



For Singles only

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Is singleness a season, a calling, or something else?

The Bible describes both singleness and marriage as gifts from God (1 Corinthians 7:1-40). Marriage is a picture of God's committed love and relationship with us. Singleness is a way to follow Jesus and devote influence, time, energy, and relationships to help others in a way that married people can't. Both are legitimate paths that honor God and fulfill His purpose. The question is, which has God called you to?

Is It OK to Be Single and Enjoy It?

It's good to enjoy being single. God specifically calls some people to singleness as a way to help others follow Jesus and grow the church around the world.

When Jesus' disciples asked if someone should get married, He explained that staying single is a viable way of life and can be used by God for good (Matthew 19:10-12). Paul recommended people stay single if they can remain faithful to Jesus, recognizing "it is better to marry than to burn with passion." That is, it's better to be married and exercise your sexuality with your spouse in the context God created, rather than give into relational, emotional, and sexual frustration at the expense of your obedience to God (1 Corinthians 7:6-9).

Many influential people in the Bible remained unmarried for much — or all — of their lives, including Jesus. Some other names you might recognize include:

- Miriam, an Old Testament prophet (Exodus 15:20-21);
- Jeremiah, another prophet (Jeremiah 1:1-9);
- Phoebe, a leader in the early church (Romans 16:1-2);
- John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-12);
- Jesus' friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:1-46);
- Lydia, the businesswoman (Acts 16:11-15);
- and Paul, an apostle and church planter (1 Corinthians 7:8).

Why Won't God Give Me a Spouse?

The longer you're single, the more you ask questions like "What's wrong with me?" or "How long will I have to wait?" It's easy to be overwhelmed when well-meaning friends and family say things like, "You're just in a season of life!" or "Be patient and wait for the right one." Those often sound like trite excuses rather than encouraging truths.

It's normal to be sad, frustrated, or angry about being single. You may not see clear reasons why you aren't yet married, but there's reason to hope and believe that change is possible. God hears every request you make and knows your frustrations. You can keep going to God with questions, concerns, and hopes — including the desire to be married.

Am I Still Single Because I'm Not Enough?

Feeling insufficient and comparing yourself to those who are married places an unrealistic and unhealthy limit on your value. Your worth is determined by God who made you, which means you are free from the burden of having to earn or prove your value (Genesis 1:27, Psalm

139:13-18). You are so valuable to God that He went to extraordinary lengths to demonstrate His love for you (John 3:16).

Instead of focusing on the spouse or significant other you don't have, consider how your desire to be married is one part of the life God has given you, not the only part. God wants to be the defining factor of your self-worth and the source of your happiness and fulfillment.

How Do I Know When I've Met "the One"?

A popular idea about dating and marriage is that you'll know who to marry because you'll realize that person is "the one." The problem is that "the one" is a myth, not an idea from the Bible.

Marriage won't automatically cure your loneliness, sexual desires, or the need to feel loved. Don't buy the lie that another person will complete you. Only Jesus can do that because we're made to be in relationship with God (Psalm 103:1-5).

If you're single and wish you were married, guard against impatience. Resist the urge to settle for someone who isn't God's best partner for you. Surround yourself with godly friends and mentors who offer listening ears and wise counsel as you navigate life as a single person, whether for this phase of your life or for the rest of your life. Being single provides an invaluable time to discover who God's calling you to be and to say yes to whatever He has for you next.

What Do I Do Now?

If you believe you're called to be single throughout your life, how will you steward that gift from God? What changes can you make to your commitments, work, relationships, time, and money to make the most of your opportunities to follow Jesus?

If you believe you're called to be married but aren't yet, what changes can you make to be faithful with the opportunities, relationships, skills, and gifts God has already given you? What changes can you make to prepare to be a good spouse in the future?

Why Singles Should Stop Waiting

Being single is either exciting or pitiful. Who doesn't love buying discount chocolate and watching *The Notebook* alone on their couch? The longer you may ask questions like "What's wrong with me?" or "How long will I have to wait?" It's easy to let these kinds of questions overwhelm you.

I grew up with people I love and respect encouraging me by saying, "You're just in a season of life! Be patient and just wait for the right one."

I'm not going to challenge their wisdom on that, because settling for someone out of loneliness is a dumb decision.

The trouble comes when I re-interpret that advice to say: "Just wait."

