

Practical lesson on dealing with people who are living together – how to deal with them about marriage.

I. MORAL FOUNDATIONS

A. Very common problem in trying to bring salvation to people is the issue of marriage

1. People who respond to Jesus in some way but they are fornicating or living together

a. Marriage rates going down/living together going up b. Some cultures have incredibly high rates of living together

2. Basic understanding: **Fornication is not compatible with salvation**

a. She is responding favorably: But Jesus deals with her about her living situation

1. **Ultimately you can't be a Christian and be a fornicator**

a. 1 Cor 6:9 no fornicator shall inherit the kingdom of God...

1. Does no good to have people in your church who wind up in hell!

2. **Ultimately God won't bless a church that allows fornication**

a. 1 Cor 5:6-7 a little leaven leavens the whole lump/purge out the leaven: Affects the whole church

II. PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

A. Some practical wisdom about dealing with people living together/fornicating

1. **Inquiry:** Jesus inquires about her marriage situation

a. You get an idea they might not be married – you gently ask: Is this your boyfriend/girlfriend or fiancé? (Husband/wife)

2. **Timing:** You don't start dealing with marriage until they indicate they are going to be a part of church

a. Not simply the first time they attend – you grill them

b. Generally when they come for a few weeks/multiple services (Not that you shouldn't talk about marriage if they ask...)

B. The first conversation

1. **You ask specifically about their marriage situation:** Are you 2 married? Legally married?

a. They may say yes/we live together/in the eyes of God/common-law, etc.

1. Show them **John 4:17-18** Jesus opinion - living together doesn't make you married!

b. They may say we're not ready/we're thinking about it, etc.

2. **Deal with people on the basis of sanctified self-interest**

a. This is why it's in your best interest to be legally married

1. Marriage is hard – you need God's blessing: You currently are cursing your relationship. Quote 1 Cor 6:9

2. If you get married – you can have the blessing & the help of God

3. **Be ready to help them get married**

a. We want to – we can't afford the license: *Tell them I'll pay for the license...*

b. What if one partner is not saved – but they have kids? My feeling is they should get married

4. **Options for marriage - quickly:**

a. Justice of the peace/courthouse b. Private wedding – in the office c. Wedding in church

1. Based on how you feel about them: if you don't feel great – JP/private is better

2. If they are switched on/want their family to hear about Jesus: Marry in church – quickly

5. **The common objection:** We are saving up/we want a party/my relatives can come in 5 years...

a. Suggest getting married privately ASAP to get God's blessing – then save up/make arrangements

b. Most of the time it won't get to that point; If so, you can do a public ceremony in church

6. **If they express that they don't want to get married/the person is abusive, etc.**

a. Discuss moving out so they can make a good decision & not destroy their salvation

7. **If they're not decided:**

a. Tell them to think about it and you will discuss again in a few weeks (2 weeks max)

C. The second conversation

1. **Ask if they have thought about it:** What do they want to do?

a. They may have more detailed objections or reasonings

1. Deal with them logically and biblically – show them scripture about how God feels

2. Give them a time limit: This must be resolved within 2 weeks

a. Get married b. Move out c. Or you won't be able to continue to come to church

D. Dealing with the unrepentant

1. If they don't/won't get married: Put them out – tell them they can't come to church anymore

a. You're wasting your time if you're building on a foundation of fornicators

E. Tricky situations: One or both are still married to others...talk to your Pastor!

1. They must pursue getting a divorce...you have to see progress to continue to come