



Finding Joy in Your *Singleness*

A Resource from
Kindred*Soul* Counseling

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Introduction

“Take the very hardest thing in your life - the place of difficulty, outward or inward, and expect God to triumph gloriously in that very spot. Just there He can bring your soul into blossom.”

Dear Struggling Single,

You are not alone in feeling alone. We all struggle with loneliness. When you're single, it can feel like the whole world is in love. Sometimes life can be extra painful, as we are reminded of the deep longing in our hearts for marriage and for a spouse; your best friend enters a new relationship, you're the only single girl in your small group, another wedding invite arrives in the mail, etc. Perhaps this longing has led you to distrust the Lord. People tell you, He's good and does good, but another year has gone by and you're still single, sad, and lonely. Maybe that relationship you thought would work out failed and you're left hurt again, with your heart in a million pieces. If that's you, please don't despair sister. To the aching; God's Word says: you are not alone. God is good, and there is greater joy than the sorrow you're experiencing.

But how do we get to the place where we truly believe those truths? How do we move from distrust to embracing the truth that God is good and that He's doing enough good in relation to our lives? How do we find joy in the midst of our unwanted singleness?

This booklet will answer these questions and help you to find joy in Christ, even in the midst of your unwanted singleness.

from,

A fellow single sister.

DAY ONE
HAVE YOU
TURNED A
GOOD DESIRE
INTO A
DEMAND?

Align Your Desires

“For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also.”

A Good Desire

A desire for marriage is a good desire from the Lord. It is not wrong to want to be married one day, but when we allow it to become something we treasure above God, we can easily fall into sinful attitudes (such as frustration, jealousy, anger, discouragement and despair). Have you been struggling with any sinful attitudes over your singleness? If you answered yes, how do you get out of this type of thinking? How do you start embracing and enjoying a life of singleness? How do you live satisfied, even in your unwanted singleness?

Made to Worship

God made us to worship Him, yet so often we worship the creation over the Creator. Therefore, the problem isn't that we don't have what we want (marriage); the problem is that we worship what we want and begin to demand it from the Lord. Longing for a spouse isn't wrong or sinful, God made marriage and it is a good thing. But, we turn good things into sinful things when we live for our desires above God. We are prone to believe that a relationship will satisfy the deepest longings in our hearts and bring us ultimate contentment. Yet Scripture tells us that creation is like a broken cistern that will never satisfy us and that running after other things to satisfy us will only bring sorrow and disappointment (Jeremiah 2:13-14, Psalm 16:4-5). It is the Lord who is our portion, our pleasure, and our joy.

- “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11).

A Higher Treasure

Satan is the “father of lies,” and he uses our desires to convince us that the Lord isn’t really to be trusted because He hasn’t given us what we really want (John 8:44). Thus, we worry we will never get what we really want. We become angry and bitter towards the Lord for holding out on us, and sad because we feel He’s let us down; and now we’re hopeless to change our circumstances. If we think this way long enough, we will fall into deep despair. So how do you change your thinking?

To change our thinking, we must seek to align our desires with the Lord by making Him our greatest delight and treasure. Luke 12:34 says “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” If we are treasuring marriage, that will be the center of our focus. Yet if we are treasuring the Lord, He will be the center of our focus. When we make the Lord the center of our life and desire His will to be done and His name to be glorified above all else we will find true joy and satisfaction. Psalm 37:4 says it this way, “delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” This does not mean that the Lord is going to give us everything we want and desire. Instead, this means that we are to align our desires with what the Lord desires and then He will give us the desires of our heart, because they will be for Him. A. Craig Troxel sums it up as such:

- “Our desires and our will significantly influence our mind, just as our thinking affects our desires and will. God shaped our hearts in such a way that our thinking functions properly only if our desires and will are right with God.”

