

Disciples Church

Marriage & Singleness Series - Session 6 -

Q32. Should everyone get married? (Singleness)

Week of February 7, 2018

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q32. Should everyone get married?**

No. God has blessed some with the gift of singleness and some with the gift of marriage. Both singleness and marriage are valued by God and accomplish His purposes.

* **Digging In**

**1 Corinthians 7:6-9**

**6**Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. **7**I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

**8**To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. **9**But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

“I wish that all were [single/not married] as I myself am.”

That’s a very significant.

See that he clarifies in verse 6 this is “not a command.”

See singleness *as good as* God sees it.

“**8**To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am.”

It is GOOD. Is that how you think about singleness? The God of creation, through inspiring Paul, declares singleness is GOOD.

**Q32. Should everyone get married?**

No. God has blessed some with the gift of singleness and some with the gift of marriage. Both singleness and marriage are valued by God and accomplish His purposes.

Christ Jesus and Paul: Both of these men were single.

Think of the implications of that, especially in regards to Christ.

The only perfect person to ever live was single.

Christ is the only person to ever have a truly complete life--a life that lacked nothing necessary.

Christ was not missing out on something to fulfill Him—to make Him happy, to bring Him joy, or to complete Him!

Christ being fully God, while being fully human, was complete single—having no temporary spouse.

And Paul, like all the rest of us, is complete because of union to Christ Jesus.

Singleness is a gift, and marriage is a gift. Both singleness and marriage are valued by God.

**1 Corinthians 7:7**

**7**I wish that all were as I myself am. *But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another*.

**Matthew 19:11-12**

**11**But Jesus said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. **12**For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

*Eunuchs*, simply stated, are those who live in a single/unmarried state.

**1 Corinthians 7:25-35** 25Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. 27Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned.

Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. 29This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, 30and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, 31and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

32I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

This is very significant. Remember, this is not a commandment on how one must act, but it is godly wisdom to consider. This kind of godly wisdom should be rightly understood and seriously considered.

Paul’s main point is summed up in the latter part of verse 28: “those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.”

There and throughout this passage, Paul speaks to the serious reality that marriage is hard work, and it takes focus. He says plainly that it divides a person’s focus.

Just because marriage is a good gift doesn’t mean it’s a gift one *has to have* or *perhaps should even pursue*. Some of this kind of wisdom is seen in:

**1 Corinthians 6:12** *“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful …*

Marriage is lawful for you, single or engaged person, but marriage is not always helpful.

Count the cost of entering into marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 again: 32I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

There is his goal in verse 35; he wants to “promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.”

What a blessing godly, wise counsel is. Far too often we press on with our own ideas or let our desires lead us, when we should seek wise counsel.

**Proverbs 15:22** Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.

So, without scoffing at marriage, we all need to say with Paul that singleness does promote a unique opportunity to serve the Lord with more focus. And this is a great thing! Serving the Lord with more focus is a high, high honor!

Don’t waste your singleness. It has a specific and high purpose.

Singles can take the emotional investment that normally goes into having a spouse and redirect that care and concern to others:

* That can equal being more in tune with the spiritual health and temptations of other believers in your life:

Eph 4:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

* That can also equal being more in tune with the needs for encouragement of other believers in your life:

1Thess 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Heb 10:24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works

* That can also equal being more regular in prayer for other believers in your life:

James 5:16 … pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Also, singles can take the time investment that normally goes into having a spouse and redirect that care and concern to others:

* That can equal being more diligent in hosting and welcoming other believers in your life:

1Pet 4:9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Rom 15:7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

* That can also equal the incredibly important task of serving other believers in your life in a way that is increased over someone who has divided ability due to marriage:

Gal 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

The opportunities to use the undivided devotion to the Lord are essentially endless.

Singles, we hope you are diligent in these things and looking for more ways to grow in them.

Looking to get married or getting married (if you are eligible per God’s terms) is not sin (so long as it’s not an idol). Look at one example of this in the next few verses:

**1 Corinthians 7:36-38** 36If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. 37But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. 38So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

In regards to a unique opportunity to serve the Lord with more focus in this short life, *it is better to be single* Paul says.

Does this mean no one should get married? No; marriage is a good gift.

In the last two verses of the chapter Paul speaks directly to widows and carries on this theme:

**1 Corinthians 7:39-40** **39**A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. **40**Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Widows, singles, if that’s not where you are now, if that’s not your heart, then I invite you to take up this thinking as a new course. In this broken world, the Christian life is one of ongoing sanctification. You have a real opportunity to put away old thoughts and feelings and put on new thoughts and feelings.

Really consider if true confession and repentance is needed here. Maybe you have made God your enemy on this topic, resented His sovereign plan for your life, cursed Him due to **your** expectations, or even resented Him. Repent of that and run to Him as the loving Father that He is to you. You have a real opportunity here to put away old thoughts and feelings and put on new thoughts and feelings. You, too, can say with the Lord Jesus, “My singleness is a good gift, and I am happier to serve God uniquely as single. My God is a good, wise God.”

