

# THE DANGER OF COHABITATION

*Bro. James Orhosere*

The word **danger** is defines in various ways:

- Power to warn or penalize
- Exposure to liable harm
- An instance or cause of liable harm.

In the case above, '*danger*' portends evil and harm and therefore should be avoided as much as possible.

## **Cohabitation**

Cohabitation in this context refers to unmarried couple living together as husband and wife. Most people in this relationship often see themselves as married couple or potentially married at most.

The habit of cohabitation is an increasing phenomenon in our society today. Although it has become socially acceptable, it contradicts the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

Jesus, our Lord laid this issue to rest in His encounter with the Samaritan woman in **John 4:16-18** – "<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."<sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." Both the woman and Jesus knew what constitute an acceptable marriage. Two people (male and female) may be living together as husband and wife, God may not regard them as couple because of what underpins that relationship.

## What Therefore Constitutes Marriage?

Marriage was ordained in the Garden of Eden by God (**Genesis 2:23-25**). “And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called <sup>[a]</sup>Woman, Because she was taken out of <sup>[b]</sup>Man.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be<sup>[c]</sup> joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.<sup>25</sup> And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

It provides man with suitable companionship (**Genesis 2:18**) and a secure environment for raising children (**Genesis 1:26-28, Psalm 127:3-5, Malachi 2:14,15**). The attack by satan on the home today is relentless and has caused much confusion. Many do not even know whether or not they are actually married. Let us therefore go back to the basics to see what constitutes marriage that meets the standard of God

1. **It must be regulated by the law of God – 1 Corinthians 7:39.** *A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.*

“The law” here is God’s law. An example of an unlawful marriage is that of King Herod to Herodias. Even though they were married and divorced according to the custom of the land – **Mark 6:17**, John the Baptist still told Herod that “it is not lawful for you to know your brother’s wife – **Mark 6:18**.” Notice also that although Herod was not a Christian, he was still accountable to God in their marriage.

2. **Marriage is undefiled and Honourable – Hebrews 13:4.**

*Marriage is honourable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.* To be valid, marriage must be honourable in all (before God and man). All societies require some form of legal marriage ceremony that is publicly witnessed and accepted. However, the marriage ceremony is mostly a cultural matter. God has not given us a model to follow. Custom and traditions vary from place to place and from time to time. Therefore, we must be sincere and honest in comparing our own with the precepts in the bible.

In case of conflicts, our customs and traditions must give way to the authority, the word of God – **Acts 4:19, 5:29**. For a marriage to be “honourable” – **Hebrews 13:4**, customary rites and requirements must be followed and fulfilled. This means that a man in any culture or

civilization have to do what the customs demand for him to be considered “*married*” as long as they are not in conflict with the law of God. In other words, a Christian cannot claim to be married or have an “*honourable marriage*” if he evades the customary requirements for marriage among his people. To do so would amount to irresponsibility. And no true Christian would want to be looked as irresponsible.

3. **Marriage is formed by Covenant** – it is not actually formed by the first sexual union. Marriage is actually a three covenant – ***Malachi 2:14***. The man, the woman and God must agree.

Cohabitation falls short of the conditions above, so cannot constitute marriage in any way imaginable and God will not have hands in what does not meet His requirement.

## **The Evils of Cohabitation**

### **1. It Breeds Fornication**

The bible is very clear about sexual immorality. From what we can read of, marriage between man and woman is the only form of relationship that God accepts as spouse and sex in this relationship is acceptable by God. All sexual relationship outside marriage are considered fornication – ***Hebrews 13:4***. It can also prevent one from inheriting the kingdom of God – ***1 Corinthians 6:9*** – *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.*

### **2. Cohabitation Encourages Lying**

People who are involved in cohabitation have that false sense of marriage as they see themselves as husband and wife. When an occasion for their introduction comes, they always refer to their spouse as husband or wife, which is a lie.

The bible has made it clear in the scripture that lying is a serious sin and is displeasing to God. The first sin in the world involved a lie told to Eve. In the early church, Ananias and Saphira lied regarding a donation in order to make themselves look more generous than they were. Peter’s rebuke is stern. *Ananias, why has satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?* God’s reaction was even sterner – the couple died as a result of their lying.

3. **Cohabitation Could Result in Breeding Illegitimate Children:** There are many culture where children out of wedlock are not regarded as children of their father. In some cultures, bride price is used to determine the fatherhood of the child. In the case of King David and Bathsheba – **2 Samuel 11:4,5, 14-18**. Abraham and Hagar – **Genesis 16:23** – the picture of illegitimacy is painted.
4. **Cohabitation Portray those involved as irresponsible people.** Although cohabitation is an increasing phenomenon in our society, it contradicts the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith and our cultural values. Within the faith, those involves are seen as not representing the faith well and outside the faith they are seen as irresponsible folks. It is in the light of these, Paul the apostle advised the Philippians, *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things”*. Of a truth, cohabitation as a relationship lacks those qualities mentioned above.

## Conclusion

Statistics prove that cohabitation is not a healthy way for relationship to progress from. Cohabitation can decrease your chances of getting married and couples who do marry after cohabiting are more likely to divorce.

Treating cohabitation as marriages *“insurance”* is a very unstable foundation; one built partially on fear and partially and selfishness. It is basically saying that, if you meet all my needs well, then I will marry you.

You can't practice marriage. Marriage is a permanent commitment which only God can sustain.