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.

**1 Corinthians 7:7-9** 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. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

**1 Corinthians 7:25-27** Now 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. I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

**Matthew 19:12** “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.”

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

* **Intro**

Church, I am so excited for this lesson.

Let me tell you a brief personal story.

Many years ago I would have been somewhat indifferent to a lesson on the topic of singleness. If I showed up and heard the teaching was going to be on singleness, I wouldn’t have been very excited. Mainly, because I would have wrongly assumed the biblical truth on the topic wasn’t very important for me to know. And that’s kind of sad because this topic is very important, but I didn’t put a whole lot of thought to it—so I didn’t know. Then, praise God, during a time I was daily listening to sermon audio from a variety of good pastors, I came across this topic and God used the preaching of John Piper to teach me how important this topic is.

Through that teaching I heard what God’s word says about singleness and it really impacted me, even as a married man. I remember contacting many of the guys I would regularly discuss theology with in those years to enthusiastically tell them all about God’s design for singleness. And ever since then, I have really enjoyed having a biblical view of it and encouraging others in that.

So….I hope this lesson might be used by God to do a work in this church. Whether we are married, never married, divorced, abandoned, or widowed, the hope is God informs us all so that we love and live according to truth.

Singleness is an amazing gift—that’s not just my opinion, it is what God’s word teaches.

So let’s jump into this….

* **Digging In**

In this lesson, we’ll be back in some passages we have been in already in this series, asking ‘what does Scripture say about singleness and how does that compel us to live and love?’

Turn to 1 Corinthians 7, where we’ll let the Apostle Paul’s strong words kick off this lesson. Beginning at verse 6.

**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.

Ok, we’ve got a couple of things going on here. These verses come directly after Paul instructs that one of the blessings of marriage is that God has provided that relationship to exercise sexual desire and activity. He states as well that sexual activity between spouses should be regular enough to meet each person’s desires as a means to fight off sexual immoral temptations.

In light of this, he then continues in our verses. Let’s analyze these.

Picking up in verse 6: “**6**Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. **7**I wish that all were as I myself am.”

“I wish that all were as I myself am.” He is speaking here about being single.

“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.”

So let’s be clear here. We are going to, with Paul, with Scripture, in this lesson highly lift up singleness. And we want you see singleness *as good as* God sees it. But, let’s be clear that even with the strong language singleness is not required of those who are eligible (based on God’s terms) to be married. While it is a great gift of God, strongly recommended by the inspired Paul, as we’ll continue to see, if you are eligible to be married, you are not commanded to be—not required to be—single.

Now, you may have the gift of singleness and therefore it is God’s sovereign plan for your life, but understand that there is not a universal command on all singles eligible to be married to NOT get married. That is what Paul is getting at in verse 6 and also in the end of verse 7 where he says “But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.”

But, as we see in verse 7, Paul makes it very clear, based on his life and ministry wisdom and more importantly, God inspiring these words, he knows the value of singleness and recommends it. “I wish that all were single (not married), as I myself am.”

This heartbeat continues in verse 8, look: “**8**To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am.”

It “is good for them to remain single.” It is GOOD. Is that how you think about singleness? The God of creation, through inspiring Paul, declares, singleness is GOOD.

Be honest with yourself, is that what you think? Honestly, it’s not how I used to think, before God used these verses taught by Piper to inform me.

In this you can see why our catechism question exists and why the answer is what it is. Look at it again:

**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.

We’ve seen clearly in past lessons of this series, that human marriage is a gift from God, and as we see in 1 Cor 7, so is singleness.

Think with me for a moment about the two most prominent people in the New Testament. 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—to complete Him!

But we’ve been told elsewhere that the single life isn’t a complete life haven’t we? Maybe unintentionally. Maybe well intended people, ourselves even, have communicated to others that single life is not good, or *as good* as married life.

“Marriage is the gift, singleness isn’t a gift…”…has been thought or said.

Popular movies, saying “you complete me.” While that’s cute, or romantic, or whatever, we have to be honest, that mentality can be quite ungodly. We don’t need a spouse to be complete. Union to the Lord, through faith in Christ, is what gives us our identity, purpose, and fulfillment (or “completes” us to say it that way).

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. Marriage “completes” no one.

So church, let’s take back a godly view of these things. Let’s put off the world’s view and put on Christ’s view of what gives us our identity, purpose, and fulfillment. This is very significant, I hope this lesson helps us in this.

