Cohabitation – living together without being married, is at an all-time high in our society. 4.1 million couples choose this kind of relationship, up over 950% since 1960.

Is cohabitation right or wrong? Is it good for you or bad for you? Let’s find out.

**Living Together or Married – Which is Best?**

Cohabitation is largely a “short-term” relationship. After only five short years, only 10 percent of cohabiting couples are still together.

**Cohabitation** does not prepare couples for stable marriages. While 60% of cohabiting couples eventually marry, almost twice as many marriages between cohabiting couples end in divorce within ten years (57%) as between couples that did not live together before marriage (30%).

**Cohabitation** leads to more domestic abuse. The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society also found that cohabiting couples fight more often and have higher levels of abuse and severe domestic violence than married couples.

Living together without being married is neither good nor right. It has serious emotional and physical consequences and God’s judgement. Do what is best for you and right! Be united in marriage and receive God’s infinite blessings on this union He created!
So, which is best – living together or being married? The statistics are stacked against living together! Let’s see why.

**Living Together or Married – Which is Right?**

*Living together without being married* is “sex” without commitment. It is “companionship” without commitment. *Living together* is “playing married” because you have not made the solemn commitment to each other that marriage calls for.

*Living together without being married* is a sin against God’s design for marriage. God says: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matthew 19:5,6). When a man and a woman desire an intimate relationship with each other, God wants them to be firmly and permanently joined together in a committed relationship. They become as one.

*Living together without being married* is a sin against the honor and intended purpose God has given the sexual relationship in marriage. God says: “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure. For God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral” (Hebrews 13:4). Living together ruins the close bonding that God intended sex to bring to a marriage.

*Living together without being married* is a sin by example against another person’s conscience. God says: “If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). Your example of “playing married” might cause someone else to commit the same sin.

*Living together without being married* is a sin that has many physical consequences. God says: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows” (Galatians 6:7). Some of these consequences are: misplaced trust, unplanned pregnancies, “forced” marriages, sexually transmitted diseases, and difficulty in committing to and adjusting in a marriage. These physical and emotional challenges put you at a greater risk for eventual divorce.

**Living Together or Married – What Should You Do?**

If you have engaged in the sin of fornication (sex before marriage) or the sin of living together without being married you need to know there is hope. God forgives all sins for Jesus’ sake. Once a woman who was caught in the act of adultery was brought to Jesus. Although she was guilty of this sin, Jesus saw that in her heart she acknowledged her guilt and desired to be forgiven. So He turned to the woman and forgave her: “Neither do I condemn you” (John 8:11). Jesus wanted this woman to know that her past sins were cleared. Her slate was wiped clean. Her heart was free to serve Him.

In fact, that is exactly what Jesus inspired this woman to do. Right after He said, “Neither do I condemn you,” He urged her to use the power in those words to change her sinful life. He told her: “Go now, and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11).

What God so desperately wants you to do is: “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Luke 3:8). Repentance is a change of heart and mind. It begins with a recognition of how we have sinned against God. This recognition is called guilt which, in turn, moves us to need and seek God’s forgiveness. That forgiveness,