Respond

- How have you been struggling with sinful attitudes over your singleness?
- In what ways have you been desiring/treasuring marriage above the Lord?
- Read Romans 8:5-6. In what ways have you been setting your mind on the things of the flesh? How can you set your mind on the things of the Spirit in these areas?

- Read Psalm 16. How can you delight yourself in the Lord today?

Prayer

Write out a prayer asking the Lord to help you make Him the greatest treasure of your heart.

DAY TWO
IS YOUR
LONGING FOR
MARRIAGE
SLAYING THE
APPETITE
OF YOUR LIVING?

Run Toward Jesus

“Let not your longing slay the
appetite of your living.”

Made Alive in Christ

What are you racing toward? Are you racing toward marriage or toward Jesus?

There is a line from the movie *Bride Wars* and it is so relevant to how singleness can feel at times. The wedding planner states that “a wedding marks the first day of the rest of your life. You have been dead until now. Were you aware of that? You’re dead right now.”

Have you ever felt like this? Like life will finally start when you get married or that life is just racing by and you keep getting a year older and are still single? There is only one relationship that ought to define your life and seasons—your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Scripture tells us that we are dead in our trespasses and sins and made alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-5). Our lives don’t start when we get married, rather, our lives are made new when Christ makes us alive in Him—when He saves us through His grace. Therefore, we can live a full and satisfied life in and through Christ in every season of life—even in our unwanted singleness. For Christ, not marriage, gives our life purpose, joy and meaning.

So instead of running toward a future relationship and marriage, run toward Christ with all that you are and all that you have.

- “Get your life from this. Get your joy from this. Get your hope from this—that you are chosen, set apart, and loved by God. Plead with the Lord that this would be that heartbeat of your life” (John Piper).

Live for Today

If you are single, you can accept your singleness in Christ by His grace. Instead of constantly looking to the future wondering if you will ever get married, take today as if it were the last day of your life and live it for Christ. Enjoy all the good gifts that the Lord has already so graciously blessed you with and run after glorifying Him in all that you do (James 1:16-17, 1 Corinthians 10:31).

Don't let your longing for marriage slay the appetite of your living. In other words, don't let your desire for marriage be so consuming that it keeps you from all the joys and blessings that the Lord has already so graciously given you. Instead of being consumed by your desire for marriage, throw your heart and soul into the will of God for your life today.

- “Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last” (C.T. Studd).

Respond

- In what ways has your desire for marriage been slaying the appetite of your living?

- Read Ephesians 2:1-10. When does Scripture say that we are made alive? In what ways have you been waiting on marriage for your life to start?

- How can you seek to live to glorify God in your singleness today?

Prayer

Write out a prayer asking the Lord to help you get your life, joy and hope from Him alone, that He would be the heartbeat of your life.

DAY THREE
WHERE
ARE YOU
LOOKING FOR
PURPOSE &
IDENTITY?

Look To Love

“One of the reasons so many singles are dissatisfied is that they’re looking for a change in status to define their significance, rather than finding a purpose in life, granted by God, that gives them significance regardless of the status they’re in.”

The Greatest Two Commandments

The greatest two commandments, to love God and to love others, apply to all of life—even singleness (Matthew 22:36-40).

What do the greatest two commandments have to do with singleness? Absolutely everything. God made us to love Him and to love others—this is our purpose in life. When we are living out the greatest two commandments, we are living out our purpose. When we are living to love God and to love others above all else our focus will be on looking to love instead of for love.

What exactly does this mean? This means that instead of putting all our focus and energy into trying to find love and marriage, we change our focus to be on seeking to love God and to love others. This takes the focus off of self and puts it onto God and others. Looking to love God and others will fill us up in a way that looking for love never will. For as beautiful as marriage is—it was never meant to satisfy us.

In Jesus Christ, you already have the greatest love you will ever find and now because of His love, you can love Him and others (1 John 4:19).

