

Singleness and Contentment

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I. Introductions, Workshop Goal

Goal ... to help you develop a Biblical view of singleness

Why are you here?

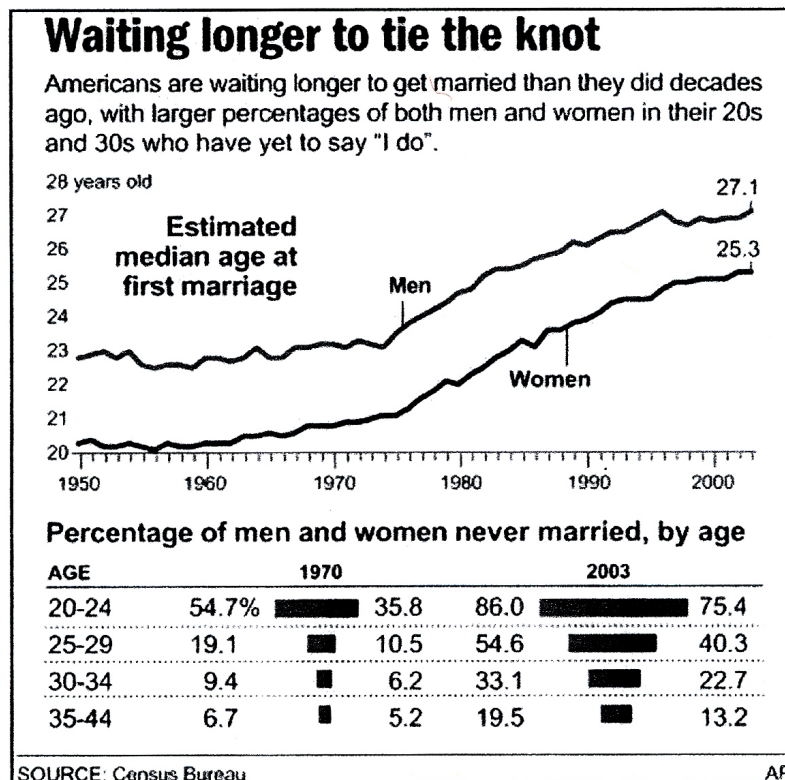
My story

Agenda ...

- Where is our culture today?
- Lies single women believe
- God's promises
- What can I do?
- Learning to be content

II. Where is our culture today?

- Nearly half of all American women are living without a spouse and the number of
- Average age of first marriage for all women is almost 26 - and it's 30 for those who pursue a higher education



III. Lies Single Women Believe

*... so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes.
II Corinthians 2:11*

A. If I were content, then God would bring along a husband

- Implies that God's blessings are earned by our contentment
- Implies that those who are married have earned it
- If I am not content in my current circumstances, then I'm unlikely to be content in a new set of circumstances.
- Deut. 9:6 NASB - You must recognize that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land because you are good, for you are not - you are a stubborn people.
- Was Jesus content?

B. God has forgotten me

- Implies that God is less competent than the mother of a newborn
- Isaiah 49:15 NASB - "Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you."

C. God owes me/I deserve a husband

- Implies that I can earn God's blessing rather than being dependent on His grace and mercy

D. If God loved me, He'd give me a husband

- Implies that God is less good to me today than when He hung on the cross - an impossibility
- Romans 8:32 NLT - Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

E. A husband will solve all my problems

- Implies that God is not sufficient to meet all your needs
- Only God understands and knows us completely - Psalm 139

F. I'm too picky

- Implies God needs broader parameters in which to work
- If I wanted to be married, I could be married. The real questions is do I want to marry well?

G. I'm not pretty enough ... thin enough ... spiritual enough

- Implies that God did a poor job in creating you
- Psalm 139:13 NLT -- You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

H. I have to have a husband to be happy

- Implies that happiness is only given to those who are married

- Implies that the purpose of marriage is personal happiness and fulfillment.
- Ultimate purpose of marriage is to glorify God - not to make us happy
- True happiness can only to be found through Christ
- Marrying to find happiness
 - sets you up for disappointment
 - can lead to settling for less than God's best

I. Before I can marry someone wonderful, God has to make me someone wonderful

- Implies that God grants marriage as a second blessing to the sanctified

J. God wants me to be happy

- Implies that God is more concerned about my happiness than my holiness
- Implies that God wants to fulfill all His promises while we are on this earth Hebrews 11:13 NASB - All these died in faith without receiving the promises but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance.
- God uses suffering in our lives to change us
II Corinthians 4:17-18 NASB -- For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

IV. God's Promises

A. Joy is not dependent on being married

Psalm 16:11 NASB - Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.

B. God's plan is for your good

Jeremiah 29:11 NASB - "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

C. God doesn't withhold good

Psalm 84:11 NASB - For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. Psalm 34:10 NLT - Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the Lord will lack no good thing.

