

A-Rod's Suspension, American Morality and Sex Before Marriage

As Major League Baseball's steroid scandal has been in the news, have you noticed how many people are saying it's critical we abide by the rules of the game? Former MLB Commissioner Fay Vincent said this: "It's important that he [Bud Selig, the current commissioner] articulates and explains that baseball is doing this to be protective of the sport. ... If you don't have rules, you don't have a game."

Does this same logic apply to morality and sexuality? How about people moving in together and simply "playing house" as newlyweds without tying the knot in holy matrimony?

In case you're not aware, here's the current stats and trends on marriage:

- Two-thirds of first marriages are now preceded by cohabitation.
- Three-fourths of women have lived with a partner by age 30.
- One-fourth of married young adults have bought their first home with their partner before marriage.
- 23 percent of births today are to women who cohabit.
- Among women under 45, twice as many move in with someone as get married first.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and *Glamour* magazine provided the above information, and in *Glamour's* recent survey, nearly 50 percent of women called marriage "outdated." The new term is *nearlyweds*—think Kourtney Kardashian or Brangelina.

Helping prepare young ladies for this avant-garde, progressive

approach to sexuality, schools and governments are increasingly launching free sex apps for teens that will educate them about birth control, sexuality, homosexuality, abortion and beyond. The New York City health department launched its free sex app for teens covering the following: clinics offering free birth control, including plan B; Planned Parenthood clinics; instruction alerts, such as the fact that in New York, you don't need parental consent; and links to websites. One link takes users to a "Dating and Friends" section that spotlights *Samantha's Story*, a seven-minute video detailing Samantha's sexual relationship with her boyfriend plus her desires toward another girl. "She's pretty. ... She's hot. ... I think about her that way," Samantha says. "I like sex with Richie but ... Alicia is beautiful. ... I want to kiss her or go even further." And when Samantha goes to an LGBT clinic, she's told, "Feelings like that are totally normal."

And we wonder why young people are confused about morality today! Why not just go the next step when you "love" somebody and move in together? It's the logical next step, right?

Not so fast! Here are three things that are critical to consider:

1. Why Wait Until Marriage? Our Creator Commands It.

As stated earlier, rules are essential. Laws are essential in every area of life in order to maintain order and harmony. In the area of sex, God has put limitations on the display of physical affection prior to marriage because He wants us to experience a maximum marriage with a maximum sex life.

What are God's directions regarding sexuality? I'll say it with charity and clarity: God explicitly condemns all forms of premarital sex. Engaging in sexual foreplay, fondling, stroking, touching, caressing the more intimate parts of another's body—either through the clothing or by direct contact—is forbidden outside the bonds of marriage. It is sin.

This will never change. "Loving by Braille" is not okay in God's kingdom.

God's plan is chastity (purity) before marriage and fidelity (loyalty) after marriage. It is keeping sex in the right place for the right person at the right time.

Here is just one of the multitude of passages in the Bible regarding sex: "You will remember the instructions we gave you then in the name of the Lord Jesus. God's plan is to make you holy and that entails first of all a clean cut sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect" (1 Thess. 4:2-3, JB).

2. You Reap What You Sow in the Present.

The God who created this universe ordained that it be governed by a vast number of physical laws. Fighting these laws is futile, for whether one believes in them or not, they continue to operate. Think of the law of gravity!

The spiritual law that is probably the most important one in dealing with morality and sexuality is the law of sowing and reaping. Scripture says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7, NKJV).

In the physical realm, it works like this: Sow corn, and you reap corn—not onions. Sow carrots, and you reap carrots—not bananas. Simple enough, isn't it?

In the spiritual realm, it works like this: Sow obedience to the laws of God, and you reap the benefits. Sow disobedience to the laws of God, and you'll reap the consequences.

While sowing obedience to the Word of God in the realm of sexuality brings untold blessings both now and for the rest of one's life, sowing disobedience brings consequences from which one cannot escape. They may not all occur, but some will

occur. They may not happen immediately, but they will happen eventually.

Here's the deal: The generation of so-called "liberation" and "progressive morality" has brought an astronomical increase in sexual addiction and dysfunction, sexually transmitted diseases, adultery, divorce, medication, illegitimate childbirths, teenage pregnancy, homosexuality, pornography and suicide, not to mention shattered families and over 55 million babies aborted.

The CDC stated recently that there is a severe epidemic of STDs sweeping America. Twenty million yearly are being added, and this now costs U.S. taxpayers \$16 billion annually! More than half affects 15- to 24-year-olds. Chlamydia, HPV, herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis B, HIV and AIDS are epidemic. There are currently 110,197,000 venereal diseases in America. That is a catastrophe!

Premarital sex, living together and disregarding God's standards for love, sex and marriage bring consequences in the present. Consider the following consequences:

- Sexually-transmitted diseases
- Ever-present guilt and condemnation for a hypocritical lifestyle
- Loss of reputation and virginity
- Illegitimate children
- Abortion, with its resultant shame and regret
- Depression
- Sexual addictions
- Detrimental effects on children

Not only are cohabitating couples with a child more than twice as likely to break up as married parents, but children living with their mother and a live-in boyfriend are over 30 times more likely to be abused than those living with their biological married parents. It should be common sense that children benefit from the structure and identity that come

with a lasting marriage between parents.

Editor Rich Lowry in the *National Review* labeled the current trend a “cohabitation revolution” and stated, “Children in cohabitating households tend to lag children in intact married families on key social indicators and are not much better off than children in single-parent families.”

Author Glenn Stanton, in his excellent book *The Ring Makes All the Difference: The Hidden Consequences of Cohabitation and the Strong Benefits of Marriage*, says the idea of “test driving” relationships before committing may seem correct but that research strongly dispels this: “Lack of commitment is seen in the high degree of breakups and people being less committed to future relationships. There’s always a pattern of holding back.”

3. You Reap What You Sow in the Future.

At present, my wife of 37 years and I are reaping the benefits we sowed prior to our marriage. Her parents have been married 67 years and have over 60 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and, to God’s glory, there are absolutely no divorces!

The above is not stated to boast or make any reader feel guilty or condemned. But isn’t it time we refurbish our marriage culture in the church and our culture? If you’ve already blown it, then it’s time to repent and get on the right track so you can experience the “abundant life” God promises when we play by the rules.

What are just some of the consequences reaped in the future for sowing disobedience today?

- **Marrying the wrong person.** If you want to know God’s choice, you must be able to hear God’s voice!
- **Sexual dysfunction in marriage.** Here’s the deception: “Good sexual adjustment makes for a good marriage. Therefore, live together before marriage, and try everything out!” Actually this is a boldfaced lie that

misleads multitudes. It is not “good sexual adjustment” that makes for a good marriage but rather a good marriage that makes for good sexual adjustment.

- **Elimination of perfect trust in marriage.** If someone jumps the fence prior to marriage by disregarding God’s laws, who’s to say you or your partner won’t do the same thing after you’re married? What you do today lays a foundation of trust or distrust that continues after the wedding. No one wants to live their life every day wondering, “If he cheated before, will he do it again?”
- **Problems related to self-control.** Do you know the No. 1 reason marriages break up? Sexual problems? Financial problems? No. The primary reason is simply a lack of self-control. If a person can’t control himself, sexual problems arise. If a person can’t control himself, financial problems arise. Same thing with a person’s temper. With overeating. With alcohol. On and on it goes. Culture tells you, “Indulge yourself!” God says, “Control yourself!”

“A man without self control is like a city broken into and left without walls” (Prov. 25:28, ESV).

Often in marriage, one must forego sexual activity because of sickness, pregnancy, travel or other situations. A self-controlled individual has the character to be at peace and not be selfish, demanding or resentful when this happens.

Our culture endorses promiscuity, cohabitation and homosexuality. We are reaping what we sow as we see the meltdown of our society. Isn’t it time we face the realities of disregarding God’s moral laws and turn to embrace our loving Creator’s ways? Will you embrace biblical standards and reject the phony counterfeits of this world system? Let’s see a restoration and rebuilding of covenant marriage in our day. It all starts with you and me.

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