Love God

The Lord made us to Love Him with our whole being; this is where our purpose, identity and joy is found. As we walk in love for God through genuine obedience, it will result in experiencing deeper dimensions of God's love towards us and a

deeper reality of His presence with us.

- “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:10-11).

Our love for the Lord will grow as we grow in knowing more of who God is and what He has done, is doing, and will do for us. For as we gaze deeper upon the infinite beauty of Christ, we will see what great love He has given to such wretched sinners (Romans 5:8).

- “The gospel is this: we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope” (Timothy Keller).

Love Others

The Lord also made us to love others with His love. In other words, to seek the highest good of others unconditionally with no strings attached.

- “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

As we walk in God’s love for others, we are walking in our purpose for God made

us to show others His love. He made us to share the good news of the gospel, to disciple others and to be the hands and feet of Jesus. John 15:13 states, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” Our lives are not our own; Jesus Christ bought them and calls us to live for Him and others. When we live this way, we will find true fulfillment. In the words of Lilius Trotter, a woman who lived her whole life as a single woman:

- “A flower that stops short at its flowering misses its purpose. We were created for more than our own spiritual development; reproduction, not mere development is the goal of matured being—reproduction in other lives.”

As a response to the garden of love we have been given in God, we are to reproduce that same love in our lives into others lives.

Respond

- In what ways have you been looking for love? In what ways have you allowed looking for love in marriage to be your main focus /goal in life?

- Write three practical ways that you can look to love God today?

- Write three practical ways that you can look to love others today.

Prayer

Read Matthew 22:36-40. Write out a prayer asking the Lord to help you focus on looking to love Him and others.

DAY FOUR
WHAT DO YOU
DO WITH
YOUR DESIRE
FOR SEXUAL
INTIMACY
AS A SINGLE
WOMAN?

A Deeper Intimacy

“If you look outside of the Savior for something to be your savior, that thing will end up not being your savior but your master.”

A Deeper Intimacy

The intimacy of a marriage is meant to point to a deeper intimacy between Christ and the Church.

- “God created us in His image, male and female, with personhood and sexual passions, so that when He comes to us in this world there would be these powerful words and images to describe the promises and the pleasures of our covenant relationship with Him through Christ” (John Piper).

The intimacy of marriage gives language to the eternal pleasure and fullness of joy that we have in Christ. To behold God in the fullness of His glory will be far beyond any pleasure or intimacy that we could ever experience in this life.

In Exodus 33:18, Moses asks God to “please show me Your glory.” God responds by saying that He will show Moses His glory, but not in its fullness; for “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live (Exodus 33:20).”

- “And the LORD said, ‘Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen’” (Exodus 33:21-23).

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony

in his hand, his face shone because he had been talking with God (Exodus 34:29). The face of Moses shone after beholding the veiled glory of the Lord. Just imagine, one day soon we will stand face to face beholding the Lord in the fullness of His glory—what a marvelous day that will be.

When Your Desire becomes Your Master

Your desire for sexual intimacy is not wrong; it is a good desire in the right context. In the confines of marriage, sexual intimacy is a beautiful thing. Yet outside of marriage, it reaps pain and destruction. So what are we to do with our desire for sexual intimacy as a single woman? We are to submit our desire over to our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that sexual pleasure was not made to satisfy our souls. Sexual intimacy is a temporary shadow of the far greater eternal intimacy that we already have in Christ.

- “Sex is powerfully pleasurable, but it cannot satisfy your heart...The problem is that the created thing that you’re looking to wasn’t designed to satisfy your heart. It cannot give you inner peace. It cannot quiet your cravings. In a word, it cannot be your savior. And if you look outside of the Savior for something to be your savior, that thing will end up not being your savior but your master” (Paul David Tripp).

Fighting Sexual Temptation

Remember, your desire for sexual intimacy is not bad, it is a good and natural desire from the Lord. The problem is what you do with the desire, if you find

yourself struggling with sexual temptation and lust, know that you are not alone. This is not a temptation that only guys face, but one women face as well. If you are battling sexual temptation, know that the Lord has made a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). You do not have to live enslaved for life. There is freedom and victory in Christ. There is a far superior intimacy in Christ to fill you up.