4 Signs It's Time to Say Goodbye to the Waiting Game

1. You're calling this period of time in your life a "singleness season."

If I'm viewing my singleness as a season, then I'm confusing God's promise to fulfill my life with a promise to fulfill my wishes. In John 10:10, Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." If I'm always putting goals, adventures, or experiences aside, then I'm setting myself up for disappointment by idolizing an imaginary relationship.

2. You've said, multiple times (this week), "When I get married, I'll..."

No one has all the behind-the-scenes knowledge of their lives. Sometimes, we live as if our lives are on hold. Once we meet the right person, then we figure we'll be able to accomplish our goals. But ultimately, the end goal of life is not marriage. As a Christian, my end goal is going to change constantly as I pursue a life with Christ. If I set my end goal as marriage, I'm putting all my trust into something that could be easily broken.

3. You're growing more and more anxious about your relationship status.

Often times, my anxiety reveals I have a lack of trust. I can say I trust God, but when it comes to my relationships, I really only trust one person to get it right—me. The Lord promises in Psalm 37:3-4: "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

In order to prepare your heart for a full life, first invest in my relationship with Jesus — trusting Him and abiding in His promises above all else. Jesus is not going to call me to something He hasn't prepared me for. 1 Corinthians 7:15 says, "God has called us to live in peace."

4. You've seriously contemplated settling.

Settling for someone out of loneliness demonstrates a hunger for control. If I am following Christ consistently, I have to believe His promises. In Habakkuk 2:3, the Lord promises that His "revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false."

Waiting for the Lord's vision does not necessarily mean that I am sitting on the sidelines, waiting for my spouse. Waiting on the Lord means I need to invest in preparation for whatever He will call me to do next.

There came a time where I had to ask myself: "What do you have on pause that you need to take off hold?" God consistently tells me what's next when I take one small step of obedience after another.

God is doing a work in our lives that we would not have believed if He had told us about it in advance (Habakkuk 1:5). When I traded the plans I had for myself — marriage and babies — for whatever God had in store for me, He showed me that the only way I can lead a fulfilling life is if I am willing to trade my plans for His.

Four signs you might need to end a dating relationship

A Quick Word About Dating vs. Marriage

Dating is an open-ended process, not a commitment. Just because you're dating someone doesn't mean you have to keep dating and even marry that person.

Marriage, however, is not open-ended like dating. Marriage is living out a commitment to stick with your spouse. It's a covenant relationship God established for husband and wife to serve and love one another. There will be hard times and you may even notice some of the signs below in your relationship. Don't quit! God created marriage for happiness as well as holiness. Whatever your relationship is facing, God can work it out for your good.

When it comes to dating, there are plenty of perspectives. The Bible doesn't offer an instruction manual for dating; instead, it paints pictures of healthy relationships in which people respect and care for each other (or fail to), whether before or in marriage.

Ask God what He thinks about your relationship and what needs to change — regardless of if it's to end the relationship or to continue into marriage. Here are a few things to consider with the person you're dating (or the person you hope to date).

Four Signs You Might Need to End a Dating Relationship Now

1. You're following Jesus, and the man or woman you're dating is not.

Dating is a process that allows you to see if another person would be a potentially suitable spouse. It's also a way to grow in understanding of relationships with other people. If you're a Christian, having a good time is an important part of dating, but the best goal is to lay a healthy, respectful foundation that could grow into a marriage. When outsiders see a husband and wife serving each other like Jesus serves the Church, they'll get a better picture of who God is (Ephesians 5:22-33).

2. Your life revolves entirely around the other person.

Is it impossible for either one of you to do something independent of the other? You're not married yet, so don't act like you can't live your own lives. Codependent relationships limit the freedom of both people because they're controlled by the needs and time of each other.

Singleness is a unique opportunity for people to be involved in a church community and serve Jesus in ways that married people cannot (1 Corinthians 7:32-35).

