

# JAMES CRUISE MINISTRIES

*“God chooses what we go through. We choose how we go through it.”*

## COHABITATION

Cohabitation is not the gateway to a happy and long lasting marriage that many believe it to be.

As children we sang a nursery rhyme:

Bob and Bettie sitting in a tree  
K-I-S-S-I-N-G  
First comes love,  
Then comes marriage,  
Then comes baby in a baby carriage.

Today this nursery rhyme should be sung:

First comes sex,  
Then comes living together,  
Then comes pregnancy,  
Then comes abortion or a baby,  
Then half split  
While some marry.  
Of those who do,  
Two-thirds divorce.

### **The Unpleasant Truth About Cohabitation**

Living together unmarried is a trap.  
If it does lead to marriage, it does not lead to happy committed marriages.

- Half of cohabitating relationships end within 15 months - without a wedding.
- The rate of divorce for those that choose to cohabitate before marriage is approximately 80%.
- America has moved from a culture of marriage to a culture of cohabitation.
- Living together has become the dominant way American couples start their life together.
- In just 2 generations the number of cohabitating couples has sky-rocketed, from 439,000 to 5.4 million (not including gay couples). This number only represents couples cohabitating in a given month. Over the course of a year, the numbers may be 8 to 10 million.
- By contrast, only 2.23 million marriages were recorded in 2005. Thus, more than twice as many couples are living together outside of wedlock at any moment as marry in a whole year.

Cohabitation has become a substitute for marriage. A bad substitute!

“If you dream of marrying someday, don’t move in together,” or “Please move out of that cohabitating situation.”



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## Risks in Cohabitation

- Nearly 50% of all cohabitating couples break up before a marriage ever takes place.
- The rate of divorce for those that choose to cohabit before marriage is 80%.
- There are about 5.4 million couples now cohabitating at any given time in the U.S. In a year's time, between 7 and 9 million couples have cohabited.
- Cohabiting couples suffer much higher rates of depression than the married.
- Women are far more likely to be abused by a live-in boyfriend than a husband.
- When cohabiting couples marry, they suffer higher rates of infidelity than those who did not live together before taking their vows.
- The number of never-married Americans soared from 21 million in 1970 to 52 million in 2005.
- The longer one cohabitates, the greater the danger of a future divorce.
- Even a month's cohabitation damages a couple's relationship.
- "Premarital divorce or breakup" of a cohabitating couple is every bit as painful as a real divorce.
- Typically, women are far more committed than men.
- The proportion of cohabitating unions that end in marriage within 3 years is 33%.
- The law protects the rights of divorced spouses; it does not protect separating cohabiters unless the couple has signed a legal agreement (Joint tenants with Rights of Survivorship), which only 10% of couples have done.
- "Men were less dedicated in their marriages if they had lived with their partners before marriage," according to Dr. Scott Stanley in his 2005 book, *The Power of Commitment*.
- Cohabitation leads to getting wed for all the wrong reasons.
- The number of unmarried senior couples has increased 60% in the last decade. Still relatively small at 280,000 couples over age 65 in 2006, according to Census. Most elders do marry, not cohabit.

## Risks to Children of Cohabitation

- Cohabitation harms children. A child is far more likely to be abused or even killed by a mother's live-in boyfriend than he or she is by his or her own father.
- The children born to unmarried couples are at much greater risk of being expelled from school & having a baby out of wedlock, and are 20 times more likely to end up in prison.
- Of cohabitating couples, 41% have children living with them.
- Many cohabitating couples have children (planned or not) when they live together. That makes it even more gut-wrenching to ending the relationship.

## Cohabiting Women vs Married Women

- Cohabiting women are 3 times as likely to suffer depression, according to the National Institute for mental health
- Cohabiting women suffer neurotic disorders (25%) more than married women (15%).
- Cohabiting women are "more irritable, anxious, worried and unhappy" than married women.
- One study revealed that 40% of cohabitating women were forced into sex.
- Women are far more likely to be abused by a live-in boyfriend than a husband.
- "Premarital divorce or breakup" of a cohabitating couple is every bit as painful as a real divorce.
- The law protects the rights of divorced spouses; it does not protect separating cohabiters unless the couple has signed a legal agreement (Joint tenants with Rights of Survivorship), which only 10% of cohabiting couples have done.
- Cohabitation leads to getting wed for all the wrong reasons

## Ministries for Cohabitation

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▪ Single Moms Class (Ages 18-31) at First Baptist Church Jackson—Contact Lori Phillips ▪  
Marriage Savers [www.marriagesavers.org](http://www.marriagesavers.org)

## Books for Cohabitation

Living Together—Myths, Risks & Answers by Mike & Harriet McManus  
Before You Live Together by David Gudgel  
Dating and the Single Parent by Ron L. Deal