Marriage will not all of the sudden solve the problem of lustful desires. If lustful desires have become your master now, they will still be your master in marriage. Christ has set you free from the bondage to sin; you no longer have to be enslaved to lustful desires and sexual temptation (Galatians 5:1). So what do you do when you are battling sexual temptation? What do you do when repeated failure, guilt, and shame weigh heavily on your conscience?

First, you must remember that Christ has provided a way of escape and that you are no longer a slave to the flesh, you now have a choice. (Romans 8:13). Second, when the guilt and shame of failure weigh heavy on you, turn to God in repentance. For God does not despise a broken and contrite heart, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (Psalm 51:17, 1 John 1:9). When we are in Christ, we are forever His—nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:38-39). Even though we struggle to trade Him for the fleeting pleasures of this life; He never trades us. Our failure reminds us that salvation was never ours to earn and that we desperately need Jesus. Lastly, we must replace lustful thoughts and renew our mind with the truth of Scripture. David Powlison uses a beautiful metaphor to describe the process of replacing our dark thoughts with Christ-honoring thoughts,

- “Here’s an old metaphor about how a Christian fights against darkness. Envision your mind as a room. When sin reigns, that room is filled with dark thoughts, dark actions, and deceptive people who mean you no good. So how do you get darkness out of the room? There are two ways that you fight. First, you stand up to the darkness, expelling it from the room, learning to directly say no to evil. And second, you fight the darkness by filling the room with light. There’s no room for the darkness when the room is filled with worthy actions, true thoughts, and constructive people. When Christ enters the room, He is patiently committed to teach us to say no to what is wrong and yes to what is merciful and good”

If sexual temptation is an area that you struggle in, it is key to keep a humble heart about it, to know that it is not your identity, but that it is an area to be on guard in. Praise God for His grace when you see victory in your life in this area and as you gaze upon the beauty of Christ and His far superior joy, sin will begin to lose its attractiveness. You will begin to see sin for the deceptive liar that it is and how it reaps nothing but destruction. The best way to fight temptation is through growing in a deeper love for the Lord. For as you grow in love for Him, you will grow in deeper intimacy and fellowship with Him which will fill you up in a way that no earthly momentary pleasure can. We have this beautiful God given desire for sexual intimacy, yet as a single it can begin to feel more like a curse than a blessing. However, the hunger for sexual intimacy in our singleness teaches us to hunger and thirst after something far greater—the love of Christ.

The battle against sexual temptation teaches us that there is value in our hunger when we embrace our hunger not as an enemy, but as a means to pointing us

into deeper intimacy with the Lord. Just as the feeling of hunger is the point of a fast; in the same way hunger for marital intimacy teaches us to hunger for something better—intimacy with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Fabienne Harford states it as such:

- “Today, my body wants something tangible and physical that it was designed to have. And today, I don’t get to have that thing. Of course my body grumbles, and as it does, I get to testify that in the midst of my hunger, God is trustworthy. I’m learning to hunger for something better. He is calling us to hunger because He wants us to experience the greatest pleasure available to man: Himself.”

The Root of Sin

Sin always goes back to our desires and what we are believing about God. In Genesis 3, God told Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Yet Adam and Eve believed satan’s lies and thought they would be happier if they ate from the forbidden tree. They believed lies about God’s words and motives, so they desired to eat from the tree, thinking it would make them wise. We do the exact same thing—we get lured and enticed by our own desires and begin to believe lies about God, such as that He is holding out on us. James 1:13-15 describes the process of being tempted and falling into sin. James says that we are tempted by our own desires. Our desires “lure” and “entice” us; in other words, we begin to believe that our own desires will satisfy us more than obeying God. We then willfully chose to sin which brings forth nothing but pain, disappointment, shame, disaster and death.

