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The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Cohabitation: The Evidence Speaks

Earlier this year I received a report on cohabitation written by David H. Olson and Amy Olson-Sigg. It confirmed many of my personal beliefs and fears about "living together." I am providing the following information as summary of that report and to get your attention. —Lance Cordle

- ◆ Over 5.1 million heterosexual couples cohabit in the U.S.
- ◆ According to demographer Larry Bumpass, 70% of young people who marry for the first time have cohabited with someone before marriage. (58% of those who recently married had lived with their partner before marriage, 14%, with someone else.)
- ◆ According to a study by Bahmann, Johnson, & O'Malley, 66% of high school boys, 61% of high school girls agreed or mostly agreed with the statement, "It is usually a good idea for a couple to live together before the getting married in order to find out whether they get along."
- ◆ Reasons given for cohabita-

tion:

- "We can save money by sharing living expenses."
- "We are able to spend more time together."
- "We have more opportunities to share sexual and emotional intimacy without getting married."
- "If the relationship does not work out, there is no messy divorce."
- "Living together enables us to better learn about each other's habits and see how we operate together day-to-day."
- "We are planning to marry soon."

◆ Conclusion by noted researchers David H. Olson and Amy Olson-Sigg: *"The social science evidence suggests that living together is not a good way to prepare for marriage or to avoid divorce. In fact, virtually all the major studies have shown a higher divorce rate among couples that cohabited before marriage than those who did not. No positive contribution of cohabitation to a successful marriage has been found to date."*

To read the whole report, go to: <http://www.prepare-enrich.com/research.cfm?id=210>

Shacked Up Couples

When I turned on my computer this morning I was greeted with an item which said, "Turns out getting married is becoming downright old-fashioned. Shacked up couples now outnumber those who've tied the knot."

Woes to those unmarried couples who have financial quarrels over rent, utilities, credit cards, etc., and show up before "Judge Judy." In no uncertain terms she will tell them that if they don't have a marriage license our courts have made no provision to settle such disputes, and they are on their own.

Does it seem to you that we are getting to the point in our society where the difference between right and wrong is either not discerned or else willfully ignored?

Or consider the overt promotion of homosexuality. Has some law been passed that requires every TV show to have at least a token homosexual? We must have "tolerance," our society says.

Those who offer objections are immediately branded with a sneer as "Fundamentalists." Yet

fundamentals are absolutely imperative today. Athletes who ignore fundamentals make for losing teams. In fact, mastering the fundamentals is absolutely necessary in any discipline.

As a nation we enjoy the benefits of Christianity while tending to reject the source of those benefits. In the words of Richard Halverson, "like parasites we are feeding on lingering blessings produced by the spiritual leadership and dedication of earlier generations; the blessings are fading, ethical and moral levels decline toward the increasingly degenerate society." We want to sow to the wind without realizing that we will reap the whirlwind.

An ancient prophet warned, "*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*" (Isaiah 5:20). Will we be wise enough to heed his warning? —**John Gipson**

A Different Kind of Family Debt

What parents do not owe their children:

◆ **The latest fashion** (Acts 10:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; James 2:1-10). We need to teach our children to earn admiration and respect through character and not clothing.

◆ **The hottest toys and games** (Ecclesiastes 1:4, 8). Look through your house at all the "gotta have it" toys that

haven't been touched in months. I wrapped all these one year and gave them as anonymous gifts to needy families. Not once did anyone ask "what happened to my . . .?" or "where is my . . .?"

◆ **A car and money to burn** (1 Timothy 6:10-11). There's nothing inherently wrong with buying your children a car, but most 16 year-olds think they are OWED a car at 16. Take a group to the mall or on a youth trip and see who has the most spending money—it's not the adults!

◆ **A life free from pain or embarrassment.** The Bible says that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). Peter said, "*If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but rather glorify God*" (1 Peter 4:16).

What parents do owe their children:

◆ **A godly example** (Psalm 85:13; cf. 1 Peter 2:21-22). Jesus gave His disciples an example (John 13:15), as Paul did his (1 Corinthians 11:1).

◆ **A good name** (Proverbs 21:9; cf. 25:24).

◆ **A peaceful home** (Proverbs 21:9; cf. 25:24).

◆ **Objectivity** (Proverbs 19:18). Everyone (including teachers, the police, etc.) is not "out to get" your child.

◆ **Structure and discipline** (1 Samuel 3:13). Children need to understand the consequences of violating the boundaries.

What children owe their parents:

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◆ **Love** (1 John 4:19).

◆ **Respect** (Ephesians 6:1-3)—For the name they wear, especially when their parents aren't around.

◆ **Obedience** The word *obey* in Ephesians 6:1 is from the Greek compound *hupakouo* (*hupo*=under + *akouo* =hear or give the ear to). Literally it means "to listen with the intent to obey" (cf. 1 Samuel 3:9-10).

◆ **Submission** (1 Peter 5:5).

◆ **Proper care when they become aged** (Proverbs 23:22; 1 Timothy 5:4). The word *despise* in the phrase "*despise not thy mother when she is old*" means to hold in contempt or as insignificant (it is an antonym of reverence). Your parents helped you with your first steps; help them with their last. Your parents made sure your home was clean and your food was hot—don't let them live in squalor. If you can't take care of your parents, find someone who can. 1 Timothy 5:8 says that a failure to properly care for your parents disrespects them, disgraces the church, denies the faith, and damns your soul.

Be sure to pay all your family debts!

—**Todd Clippard**

"The principal objective of American government at every level should be to see that children are born into intact families and that they remain so."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan