

## What is the example for us?

**Gen 2:24** *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

There are many things that believing people have done in the Bible that are not normative, in other words, that their example is not what is right, much less obligatory on us that we should follow these examples just because it is in the Bible. For example, David saw a woman bathing one evening from his roof, and she was nude, and very pretty. David wanted her, and sent for her, and left her pregnant, and later arranged for the death of her husband so he could take her as his wife. All of this is not exemplary for us, but shows the failings and spiritual weaknesses of David. It is an error to make this a biblical example as if it were approved of God, normative, or that we have God's permission to do the same. We should notice that the example of God is to begin humanity with two people, male and female, a couple and a family, blessing them with children. Part of our understanding should be a strong rule that any other person that enters into this relation *between a husband and a wife is sin, and call it adultery.*

**1Cor 6:16** *What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

There is a union between these two people that has a permitted sexual aspect to it. But the relationship is as much spiritual as it is emotional and physical. There is a prohibition of going into whores, or to enter and leave sexual relationship «like sailors» (on a whim).

## Adultery is sin

**Exo 20:14** *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

When a married person has a love or sexual relationship with some other person (a single person or some other married person other than their legal spouse), then it is adultery, and it is so evil that God

commanded the death penalty in the O.T. (**Deu 22:22-24**).

God seriously condemned the destruction of homes by outsiders (or even initiated by one within the home), saying «*what therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*»

**Mat 19:5.** So marriage is holy in the eyes of God.

**Heb 13:4** Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

The sex act is not sin, rather it is holy, but always when it is done within the bonds of marriage. When people have sex with others outside of the proper bonds of marriage, it is a sin God will judge.

## Common Law Marriage

There is an evil in our day that is very popular, which is this concept of «common law marriage». Some refer to this as «free union», which is not a free union, but free to breakup without complications supposedly. When two people live together without the marriage bond, they have no marriage vows to guide and restrain them in that relationship, and they don't put seriousness nor real importance into that relationship. Simply put, they don't want a serious obligation, and this is the problem with it. The duty and responsibility of marriage exist none-the-less though. They get upset when one doesn't comply with the unspoken but obligatory responsibilities. Even civil authorities recognize that living together out of wedlock causes the same responsibilities as being married. When the two have a child, they are both its parents, and the relationship cannot easily dissolve and the child goes back where he came from. The agreements between two people often will go outside of those two along legal lines.

The idea that two people can just get together for a while, and then when they so want, they can just break up like nothing ever existed between them is just a dream. Living together as man and wife causes emotional and spiritual bonding between

them, and having sex with another person likewise makes bonds (**1Cor 6:16**) that cannot be broken without damaging consequences. While it is heartbreaking to have to separate the mutual possessions they have accumulated living together, it is simply not possible to divide a child in two. The child is the one who is hurt most here. Parents who break up simply force their children to hate one parent and love the other, and the child wants to love both. To erase love in another person is just unthinkable, and God will judge the lack of commitment and responsibility of those who do this. In Malachi 2:15 «*And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.» The point of God here is that sexual union is for the formation of godly families, for the transmission of moral principles from one generation to another, and sex without the moral commitment of marriage is exactly the opposite of what God wants.*

## Marriage is until death do us part

**Rom 7:1-3** *Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.*

According to Paul here, an adulteress person is one that has joined to some other person while they have a living spouse from a previous marriage. Marriage is a commitment for life, and when somebody despises marriage and enters into a sexual arrangement or «live together» arrangement, it greatly displeases God. There is a responsibility to suffer and endure the problems and difficulties that come in a relationship between two people. Because this is difficult, is not to say it is right to separate from any cause.

**Mat 19:5** *And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

When God forms a family, a married couple in the bonds of marriage, God does not want this union to dissolve until God dissolves with the death of one of the couple. Nobody else, not even one or both of the couple, has the right or authority to end the union, especial not because of a loss of interest by one of the two, problems, etc. or because one of the two wants to end it. Once a man and wife are joined through sex, God seals that relationship making it wrong for even the couple themselves to dissolve the union.

### Divorce in the Bible

**Matt 19:7** They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? **8** He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. **9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except\* *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

\* "except" also can mean «even for».

God understands that under certain conditions, couples break up. Two obedient Christians should never divorce. It simply is not God's will. In 1Corinthians 7, God outlines this, that when a Christian and an unsaved person are married, and the unsaved person leaves the marriage, the saved person is not in sin, but even so, God wants us to stay married and not divorce.

### The Formality of a Wedding

**Ecl 5:4** *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for [he hath] no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5 Better [is it] that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

The point of having a formal wedding is to publicly and formally recognize the relationship between the two people, and this includes before both sides of the family, friends, co-workers, This is a formal «vow» or serious promise and relationship between the two

people. By means of a formal wedding, the people involved are making their relationship and commitment serious before all and between the two. What a common law marriage without any public or religious recognition is, is to make fun of God, the divine institution of marriage, and seriousness that God has placed on «living together as man and wife.»

### The problem of common law marriage

The principle problem of common law marriages is their lack of formality which leaves God and any serious commitment to the relation outside of the relationship altogether. This may be the agreement in the beginning, but with time, it will be the cause of great damage, hurt, and eventually will be the end of the relationship.

A marriage relationship functions because of several important factors: (1) Both have common interests. (2) Both are agreed in principals, morals, and the elements of life that join them, especially their religious beliefs. (3) Both have a commitment and desire to be together, and this is declared love, not just emotion, but they both strongly will to love each other no matter what happens. The problem then is that this relationship never stays still, but always grows better or worse. In the changes of life that come to all, these factors that are the foundation of their marriage, and the commitment is what really unites them when the joys of sex grow cold and fade away.

### How do we fix Common Law Marriage?

First of all, we need to understand that when two people begin to live together and have sex, they form a spiritual obligation and responsibility before God. With kids, things get more complicated. Two people having sex are already one flesh in God's sight. In general, the solution is to «formalize» the relationship with a civil wedding and a religious wedding. With this they should recognize their obligations and responsibilities, and faithfully fulfill them, dedicating themselves to their marriage relationship.

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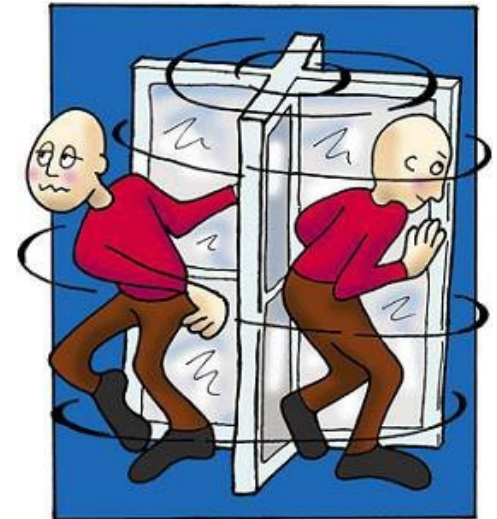
# Common Law Marriages

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**Mat 24:38** *For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

Many in our day promote informal unions, which is a man and woman living together and having sex without the formal commitments of marriage, that is with the understanding that the relationship is not permanent. This is supposedly without the «strings» of commitment, but with the freedom of sex. Is this really a paradise situation or a great problem? What does God say about this situation?