- “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” (James 1:13-15).

Therefore, the answer to battling against sexual temptation is seeing and savoring Jesus Christ. As we seek and savor Jesus Christ, our desires will begin to change and we will see Him as our deepest delight that far outweighs all else. Jon Bloom sums it up beautifully:

- “We keep falling into the same sin when we fail to believe that holiness really will make us happier than giving in again. Many other factors may influence us, but at the root of habitual sin is a battle not for self-control, but for happiness. What we believe and want deep in our hearts really matters. we will keep choosing to sin as long as we believe that choosing not to sin is choosing less happiness. Habitual sin is not fundamentally defeated through the power of self-denial, but through the power of a greater desire. Self-denial is of course necessary, but self-denial is only possible—certainly for the long term—when it is fueled by a desire for a greater joy than what we deny.”

Next time you are tempted to give in to sexual temptation, ask yourself what you are believing about God and what are you wanting deep in your heart? Then remind yourself of the far greater joy that is found in obeying Jesus Christ and submitting your desires to Him.

No Condemnation

If you have fallen into temptation in the area of sexual sin, there is forgiveness in the Lord. Please know that there is “now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).” The lifestyle of a Christian is one of continual repentance and the Lord does not despise a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). The Lord wants you to come to Him in repentance over your sin and to know that when you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you of your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). His mercy is new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). In Christ, you can confidently draw near to the throne of grace, knowing that in Him you will receive mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16). Know this; nothing you have done is too much for Christ to forgive. Come to Him with your sin, for He alone forgives, cleanses and brings peace.

As a new believer, I had a sister in Christ write these words to me, “please know that no past sin should still rule over you or keep you from walking closely with Him. I know God has called you to do great things for Him.” Little did this sister who wrote these words know that I was carrying around the weight and shame of failure in the area of sexual sin. These words were exactly what I needed to hear. These words being spoken to me marked the beginning of the Lord bringing my sin to the light, allowing Him to bring me freedom from shame, guilt and slavery to my sin. So, sister, I say these same words to you today: Please know that no past sin should still rule over you or keep you from walking closely with Him. God has called you to do great things for Him, there is freedom in Christ from your shame, guilt and bondage. In Christ, you are made new and can now walk in the newness of life that He has already given you.

- Read Luke 7:36-50. Have you been believing the lie that you have done too much for Christ to forgive? If so, come to Him now in repentance, remembering He does not despise a broken and contrite heart.

Prayer

- Read Psalm 32 & 51, David's repentance Psalms. Then write out your own prayer of repentance, asking the Lord to help you seek and savor Him as who He is—your deepest delight.

DAY FIVE
DO YOU FEEL
LIKE YOU
NEED TO BE
MARRIED?

The Meaning of Marriage

“The meaning of marriage is the display of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and His people.”

Covenant Keeping Love

Marriage is from God through God and for God. In the words of John Piper: “the meaning of marriage is the display of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and His people.” Ultimately, marriage exists for God’s glory.

- “The ultimate thing we can say about marriage is that it exists for God’s glory. That is, it exists to display God. Marriage is patterned after Christ’s covenant relationship to His redeemed people, the church. And therefore, the highest meaning and the most ultimate purpose of marriage is to put the covenant relationships of Christ and His church on display. That is why marriage exists. If you hope to be married, that should be your dream” (John Piper).

When you dream about marriage, is it to glorify God or is it to have your desires met? Personal gratification should not be at the center of our desire for marriage. A good way to know if we want to marry for God’s glory is to ask ourselves if we are content with, whatever our lot, marriage or singleness. Are you content with being single for life if that is what God deems as most glorifying to Him for your life?