So much of this is seeing who you are in Christ. COMPLETE IN CHRIST means not lacking any good thing.

**Psalm 23:1**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**Psalm 34:9-10 9**Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! **10**The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

**John 10:10** “… I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

**Philippians 4:11** Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

Be content with knowing God is able to use us for His purposes where we are.

Maybe the divorced people who’ve heard the teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage are really struggling with the idea that the Lord does not permit them to marry another person. Philippians 4:11, like with the rest of Scripture, calls you to and speaks life into you for contentment in the Lord. No one is saying that comes easy, but it is Christianly.

Being satisfied in Christ as your joy and treasure is the only true way to contentment. Being satisfied in Christ as your joy and treasure is what God is calling you to.

Take heart; God makes it clear through Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 there is a sweet joy in singleness. You can be happier in it than if you get that spouse you have longed for.

* **What about the passages in Scripture that may seem to say or imply that singleness is subpar?**

Scripture needs to be handled carefully, using proper hermeneutics to understand things.

**Genesis 2:18** Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

Significant things were happening here. One being that the image-of-God-intention that God gave mankind is not complete without woman, as **Gen 1:27** says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; **male and female** he created them.” So Gen. 2:18 is not just about marriage.

Next, while marriage was certainly in view and certainly Eve herself was created by God for marriage and procreation with Adam, this doesn’t condemn singleness.

Singleness is didactically called GOOD and even encouraged now in the New Covenant. And based on the fact the only perfectly fulfilled person to ever life was single in the flesh, Christ Jesus, we can know singleness is not second-rate at all; it is a good gift from God.

The depth of Genesis 2:18 is about community, as opposed to solitariness.

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-11** 9Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! 11Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?

**Ecclesiastes 4:7-12** 7Again, I saw vanity under the sun: 8one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, “For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?” This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

9Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! 11Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? 12And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Upon a closer examination of the passage and its context, we see this passage is not first or directly speaking about marriage. It seems to say little if anything specifically about marriage in particular. In verse 8, we see described one who is alone, without companion*: He has neither son nor brother.*

Our Ecclesiastes passage is anti-aloneness, not anti-singleness.

God designed mankind not to do life alone. In our flesh, we do that though, don’t we? There are times in our flesh, because of sin, we retreat. We seek loneliness, and then sometimes loathe it, acting like the victim. Married people do this, as do single people. It’s our flesh working against God’s design of multilayered companionship. God created us to be social beings--not social in the sense of talkative alone, **but communal**. We are to be part of a community of people, supporting one another, serving one another, etc.

Whether it is the Ecclesiastes passage or Genesis 2:18, the ultimate thing happening is that we are wired by God to be blessed by others—we were not wired to thrive in solitariness. Married or single, heed this truth, and seek companionship in all the ways God has gifted it to you (the church; friends; blood family; and for some, a spouse).

* **Take-a-ways**
* The ultimate thing we can say about singleness is that it exists for God’s glory.

This is the case with everything: singleness, marriage, everything. Let us know this and never think otherwise.

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen

* Singles who do not have biological children: Do not think that no marriage means no parenting. That is not the case. If you don’t have biological children, you still have parenting realities in God’s family.

Marriage and family are temporary for this age; the church is forever—the family of God is forever.

**Matthew 12:48-49** 48But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” 49And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!”

**Mark 10:29-30** 29Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”

* Let us remember what was taught about singles and the creation ordinance in our first lesson of this series.

How does a person given the gift of singleness honor the marriage ordinance?

They would do this not by having a marriage themselves; rather, they honor the marriage ordinance:

By lifting up God’s design for marriage,

by speaking of God’s design for marriage,

by encouraging others in God’s design for marriage,

by not voting to approve an ungodly definitions/practices of marriage,

by not tempting a married person with sexual immorality, and so on.

The ordinance is still a reality in the creation they live in—God’s creation—so they honor it in ways appropriate for them.

And remember, everyone who is united to Christ by faith **will** experience the holy and eternal union with Christ as the bride forever. As Pastor Joshua taught, human marriage is momentary. We know what human marriage points to: the ultimate marriage of Christ and His Church. And that is a marriage all the saved are in. That is the eternally important marriage. That marriage is not just for a short time but forever. Let all of us be eternally-minded people.

* Lastly, to the married, hopefully this lesson also has given you a more biblical view of singleness. May it fuel your love and care for singles.

In that, how are you doing living out the “one anothers” towards singles?

Speak God’s truth to one another, instruct one another, live in harmony with one another, encourage one another, stir up one another to love and good works, buildup of one another, welcome one another, show hospitality to one another, value one another, bear one another’s burdens, serve one another, regard one another as more important than yourselves, have fellowship with one another in truth, and so on…

If you’re married, make it a priority to spend quality time with single people and if you’re single with married people. Let us be the loving body to Christ.