

- A young lady named Christena Cleveland wrote this in a series of articles called "Beyond Multiethnic" which was a series on how people can honor God as a diverse people. **"A couple of summers ago I visited a Dallas-area church. It was a hot day and the temperature in the church building was almost unbearable. But I wasn't distracted by the heat because the pastor (who is quite the scholar) gave a profound, rousing sermon on the beauty and holiness of marriage. Even as a single person, I was inspired by his sophisticated, lovely depiction of a Christ-centered marriage. It was that good! At the end of the 40 minute sermon, the pastor looked up from his notes and began to ad lib: " I know that over 40% of you are single, so I should probably say something about singleness as well." My eyes perked up. Since the pastor was such a scholarly guy and since he had just given an exceptionally thoughtful sermon on marriage, I just knew that his brief thoughts on singleness would be as equally profound. I leaned forward. "Here's what I want to say to all you single people: Don't have sex before you get married. Then when you get married, make up for lost time. [wink, wink]" Once the laughter died down, the pastor gave a benediction and returned to the pew where his wife awaited him."**
- The author of the article went on to talk about the lack of attention and conversation that is had for the singles with the churches. Her article concludes with 6 tips on how married Christians can embrace single adults. Sadly, this type of thing is played out in almost every church throughout the country, both in denominationalism and even within the Lord's churches. A quick google search of "single people in church" will bring 296 million hits on articles and such pertaining mostly the struggles of the single person within the church setting, so this is a popular issue to discuss. Thinking back in my own mind, I can only think of one lesson I have ever heard on the subject of living single in the church and that was done by a friend of mine just a few months ago. So it is not something that is discussed frequently in the Lord's churches as best I can tell.
- So with this in mind, and it being the first Sunday, I would like to continue our 2015 Series on Glorifying God by studying from God's Word about how we can serve God as a single person in Christ. So far this year, we have studied about how the family and senior soldiers can glorify God, and I don't want our singles to feel like lepers within this body. They are just as special and as important as the next brother or sister, and they are to glorify God in their lives just the same. I hope this morning, they will be encouraged in their single life in Christ.

### **I. There is absolutely nothing wrong with being single.**

- A. Unfortunately, we have almost put a negative stigma on singleness.
  1. There are many single who are constantly hounded with question about finding Mr. or Mrs. Right.
  2. Marriage is seen as the end all be all for the mature Christian adult, and those who don't marry are seen as immature or behind in their development.
  3. As has already been pointed out, there is normally much focus put on the family and child raising within the church, but there is not much out there in the way of encouragement for the single person.
- B. The reality is that all of us are single and some point in this life, but the same is not true for marriage.
  1. Some are single because they haven't found the right person to marry to this point.
  2. Some remain single because they don't desire marriage, not everyone wants to be married.
  3. Some are single because they have lost their spouse, some of many years and some of few years, and they have chosen not to remarry.
  4. And then some are forced to remain single because of God's teachings on divorce and remarriage.
- C. The bottom line is that the fact of their singleness, does not make them second class Christians.
  1. It might be good for us to be reminded that some pretty influential people of the Bible were single.
  2. Jesus was single, John the baptist was single, the Apostle Paul was single and wrote about the single Christian in **I Cor. 7:7,8**.
  3. Paul's desire was for all men to be like him and single, but he recognized that not all people had the ability to live in that manner. His encouragement to remain single must mean that the single Christian is still capable of glorifying God in this life.
  4. What could be his reasoning for this? I think one reason is given to us in **vv.25-28**. The Christians of the day were suffering persecutions and Paul points out that being married could just add more problems.
  5. But I think He also has another reason that leads us to our next point as we discuss how the single Christian can glorify God in this life.