The sole purpose of marriage is not to satisfy our own desires or to have another person meet all of our needs. No person can do this and if we are expecting them to do so, then we are turning them into an idol and are going to be very disappointed (Jeremiah 2:13). It is Jesus Christ alone who can satisfy our hearts and desires and meet our every need. Charles Stanley puts it this way:

- “Who wants to get married for the sole purpose of being used by the other person to get all of his or her needs met? Who on this earth could remotely feel that it is either possible or equitable to spend one’s life solely for the purpose of meeting another person’s needs? And yet many people who say with a tone of desperation in their voices, ‘I need to get married,’ are looking for precisely that—somebody to meet all of their needs for them. The need to be married is a me-centered need in most cases.”

This quote was really convicting when I first read it. I did not want to acknowledge how much I had been looking to marriage to meet my needs. But I was still idolizing marriage and looking to it to satisfy me, making it something I had to have. Yet when we are willing to acknowledge our own self-centeredness and sinful desires, then we can come to the Lord in repentance. The lifestyle of a christian is one of repentance, as we will never be perfect in this life, but thanks be to God, who has delivered us from this body of death and who is sanctifying us until we are home with Him (Romans 7:24-25, Philippians 1:6).

Instead of looking to marriage to fulfill our desires, let us seek to look at marriage for what it is—a display of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and the church. When we are able to see the big picture of marriage (why God created it in the first place) it gives us a greater perspective.

Having a Biblical view of marriage is helpful in your singleness, for it takes your eyes off of self and puts them on God. In His sovereignty, right now, your singleness is what Christ has deemed as most glorifying to Him.

Naked & Unashamed

When we fall in love, we want to give ourselves completely over to the other person because we all have this innate desire to be truly known and truly loved. To be naked and unashamed. Yet, no person can quench this desire in us. Only God can. In Genesis 3, man is separated from God as the first sin and act of rebellion against God takes place. As a result, Adam and Eve are “naked and ashamed.”

- “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was **afraid**, because I was **naked**, and I **hid myself**.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” (Genesis 3:8-11)

Before sin entered the picture “the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” before God and each other (Genesis 3:25). Yet when they sinned, the very foundation of covenant-keeping love collapsed. Their sin broke their fellowship with God and their all-trusting security that they once shared in their marriage. Now that their relationship with God had been separated and fractured by sin, they could no longer walk confidently with God in the garden; they now tried to hide themselves from His very presence. We are all born sinners in desperate need to be restored to a right relationship with God. It is only through Jesus Christ that our sin can be covered and our relationship with

God restored (1 John 2:2). The Study Bible for Women puts it as such:

- “Adam and Eve could no longer walk naked before God, for by their disobedience they had made themselves vulnerable, inadequate, and ashamed. Their clothing would always be a reminder of their loss of a wonderful relationship with God, while also a token of God’s tender mercy in providing covering they needed. The clothes were made of skin, the Bible’s first hint of death, which had been totally absent up until this point. Already a substitute was required. An animal died that man might be able to face God. Here appeared the beginnings of an understanding of substitution and sacrifice, which would lead to the final sacrifice Jesus Christ.”

God clothed Adam and Eve: “and the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them (Genesis 3:21).” Adam and Eve had tried to cloth themselves (Genesis 3:7), yet their own provision was not adequate, God did for them what they could not do for themselves. Christ is the only one who can give us the covering we need and long for. It is only through the blood of Christ that we can once again stand naked and unashamed before God. And it is Christ alone who fully knows us and loves us so much that He died for our sin.

- “Marriage was designed from the beginning to display the new covenant between Christ and the Church. We have seen this in Ephesians 5:31-32. The very essence of this new covenant is that Christ passes over the sins of His bride. His bride is free from shame not because she is perfect, but because she has no fear that her lover will condemn her or shame her because of her sin” (John Piper).

Respond

- In what ways has your desire for marriage become self-centered? In other words, in what ways are you looking to marriage to meet your own desires, needs, or insecurities?
- How does looking at the meaning of marriage change your perspective on marriage?

