

Devoted: Paul's Transformative Vision for Singleness

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Biblical Theology of Singleness

Biblical 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)



'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 54:1



2. Jesus was the in-breaking of the gospel.

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

Mark 4:34–35



2. Jesus was the in-breaking of the gospel.

“Human marriage is temporary and finally gives way to the relationship to which it was pointing all along: Christ and the church—the way a picture is no longer needed when you see face to face; so now, faithfulness to our Savior defines the value of life; all other relationships get their final significance from this. No family relationship is ultimate; relationship to Christ is.”

“Single in Christ,” John Piper



3. Paul: Living as *devoted, undistracted disciples*—single or married—is our priority.



4. Paul: 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.



4. Paul: 1 Corinthians 7:6–9

What is the 'gift'?

"... 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

"Is the 'charisma/grace' to be in whatever state you are; if you're single or married, there is a grace on your life to be in your current state." Dani Treweek



5. Paul: 1 Corinthians 7:32–35

³² I want you to be **free from anxieties**. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. ³³ But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, ³⁴ and 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. ³⁵ I 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.**



Summary

This need not be complicated, controversial, or a competition! Can we simply, yet faithfully, let singleness be a pathway for God's people, for the sake of Christ and the expansion of his kingdom?

Can we, the household of faith, keep growing into our eternal reality: eternal spiritual siblings helping each other live as devoted disciples of Jesus?



Implications and Applications

For my unmarried sisters and brothers:

1. Grief and shame
2. Identity, home, and hope in Christ
3. Desires and dreams
4. Beliefs
5. Posture of heart



Implications and Applications

For the family of God:

1. Promote family of God reality in practical ways
2. Dating in the household of faith
3. Learn stories and understand THE Story
4. Offer the comfort *and* the challenge of the gospel



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Recommended Resources

- *Redeeming Singleness: How the Storyline of Scripture Affirms the Single Life*, Barry Danylak. See <https://seeglobally.org/>—equipping the Church with a biblical paradigm of singleness, marriage, and spiritual family
- "Single in Christ: A Name Better Than Sons and Daughters," John Piper, 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

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