

Honor
Singleness and Marriage God's Way
Troy Knight

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 7:7–9 (NLT)

7 But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another.

8 So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. 9 But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust.

1 Corinthians 7:32–35 (NLT)

32 I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him. 33 But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. 34 His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

Matthew 19:4–5 (NLT)

4 "Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.' 5 And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.'

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NLT)

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- If you're single, what do you like most about being single? What do you like least about it? If you're married, what do you like most about being married? What do you like least about it?

Start **sharing**. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- Why do most people consider being single a curse? How did Paul feel about it?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 7:7-9.** For what reason should a single person get married?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.** What are the advantages of being single?
- **Read Matthew 19:4-5.** What is God's definition of marriage? Can you think of any other scriptures that teach this idea?
- **Read Proverbs 3:5-6.** Why do so many people depend on their own understanding when it comes to dating and marriage? Have you ever rejected God's way? What was the result?
- Troy said less than 4% of arranged marriages end in divorce. Why is that? How does that debunk the "I married the wrong person" myth?
- How do you fight for your marriage? What are you doing on a daily or weekly basis to make your marriage better? What do you plan on doing that you're not doing now?
- What advice would you give a newlywed at Generations Church to affair-proof their marriage?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Identify where you're not being obedient to God's design for your life in the area of relationships, whether you're married or single, and take steps toward obedience.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Give thanks to God that He blesses us in singleness and marriage. Ask for His guidance and strength as we pursue glorifying Him, wherever He has us. Confess and repent where we fall short, asking for forgiveness.

Question: "What does the Bible say about a Christian staying single?"

Answer: The question of a Christian staying single and what the Bible says about believers never marrying is often misunderstood. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 7:7-8: "I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am." Notice that he says some have the gift of singleness and some the gift of marriage. Although it seems that nearly everyone marries, it is not necessarily God's will for everyone. Paul, for example, did not have to worry about the extra problems and stresses that come with marriage and/or family. He devoted his entire life to spreading the Word of God. He would not have been such a useful messenger if he had been married.

On the other hand, some people do better as a team, serving God as a couple and a family. Both kinds of people are equally important. It is not a sin to remain single, even for your entire life. The most important thing in life is not finding a mate and having children, but serving God. We should educate ourselves on the Word of God by reading our Bibles and praying. If we ask God to reveal Himself to us, He will respond (Matthew 7:7), and if we ask Him to use us to fulfill His good works, He will do that as well. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

Jesus addressed the issue of singleness in Matthew 19:11–12: "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." According to Jesus, some people have been given the gift of singleness in order to better serve the Lord in some capacity. Those "who can accept this" choose to forego marriage and remain celibate. This corresponds with Paul's reference to those who serve the Lord in their unmarried state in 1 Corinthians 7.

Singleness should not be viewed as a curse or an indication that there is "something wrong" with the single man or woman. While most people marry, and while the Bible seems to indicate that it is God's will for most people to marry, a single Christian is in no sense a "second class" Christian. As 1 Corinthians 7 indicates, singleness is, if anything, a higher calling. As with everything else in life, we should ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) concerning marriage. Following God's plan, whether that be marriage or singleness, will result in the productivity and joy that God desires for us.

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