

## **Devoted: Paul's Transformative Vision for Singleness**

Ellen Mary Dykas  
www.harvestusa.org

### **Introduction**

### **Quick Biblical Theology of Singleness**

#### Foundation

- God is sovereign over our lives (Psalm 139)
- He is loving in his lordship and authorship of all our days (Psalm 136; Hebrews 12:1–2)
- He faithfully uses all of our experiences to make us more like Jesus (Romans 8:28–29)
- Our earthly stories will one day give way to what they were pointing to all along: His STORY! (1 Peter 1:13; Colossians 3:1–4; Revelation 19:6–10)

### **1. The Old Testament pointed forward to the radical in-breaking of the gospel into our understanding of being unmarried and married.**

**Isaiah 54:1** “Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married,” says the Lord.”

**Isaiah 56:3–5** Something new was going to happen through the coming Messiah.

### **2. Jesus was the in-breaking of the gospel; now no family relationship is ultimate; relationship to him is.**

**Mark 4:34–35** And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

### **3. Paul: Our priority as believers is to be devoted, undistracted disciples.**

### **4. Paul: 1 Corinthians 7:6–8. Singleness lived in devotion to Jesus is a beautiful signpost to our eternal reality.**

a. Context in Corinth

b. What's “the gift”?

- grace to be faithful as single or married

- “. . . a Spirit enabled freedom to serve the King and the kingdom wholeheartedly, without undue distraction for the longings of sexual intimacy, marriage and family.” —Barry Danylak

**5. Paul: 1 Corinthians 7:32–35. The single life can provide a unique opportunity to be focused on devotion to Christ.**

**Applications for the Church: For those of us who are unmarried**

- a. Grief and shame
- b. Identity, home, and hope in Christ
- c. Desires and dreams
- d. Beliefs
- e. Posture of heart

**Applications for the Church: For all of us**

- a. Cultivate family-of-God community
- b. Dating in the household of faith
- c. Learn the specific stories of singles and point to THE Story
- d. Offer the comfort *and* the challenge of the gospel to the unmarried

**Recommended Resources**

- *Redeeming Singleness: How the Storyline of Scripture Affirms the Single Life*, Barry Danylak. See <https://seeglobally.org/>
- “Single in Christ: A Name Better Than Sons and Daughters,” John Piper, [desiringgod.com](http://desiringgod.com)
- *Single and Lonely: Finding the Intimacy You Desire* (minibook), Jayne V. Clark
- *Divorce Recovery: Growing and Healing God’s Way* (minibook), William Smith
- *Becoming a Widow: The Ache of Missing Your Other Half* (minibook), Elizabeth Groves