3. You care more about the other person than he or she does about you.

It's not healthy romantic love if both people don't actually care about each other. Relationships are a two-way street, but if it's only one way, it's called infatuation. When only one party is committed in the relationship, it's unreasonable and unhealthy. This often leads to confusion and emotional pain. A good, loving relationship of any type will be beneficial and respectful for each person (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

4. Your boyfriend or girlfriend is an addict to anything — and is unwilling to change.

If your significant other pays more attention to a smartphone than to you, it may be an indicator that he or she is addicted to technology. Perhaps there's another sort of addiction one of you struggles with, like porn or alcohol or excessive shopping. Addictions add strain to any relationship. Our selfish desires are fueled by what we pay most attention to (Matthew 6:19-24; Proverbs 23:1-7). Unless one develops ways to combat the addiction and works to get healthy, those addictions often take higher priority than the significant other.

If you're dating someone who exhibits one or all of the signs above, what your boyfriend or girlfriend needs more than a relationship with you is a growing relationship with Jesus.

Pray for that person like you would a brother or sister. Invite them to church. But at the very least, hit pause and get wise counsel from someone experienced in following Jesus and building healthy relationships. These signs may be hints that your significant other is not ready for marriage, and right now, he or she is not God's best for you. A godly spouse is worth waiting for. A true friend will put the other's needs before his or her own.

9 Ways To Fight For Contentment and Date while being single.

1. You have to choose to keep yourself from making the first move.

The more you talk about something, the more it takes over your mind. When you take that option off the table, and actively choose not to think about it as a possibility, the inclination to make the first move starts to diminish. For example: When you want to text him or drop a huge hint that you're single in front of a handsome man, take that option off the table for yourself.

2. Tell your friends. Or just one friend, really.

Have someone who will keep you accountable to your determination to be patient. Ask a friend to question you periodically about how you're doing with your contentment in being single. (Don't let her ask you daily; that's just a reminder day-after-day!) Tell this friend about what triggers your discontent and have them keep you accountable for cutting it out of your life!

3. Realize you are not in control.

There is absolutely nothing that you can do to speed up the plan God has for you. Habakkuk 1:5 says, "For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told." Later on, Habakkuk 2:3 says, "For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end - it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay." A different translation of this verse states: God's plan will not be late by a single day.

4. The more you think about something, the more you're anxious about something.

Some people are anxious about money, health, spare time, schoolwork. Singleness falls into this category. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

5. Pray about this struggle.

Don't be ashamed to tell God that you're struggling with His timing! He won't be surprised by it. You cannot defeat discontent without His help.

6. If you're not battling your anxiety with Scripture, you're doing it wrong.

You're letting Satan discourage you with something he knows will always discourage you, even on a good day. You know how you can be having a great day, get everything done, go home and make dinner, but then the thought pops up in your mind, "Dinner for one, again." Suddenly the whole day is ruined by the reminder of being single? Yeah, that's not just your brain being stupid. That's the devil seizing an opportunity! What are you memorizing? What are you reading?

7. Who are you spending time with?

If you're hanging out with other single friends who are obsessed with their singleness as well, you're fueling your discontent (and theirs)! This isn't to say you can't spend time with your single friends, but when you do, change the attitude of the conversation. Lead by example.

8. Rest.

Are you resting? How so? Philippians 4:7 says, "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Ask the Lord for this peace. Make this your soul cry. This verse isn't to get your hopes up; it is a promise from the Lord.

9. Pursue Jesus more than you pursue a plan.

Most times, we are most discontent when our plan doesn't mirror our life. I can have the "head knowledge" that Christ's plan for my life is better than my own, but until I truly have that attitude, I'm always going to compare my reality to my ideal. Freedom comes when I put my plan to death and sincerely ask Jesus to fulfill His plan for my life — no matter the cost.

In the Old Testament, God consistently promises to destroy our high places in order to draw us back to Him. High places were the places in which Gentiles placed their false gods or idols. The high places were the spaces or pedestals prepared and intended for the idols. That term sounds ancient, yet we are still practicing that today.

We erect 'high places' in our hearts and we put false gods like marriage, children, higher education, or a six-figure salary in those high places instead of helping the Lord smash them. A 'high place' is just an opportunity for discontentment to sow deep seeds in my heart. A 'high place' shows the Lord that I don't believe or trust Him when He promises immeasurably more in Ephesians 3:20.

The Lord does not give us desires just so He can take them away, and I truly believe that the desires of my heart are just sneak peeks at the plan the Lord has for my life. His plan is inevitable. Instead of being impatient for His plan, I actively choose an attitude of joy. Patience doesn't have to be agonizing! 'Waiting on the Lord' doesn't have to fill my heart with discontent.