

JACK'S CORNER

QUESTION: I was disappointed to learn that my college age daughter has plans to share an apartment with a girlfriend and two young men. She says they are just friends. Her father and I couldn't seem to come up with any convincing reasons to dissuade her. Can you help?

ANSWER: I'm hoping you are looking for some convincing **biblical** reasons. If we go by what is "practical" or "popular", if we go by the "What's wrong with it?" philosophy of looking at morality, then we will find ourselves caught in the quagmire of relativism, pragmatism and opinion. As Christians, **we determine our morality by what God reveals to us in Holy Scripture.** What is right is what God says. Christian morality is prescriptive: based on what "should be" not what is popular, pragmatic, or even culturally commonplace. It is deontological (duty-centered), not teleological (end-result-centered).

The world would like us to believe there are many moral "gray areas". I believe there are few. The world would like us to believe that morality is determined by the individual. I believe morality is determined by God. It's time for a well-rehearsed, heart-to-heart talk with your daughter. **If her relationship with Christ is important, the following points will matter to her.**

1. Don't be naïve; friends don't always stay friends (Consider the TV show by that name.). In the intimacy of a shared residence, opportunities and changes happen that are unforeseen.

2. **Don't give Satan a foothold.** Don't think you are "spiritual enough" to avoid the thoughts and temptations that will be consistently put before you. "Let anyone who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." It is hard enough for a young person to live a sexually pure life without purposely placing herself in situations where temptation abounds. Avoidance is good policy when it comes to opportunities to sin.

3. **This choice is not just about you.** Consider the effect on believers and unbelievers who look in from the outside. A Christian should make certain there is no reason for rumor or misinterpretation to occur. Our example should be morally pure. People will always put their own "spin" onto the situation. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven" Mt. 5:16 "But among you (believers) there must not be EVEN A HINT of sexual immorality, or ANY KIND of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. EP. 5:3 "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." 1 PE 2:12 **God's reputation is entrusted to his people.**

4. Consider the effect on any younger people who look to you for leadership and example. Whether or not you can "handle it", they might not. Your example

might give them permission to enter a situation where they will fall into temptation. “Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but **woe to that person through whom they come.**” LK. 17:1 Christians should not be a stumbling block to other believers. “Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God. 1COR 10:32 “Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way. RM 14:13 “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.” 1COR 8:9

5. Try to find any evidence in Scripture to support the idea that this choice is wise, prudent, in the best interests of young Christians, in your best interest, is a good example, or will foster a good reputation. “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity.” 1 TIM 4:12

6. The Corinthian congregation had a “What’s wrong with it?” attitude, a “We can do whatever we want!” attitude. “Everything is permissible for us” they would say. St. Paul would respond: “but not everything is beneficial.” (1 COR 6) Instead of asking “What is wrong with it?”, ask: “What is right about it?” Will this arrangement be good for God’s reputation? Will it make it easier for you to have pure thoughts? Will it make it easier for the young men who live with you to have pure thoughts? Will it help you shine as “light”, or will you blend in better with the “darkness”?

So many young people today have no clue about morals and ethics. They look to the media or what’s popular. No wonder! Many adults are confused, compromised, and unsure of how to determine right and wrong. This is an opportunity for your daughter to experience your convictions based on the revealed Word of God; do not fail her!

If she still chooses badly after hearing what God has to say, she will have clearly exposed her spiritual condition. You will know just how much she needs your prayers, encouragement, and example.

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