D. God will give you your heart's desire

Psalm 37:4-5 NASB - Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He will do it.

- This is a tricky verse - be careful how you interpret it

E. You can have spiritual children

Isaiah 54:1 NASB - "Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman," says the Lord.

F. God will be your husband

Isaiah 54:5 NLT - For your Creator will be your husband; the Lord of Heaven's Armies is his name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth.

- How exciting is it that the king of all creation chose you to be his bride!
- Isaiah 62:4 NLT - ... for the Lord delights in you and will claim you as his bride.

G. God will satisfy you

Isaiah 58:10-11 NASB - And if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday. And the Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.

H. God will provide peace

John 14:27 NLT- "I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."

God's peace does not replace our emotions, but rather gives assurance that God is in control in spite of what we are feeling.

Bob Shelton, Singles Pastor

I. God loves you

Ephesians 3:18-19 NLT - And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully.

- The one who knows you inside and out, loves you with an incredible love

J. God will be with you in everything

Isaiah 43:2 NASB - When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.

- You will never have to face anything alone

K. God has given you everything you need

Psalm 23:1 NLT - The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.

V. What can you do?

A. Seek Him

Psalm 27:4 NASB - One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to meditate in His temple.

B. Control your thoughts

- Proverbs 4:23 NASB - Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life

- Romance novels

C. Don't dwell on "If only ..."

- II Corinthians 10:5 NASB - ... taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

D. Don't put off anything "until I get married"

- Buy dishes and furniture
- Buy pretty lingerie

E. Pursue a career

- Use your gifts and talents
- Marriage is no guarantee of financial stability - divorce, disability, and death happen

F. Don't buy what the world is selling

- Romans 12:2 NASB - And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

G. There are worse things than being single

H. Rely on God - not yourself

- Galatians 3:3 NLT - How foolish can you be? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?
- John 15:5 NASB - Apart from Me you can do nothing
- Zechariah 4:6b NASB - "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts.

I. Miscellaneous

- Weddings and wedding showers can be difficult - recruit someone to pray for you
- Seeing happy families together was difficult for me - again, recruit someone to pray for you
- 30 days - thank God every morning and every night

VI. Learning Contentment

The truth is that contentment is not found in having everything we think we want but in choosing to be satisfied with what God has already provided.

Nancy Leigh DeMoss, author of Lies Women Believe

A. What is contentment

- It is not resignation to circumstances that do not change - this can lead to bitterness
- It is acceptance of circumstances because
 - God's plan for me is for His glory and for my good
 - God knows what is best for me

- God allows nothing without a purpose
- God loves me

B. Longings are not sinful in and of themselves

- Wrong responses to longings
 - Demanding that God fulfill my longings right now
 - Taking things into my own hands and fulfilling my longings in an illegitimate way
- Truth is that God alone can fulfill our deepest longings
- Being content does not mean that you will not have unfulfilled longings

We must learn to accept those longings, surrender them to God, and look to Him to meet the deepest needs of our hearts.

– Nancy Leigh DeMoss, author of Lies Women Believe

C. Contentment can be learned

Phil. 4:11-13 NASB - Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

- Fantasizing - feeds discontent
- Firm belief in the sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness of God in all the circumstances of our lives. - Jerry Bridges

Confident trust in God is not a battle that's fought once and won, but rather one in which you gain a beachhead and then continually fight to take new territory

– Bob Shelton "Living Single When I Want to Be Married"

D. Primary goal is to know and glorify God

Phil. 3:10 AMP - [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly],

1 Cor. 7:32 NLT - I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him.

E. God's Plan vs. Mine

- The primary goal of life is that we know and glorify God
- Esther - exiled, orphaned, raised by cousin, unwilling bride
- Daniel - exiled
- Ruth - widowed with no children, all the men in the family dead
- Moses - leading Israel in the desert for 40 years instead of being in the Promised Land - and not because of anything he did
- Joshua - sold into slavery by his brothers - Gen 50:20 NLT - You intended to harm

me, but God intended it all for good.

- Job - loss of all his children and wealth for no reason that he ever knew

F. Caution

Psalm 106:15

NASB - And he gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.

NLT - So he gave them what they asked for, but he sent a plague along with it.

MSG - He gave them exactly what they asked for - but along with it they got an empty heart.

G. Surrender

Lord, I am willing to -

Receive what you give,

Lack what you withhold,

Relinquish what you take.

- Anonymous, quoted by Jerry Bridges in Respectable Sins

Resources

Singleness

"Living Single When I Want to Be Married" Bob Shelton workshop, available at

www.discipleshiptapelibrary.com

Lies Women Believe by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Purity

Every Woman's Battle by Shannon Ethridge

Guarding Your Heart by Dr. Gary and Barb Rothberg

Boundaries in Dating

I Kissed Dating Goodbye by Joshua Harris

Too Close Too Soon by Jim Talley