((DG Question…Married people, how is the clarity on being complete help you not idolize your spouse, make them be your functional savior))

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

Paul rose singleness and marriage as gifts in verse 7:

**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*.

Let’s look now at Christ’s words on singleness and see how it lines up with what we are seeing, what Paul writes in 1 Cor 7.

When the disciples heard Jesus’ high view of marriage, they spoke up in an effort to verify what they heard and digest it.

Matthew 19:

**10**The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

They are saying, “WHOA, if a person is not permitted by God to end the one-flesh union via divorce than it’s better to not even marry!” They know too how difficult marriage can be, like we’ll see Paul say more later in our study.

**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 or unmarried state.

Jesus doesn’t soften His marriage teaching since it sounds hard to some to uphold, He holds it up and says, those who can’t or aren’t willing to agree to God’s design for marriage either know they have the gift of singleness from God or should embrace they have the gift of singleness from God. For it it’s better to be single than to disobey God’s design for marriage.

In this, it lines up with what we have seen Paul writes in 1 Cor 7. Singleness is a gift…it is God’s sovereign plan for many.

Let’s look at further at 1 Cor 7 to build out our theology on the singleness being a good gift.

**1 Corinthians 7:25-40**

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.

Pause there. Here Paul is speaking to those who are betrothed. Betrothal is like engagement, but much more committed. Paul is saying that, it’s good to stay unmarried if possible, but if you do marry, you have not sinned. We’ll see why its his recommendation to stay unmarried as we proceed. Verse 28 continues…

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.

Pause there. 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.

Now, since marriage is a good gift and designed by God to do such dividing of focus, that is not bad in and of itself. Idolatry of marriage is bad, having your spouse as your functional savior is bad, focusing too much on your spouse compared to service to God and loving others is bad….but the appropriate focus/intimacy/dedication between spouses it is not bad in and of itself.

However, the reality of divided attention is where Paul’s godly wisdom comes in. 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.

Paul has brotherly concern for believers in this. Like a caring pastor or father, he is saying “count the cost” of entering into marriage. It has a real cost and you need to consider if singleness is the gift for you. He’s clear in verses 32-35,

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!

Singles……do you get that? That is about you. Since God is sovereign, and He has you single right now, possibly for the rest of your life….do you see that the reason is to provide you a unique opportunity to serve the Lord *with better focus*? Don’t waste your singleness. It has a specific and high purpose. You belong to the Lord…he gives you breath each day to live for Him….and He has you single for this reason. Please don’t waste your singleness.

What does it look like to not waste your singleness?

We could go on for hours with practical things to answer that. But let’s give just a few examples for now.

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:

1Th 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:

1Pe 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.

These things and others can play themselves out in ways that does so much good to others and displays just how glorious God is! 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.

Shifting bask to our text, let’s be clear about something: 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:

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.

It is not a sin to get married, “he who marries his betrothed does well.” Marriage is good.

But, “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. God’s Creation Ordinance of procreation requires marriage still happen, etc. So we don’t need to over swing here. But the weight of Paul’s godly wisdom and point need to be know well by all of us and encouraged as well.

Your pastors have been, and will continue to pray this: “Lord, will you please give our singles this understanding, would you give our singles a zeal to honor you in this. Would you give our singles who are not eligible to be remarried the good news of this. Would you give some of our singles who can be married desire to not be, so that they can have the sweet gift of undivided devotion to you, Lord.”

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

**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.

”in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is.” Widows, you may be thinking, well he doesn’t know me then, I’d be happier with a spouse.

But remember, Paul is inspired by God in these words. This isn’t mere human opinion as we may take it on a surface read. God is saying through Paul: considering all truth, there is a special happiness for those who are single when they are thinking like the Lord. God loves singleness because it is a unique opportunity to serve the Lord with more focus. And there is a high joy in serving the Lord. Therefore, if one thinks like the Lord *on this point*, the widow (and other singles) will be happier if he/she remains unmarried and lives out the life of singlehood service.

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. The Christian life in this broken world is one of ongoing sanctification. You have a real opportunity here 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. Let me share with you a portion from one of Pastor Joshua’s sermons to this point:

Psalm 23:**1** The LORD is my shepherd

**Who is the LORD?** **Yahweh!** The one true God. The one whose name is IAM.

YAHWEH is my shepherd.  **YAHWEH is MY shepherd.** Praise God that the Great Shepherd became the Lamb who was slain so that we could be HIS sheep and he could be our SHEPHERD.

