

Single - Should You Pursue Marriage?

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Adapted by Greenville Oaks Church of Christ*

As an unmarried believer, you have distinct opportunities to grow in your faith and to make a substantial contribution to the kingdom. Unfortunately, churches sometimes unintentionally idolize marriage and family, leaving single adults feeling inadequate and left out, even though the apostle Paul clearly talks about the spiritual benefits of singlehood in 1 Corinthians 7.

At some point, you'll probably wonder if you should get married or stay single. These two questions might be helpful as you move forward:

QUESTION ONE: What do you enjoy about being single?

Culture often teaches that marriage will hold us back or keep us from having fun. Even Christians with the best intentions can easily drift into a single lifestyle marked by recreational relationships, hyper-individualism, consumption and leisure—a “me-first” attitude that doesn't honor God.

Those who find themselves in this cycle might want to reflect on how to become intentional rather than passive with regard to the freedoms of single life.

QUESTION TWO: To what are you called?

In the scriptures, God calls adults either to a path of biblical marriage or a life of celibate service (Genesis 2, 1 Corinthians 7). Too often our churches imply that you must be married to fulfill God's calling on your life, but this is not the case.

The best way to honor God in your singleness is to be intentionally set apart for His purposes, recognizing that His call to both marriage and singleness is much different from the surrounding culture because it includes a commitment to absolute purity, active engagement in Christian community, and faithful stewardship of your talents and resources.

Singles who cultivate such qualities find it easier to discern if God is calling them to biblical marriage or celibate service.

Celibate Service

Dr. Al Mohler of Southern Seminary explains that celibacy means sacrificing the companionship of marriage, the pleasures of sex and the blessing of children for your entire life without being bitter about it. In that context, serving God in celibacy makes full engagement in the body of Christ — giving and receiving fellowship — vitally important.

It is not a “consolation prize” for those who haven't yet found a spouse, but a purposeful life devoted to serving others as worship and “being Jesus” to others.

Marriage and Family

Singles who don't feel called to celibacy should pursue a biblical marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33) with hopeful preparation.

You can also take initiative and pray purposefully for a good marriage despite living in a culture that dishonors marriage.



This means moving beyond passivity and taking the initiative to leave home and pursue a godly future (Genesis 2:24) and preparing for marriage in purity (Ephesians 5:1-5), in community (Titus 2:3-5 and Ephesians 4:11-16), and in prayerfulness (Matthew 7:7-9 and Matthew 21:21-22).

Whatever the circumstances of your life, you can find purpose and fulfillment as you break away from a “me-first” culture and honor God in hopeful pursuit of either celibate service or a God-honoring marriage.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

Available for checkout at the Faith@Home Center or for purchase online.

Power and Purpose of Singleness (by Michael Cavanaugh) offers insights that have changed the lives of many people, answering many tough questions singles ask.

They Were Single Too (by David Hoffeditz) show examples of adult singles in the Bible and leads the way to spiritual freedom in the midst of living single today.

Before You Get Engaged (by Brent Gudgel and David Gudgel) offers priceless advice and direction for daters who are considering popping (or answering) the big question

Before You Remarry: A Guide to Successful Remarriage (by H. Norman Wright) takes the latest findings on adjustments in second marriages to share steps couples can take to make their marriages fulfilling and successful.

What Women Wish You Knew About Dating (by Stephen Simpson) educates men about spiritual and psychological obstacles to dating and provides solutions to the problems that often interfere with a healthy, holy dating life.

Recommended Website:

Check out the Being Single section at boundless.org.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

Pastoral Care

Greenville Oaks Shepherds and Ministers are here for you. Email info@greenvilleoaks.org and ask to be contacted by a Shepherd or Minister.