We must not assume that even the most basic teachings are understood and practiced.
1. What is sexual immorality? **(1 Cor 6:9-10, 13, 18-20)**
 2. The general term is fornication. **πόρνος** - universally, *a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse.* - **Thayer**
 3. What is lawful? **(Heb 13:4)**
- B. Does sincerity cover a practice of sin?
1. Is it really that hard to know the answer to this question? The Bible tells us "be not deceived!" Some do not *want to know*.
 2. Does God's grace cover a practice of sin? **(1 Jn 5:16-17; 3:9)**
 3. Recently a brother extended fellowship to those who "sincerely" teach that the practice of homosexuality is not a sin! **(Eph 5:5-6)**
- C. What about those who live together without acting upon the sexual desires?
1. Can this person be serious about the appearance and temptation of this? **(2 Cor 8:21; Rom 14:19)**
 2. Is one "sincere" when they are quick to accuse and separate from brethren?
 3. This world does not blink an eye at this. See the article on living together before marriage.
 4. There are consequences. It can be called "training for divorce."

II. Is denominationalism approved by God in John 15:1-6 and in John 10:16?

- A. It is important to properly understand a verse in its context.
1. The branches are individuals and the vine is Christ.
 2. We are individually saved and individually held accountable to Christ. **(Jn 1:12-13; 3:16; 12:48)**
- B. The other "flock" that Jesus spoke of in **John 10:16** are the Gentiles. The "flock" were individuals and not an organized body.
1. Did God approve of two separate churches, one Jewish and one Gentile? **(Eph 2:11, 15-16, 18; 4:4-5)**
 2. Does God approve of many bodies, doctrines and names? **(1 Cor 1:10-13)**

III. Does God give gifts of the Holy Spirit to men today who can lay hands on others and heal them?

- A. A brief survey of the book of Acts shows how gifts were given.
1. At first only the apostles were working signs and wonders. **(Acts 2:4, 43; 4:33; 5:12)**
 2. Later the apostles then laid their hands on selected men. **(Acts 6:3-6)**
 3. Stephen and then Phillip now could perform signs. **(Acts 6:8; 8:5-7, 12-13)**
 4. Phillip had to send for the apostles for others to receive additional gifts. Only apostles could give spiritual gifts. **(Acts 8:14-18)**
- B. The context of a passage must tell us what gift of the Holy Spirit is being spoken of.
1. Every Christian receives the Holy Spirit as a gift when they are saved. **(Acts 2:38-39; Rom 8:9)**
 2. Timothy had Paul's hands laid upon him. **(2 Tim 1:6)**
 3. Paul could not send another to Rome to impart a spiritual gift. He has to go. **(Rom 1:11)**

4. This is one of the unique powers of an apostle. (**2 Cor 12:12**)
5. There are no living Apostles today.

IV. Should we be careful in our use of images such as the cross and depictions of Jesus? What care should we take in the use of our PowerPoint slides?

- A. We need to be careful that we do all things to edify. (**Rom 14:19; 1 Cor 10:23**)
 1. There are many things that are not unlawful but may not be profitable to build up my brother in Christ.
 2. There are many considerations we need to take when working with others such as personal background of an individual and the beliefs and practices of the culture in which we work. Consider the wisdom of Paul. (**1 Cor 9:19-22**)
- B. When does the use of an image become a sin?
 1. Under the Old Testament it was typically involved with idolatry. (**Deut 4:23-25**)
 2. Some within Catholicism place power in an image. The image of the cross is the most common one used.
 3. For the conscience of my brother those images were removed.
- C. What can we put on a PowerPoint slide? What is lawful? What is profitable?

V. Is abortion a sin? How does the use of the “day after” pill relate to this subject?

- A. Does life begin in the womb? (**Lk 1:36, 41-44**)
 1. At 6 months this was a child that could experience joy.
 2. The care of God began in the womb. (**Psa 22:9-10**)
- B. Should we take a child at 4 months, 1 months, 1 week?
 1. Our fear of God and respect for life should accept life beginning at conception.
 2. I hope to do more detailed teaching on this.

Living Together Before Marriage
by Ray Fowler

Here are some statistics on living together before marriage from Michael McManus, the president of Marriage Savers. Statistically speaking, living together is not a trial of marriage, but rather a training for divorce.

- The number of unmarried couples living together soared 12-fold from 430,000 in 1960 to 5.4 million in 2005.
- More than eight out of ten couples who live together will break up either before the wedding or afterwards in divorce.
- About 45 percent of those who begin cohabiting, do not marry. Another 5-10 percent continue living together and do not marry.
- Couples who do marry after living together are 50% more likely to divorce than those who did not.
- Only 12 percent of couples who have begun their relationship with cohabitation end up with a marriage lasting 10 years or more.
- A Penn State study reports that even a month’s cohabitation decreases the quality of the couple’s relationship.

Here are some more statistics relating to the children of cohabiting parents.

- Children of cohabiting parents are ten times more likely to be sexually abused by a stepparent than by a parent.
- Children of cohabiting parents are three times as likely to be expelled from school or to get pregnant as teenagers than children from an intact home with married parents.
- Children of cohabiting parents are five times more apt to live in poverty, and 22 times more likely to be incarcerated.