**The LORD is my Satisfaction**. We get this from the next 6 words David writes in verse 1. Psalm 23:**1** The LORD is my shepherd,  **I shall not be in want.**

In today's English this sentence can sound like, **"When God is my Shepherd, I shall not desire."**

If this is true then it would seem that David is saying when God is your shepherd you don't have the feeling of desiring anything anymore. But the Scriptures are clear that God has made us with desires.

So, this is not saying. **I shall not desire.**

A deeper look into the Hebrew helps us see when David says, "not be in want" he means to, “not lack”

What he is saying is **“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack."** But, **Lack what, David?**

Well, In another psalm that David wrote, **Psalm 34:9-10,** we gain some light. "O fear the Lord, you his saints; for to those who fear him **there is no want.** The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord **shall not be in want of any good thing**."

**🡪 So we could say, that Psalm 23:1 is saying: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack any good thing.**

What David is saying here is that “In His Shepherd” he has found complete Satisfaction & Enjoyment!

This is exactly what Christ himself said he would be to us in John 10. That in HIM WE are FULL!

**John 10:10**, Jesus says, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (give life to the full)

**We could say, *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack anything that the Shepherd determines I need to be satisfied in him.”***

Let me take us to another passage that speaks to who we are in Christ that I believe is a major part of how a single person equips their thinking and heart to honor God in their singleness.

Consider,

**Philippians 4:11**

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

Some of you perhaps are single because you know the joy of it, some of you are single due to the death of a loved spouse, some due to the wreckage sin can have on a marriage…and others in this room are perhaps in really difficult marriages, or really enjoyable marriages or most likely a marriage the vacillates between those two things. The point of Philippians 4:11, like with the rest of Scripture, is we should 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.

And take heart, He makes it clear through Paul in this 1 Cor 7 Chapter, there is a sweet joy in it. You can be happier in it, than if you get that spouse you have longed for. Divorced loved ones here, don’t waste your singleness, God has a great design for it.

This is big stuff. It hits home in the most real and personal ways. Hopefully the word of God—the truths of God—are shaping all of us to conform to Christ.

Before we wrap up with some more points and encouragements, let’s try to help you with some other Scripture, as we like to do.

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

Well, something we have been saying (such as in our Divorce and Remarriage lessons) and will continue to say, is that Scripture needs to be handled carefully, using proper hermeneutics to understand things.

There are many topics in Scripture that seem unclear or even contradictory.

While things can certainly be unclear to us, in our flesh, there is nothing in Scripture that contradicts itself. When we get to an apparent contradiction we must realize the issue is not with God’s word, but with our perception that it contradicts—our understanding of it. Instead of a matter being a contradiction, it comes down to us needing a more informed understanding to make sense of the matter.

So, let’s consider a few passages that may seem to say or imply that singleness is subpar on a simple reading of the text.

First,

**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.”

In the creation account, as God created, we see that He made man first. Then He declared these words, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” (Gen. 2:18). So Eve was made. Woman was created.

Now, some point to this to say that “marriage is necessary, God said after all, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone.’” But that’s too simplistic of a reading.

Yes, a significant part of this was God creating the proper marriage companion. But other 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.

Marriage and procreation **is** the ordained way God carries out this plan for creation, and it is not bad or hurtful to acknowledge that it is *regarded as the norm*—the expectation even that one should have—for example, we should teach our daughters how to be godly wives and our sons to be godly husbands (be let us also teach them that marriage is not the highest goal, it may be a gift for them, or singleness may be the gift for them.) But doing that (regrading marriage as the norm) **does not mean** the other alternative, singleness, is subpar.

We know this based on what we’ve seen tonight:

In particular, that 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.

Therefore, we cannot take God’s design of marriage (or it being most common) to mean not being married is subpar.

We should see that Gen 2:18 is about a spouse for Adam, yes, but also more than that… The depth of Genesis 2:18 is about community, as opposed to solitariness. And we’ll build out this point in a moment.

Next we have a likely familiar passage from Ecclesiastes.

**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?

“Two are better than one.” You can see how some may take this to mean that singleness is subpar to marriage. But again, we need to use good hermeneutics to know what God fully intends to communicate with this passage.