### **II. Those who are single ought to be fully devoted to the Lord.**

- A. Again, this is a motivation for Paul remaining single.
  1. Paul makes it pretty clear that he is able to do much good for the Kingdom because he is single. **(I Cor. 7:32-35)**

2. This makes logical sense. Paul doesn't have any outside responsibilities that would hinder him from the work that he was doing.
  3. He was able to travel as he did and suffer the heartaches of the work without having a wife or kids at home worrying about him and his safety.
  4. With this freedom, he was willing and able to leave it all out there for the Lord.
- B. As a single person, the ability to fully devote yourself to the Lord is in front of you and the can glorify God by using this freedom to His service.
1. Paul actually talks about this again in **I Timothy 5:9,10**. Those widows who were to be taken in by the church were to have been busy within the good works of the Kingdom and fully devoted to the God in all that they did. They used their time well for God!
  2. In **Acts 21:8,9**, we find 4 unmarried women who devoutly served God as prophetesses.
  3. No, you won't be a prophet, but you still should use your life as a single person to be fully devoted to God in all that you do. Paul greatly encouraged it and those who are singles should seek it out.

### **III. There are many opportunities for the single Christian to serve.**

- A. Again, go back to the great things that those single people of the Bible did.
1. No indication that John was married, and he used his time to preach to thousands of people and prepare the way for Jesus.
  2. We, of course, know the amazing work of Jesus.
  3. Paul traveled all of the place evangelizing and strengthening churches.
  4. Paul's son in the faith, Timothy, was so useful for the kingdom. He went with Paul on many trips and was even left by Paul in Ephesus to put all things in order for that church. **(I Timothy 1)**
- B. There are so many things that the single Christian can do to glorify God and serve the local church.
1. Single Christians can be used as teachers for the church. This teaching can be within the churches meeting times or it could be special studies outside of the meeting times.
  2. They can use their time to evangelize and study with or set us studies for others.
  3. They can prepare food for the needy or sick of the congregation. They can visit with those who are in need and encourage them.
  4. They can be great helps with any special projects that need to be done.
  5. There are many things on a weekly basis that can be done to help the church continue to thrive and move forward at this place and at other places.
  6. There is certainly no shortage of ways for the single Christian to glorify God in his or her life.

### **IV. There is a time when it is not wise to remain single.**

- A. Remaining single in this life shouldn't be looked at as some sort of badge of honor.
1. Some might use the "gift" of singleness to say that they were able to get through life without anyone.
  2. They might turn the tables on others and say they are weak for being married and needing someone else.
  3. This mindset is shameful and shouldn't be a part of God's people.
- B. Also, the single Christian should marry if they cannot control their physical desires.
1. Paul concludes his first section of teachings on singleness by saying that if you do not have the ability to remain pure then you should marry to avoid sin. **(I Cor. 7:9)**
  2. My friend who preached on this subject went on a little soapbox and I'd like to do the same for just a brief moment.
  3. We should not be teaching our young Christians that they MUST graduate college and obtain the riches of this world before they marry. Those things should not be the prerequisite for marriage.
  4. The prerequisite should be maturity, devotion to God, and a devotion to their potential spouse. Often, all we are doing is setting Christians up for failure and putting them in situations to not be able to control their fleshly and God given desires in the God approved manner.
  5. I have known many Christians who recognized that singleness wasn't an ability that they had. They got married to another Christian, and sure they didn't have every physical thing they could want, but they loved their God and their spouses and they made it on a little just like so many have done before them.
  6. If a single person is burning in their flesh and they have the right, ability, and maturity to get married then that should be their move so that God will be glorified and they will stay pure. That is a time when singleness should not be maintained. Our God is faithful and he will provide!

The church is made up of all sorts of people at all sorts of different stages of life. Some are married, some have kids, and even some are not married and single. May God help us as a church to focus and provide strength to all peoples who come to us. May we strengthen and lift them up so that they might glorify God in whatever season it is that they are in. No matter our season of life, our goal out to be to glorify God in all ways and to serve the Kingdom as best we can. May God help us to all glorify Him and serve Him all of our days.