While this is a popular passage at weddings, and rightfully so as we’ll see, this passage is not first or directly speaking about marriage.

Look at the great context:

**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.*

I’ll read a few helpful quotes: “It’s no lie, two are better than one, and life lived in isolation, for oneself alone is meaningless. But marriage wasn’t God’s only solution.

God designed us to live and serve in community. His great gospel plan to save the world is a plan to save and redeem **a people**, not just persons. The apostle Peter wrote, “you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, … you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **a people** for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10). The people of God are united in Christ, many members making one body, no part being able to do without the other any more than our eyes, hands, and feet can do without each other (1 Corinthians 12:20-26).”

In short, our Ecclesiastes passage is anti-aloneness, not ant-singleness.

God designed mankind to not 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 loath in it….acting like the victim. Marriage 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**. Part of a community of people, supporting one another, serving one another, etc.

Theologian John Gill says of these things this:

“Society is preferable to solitariness; conversation with a friend is better than to be always alone.”

In our Ecclesiastes passages, “The wise man takes occasion to show in this … the profitableness and advantages of social life; which, as it holds true in things natural and civil, so in things spiritual and religious; man is a sociable creature, was made to be so; and it was the judgment of God, which is according to truth, and who can never err, that it was not good for man to be alone.”

Then Gill focuses in on something next, and it is **so good**, listen to this:

“This is true in a spiritual sense of persons in a Christian communion and religious society; when they are grown cold in their love, lukewarm in their affections, and backward and indifferent to spiritual exercises, yet by Christian conversation may be stirred up to love and good works: so two cold flints struck against each other, fire comes out of them; and even two cold Christians, when they come to talk with each other about spiritual things, and feel one another's spirits, they presently glow in their affections to each other, and to divine things…”

AMEN! Your elder’s desire has been to lead this church in these things, and by God’s grace you—the body—have been enjoying these blessings, let us all continue in that.

So, 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).

Now, should Ecclesiastes be used in wedding ceremonies, etc to lift up a blessing of be married? Yes, that is fine, that is good. The principle is right to lift up in that consideration—namely marriage is one way the companionship we need by God’s design can be had. But let us not see our Ecclesiastes passage as only speaking to marriage, or worse yet, condemning or belittling singleness.

Remember, “Tota Scriptura.” God’s word elsewhere tells us singleness is a good gift and even encourages it in the New Covenant!

So, let’s finish this lesson with a few more points and encouragements.

}}}}}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

}}}}}Next, taking a point from one of Piper’s sermons, 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.

PIPER: In the narrative in Matthew’s Gospel “when [Jesus’] own mother and brothers asked to see him, Jesus said, “‘Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?’ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers!’” (Matthew 12:48–49). Jesus is turning everything around. Yes, he loved his mother and his brothers. But those are all natural and temporary relationships. He did not come into the world to focus on that. He came into the world to call out a people for his name from all the families into a new family where single people in Christ are full-fledged family members on a par with all others, bearing fruit for God and **becoming mothers and fathers of the eternal kind**.”

“In Mark 10:29-30, Jesus 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, who 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.” Here Jesus shifts the absolute from having children biologically to having hundreds of children through the family of Christ and through spiritual influence. It might include adoption. It might include foster care. It might include making your home a place for backyard Bible clubs. It might include hospitality in a neighborhood where your home is every kid’s favorite place. It might include your nursery job or your care for your nieces and nephews or the Sunday School class you teach.”

The point is: Marriage and having children biologically is NOT necessary for loving children, caring for children, and teaching God’s truths to children in hopes they become followers of Jesus. Singles, please know your role in kid’s lives can be as significant as you want to make it. You can parent children is very, very real ways.’

}}}}}Next, 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 in the room or hearing this audio later, hopefully this lesson has given you also a more biblical view of singleness. Mat it fuel your love and care for singles. In that, how are you doing living out the “one another’s” 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…

And how can you improve in these things?

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

I’ll read our catechism answer again:

**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.

Church, singleness is a glorious thing. Let’s us thank God for His design and purpose of it. Living life without a spouse is not second rate. Marriage is not the treasure, having Christ is. Being single is a gift from God, and should be intentionally used for His glory. We are excited to lift up and teach on the honor of Singleness in this series. Fill your mind and heart with the reality that being unmarried is not a curse, it is not second rate, it is not something to forsake.

Let’s pray….