- Read Psalm 139. What truths about being truly loved and truly know by God can you glean from this passage of Scripture?

Prayer

Write out a prayer praising God for His everlasting covenant-keeping love.

DAY SIX

DO YOU BELIEVE
THAT GOD'S
LOVE IS
FAR GREATER
THAN ANY
EARTHLY LOVE?

Eternal Love

“We’re not on hold. Waiting in faith is our high form of worship. And though we may not be married, we are eternally embraced in the arms of everlasting love.”

A Momentary Gift

Marriage is temporary—it is not eternal, it is a momentary gift. It could last years, or it could be snatched away in an instant. Yet the love of Christ is eternal. It can never be snatched away; we can never be separated from the love of Christ.

- “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Marriage is merely a shadow of the love of Christ to His bride, the Church. It is an illustration of the Gospel.

- “Very soon the shadow will give way to reality. The partial will pass into the Perfect. The foretaste will lead to the Banquet. The troubled path will end in Paradise. A hundred candle-lit evenings will come to their consummation in the marriage supper of the lamb. And this momentary marriage (or singleness) will be swallowed up by Life. Christ will be all and in all. And the purpose of marriage will be complete” (John Piper).

The Eternal Gift

Unlike earthly marriage, marriage to Christ, is eternal. The Church is referred to in Scripture as the Bride of Christ. Here are just a few examples:

- “Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7).
- “And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true words of God’” (Revelation 19:9).
- “For your Maker is your husband the Lord of hosts is His name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer the God of the whole earth He is called” (Isaiah 54:5).
- “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Jesus is a betrothed King and His betrothed bride is the Church. Jesus Christ laid down His life for His bride: He paid a dowry, as it were, with His own blood. And He will come a second time to marry His bride and to take her into His infinite love and joy that far exceeds any finite earthly love. Jesus Christ will wipe away every tear, every pain and death will be no more, the curse on creation will be shattered and we will behold our bridegroom face-to-face for all eternity. We will be eternally embraced in the arms of the everlasting love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Richard Baxter sums it up as such:

- “Christian, believe this, and think on it: thou shalt be eternally embraced in the arms of that love which was from everlasting, and will extend to everlasting—of that love which brought the Son of God’s love from heaven to earth, from earth to the cross, from the cross to the grave, from the grave to glory—that love which was weary, hungry, tempted, scorned, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crucified, pierced—which did fast, pray, teach, heal, weep, sweat, bleed, die; that love will eternally embrace thee.”

So though you may be single right now, remember that marriage in this life is temporary and only a mere shadow of the everlasting love of the Father that will embrace you for all eternity.

The Gospel is a Kiss

There once was a princess. She loved her family dearly and caring for them was her highest honor and joy. A terrible sickness befell her home—it struck her children without mercy and even claimed one of her precious darlings. She tried her best to keep news of her youngest daughter’s death from despairing her other little loves as they continued their fight against the illness. To remain the healthy heroic caregiver, she had to restrain her sacred natural instinct—her motherly love and affection. The princess ever so painfully guarded herself from physical contact with her babes while she tended to them. How she must have longed to hold them tight and cover them with kisses, what anguish! Yet she went on day after day in bondage as their distant dedicated guardian, knowing any breach could mean grave harm and part her from the gifts she loved so sweetly. One day, she overheard her boy telling his nursemaid that he

wondered why his mother never kissed him anymore. The dam broke and in an instant she ran to his side and gave that final fatal kiss. The princess was buried a few days later.

This tale is the moving account of Princess Alice, the daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and in it we see a partial picture of the Glorious Gospel.

A person's kiss cannot heal you forever, but Jesus' can. God kissed us when He sent His Son. He knew coming to us would mean His death, yet into the world He came and to the Cross He went, all the while tenderly pressing His lips to ours—that fatal kiss. By it, He caught our sickness and made us well (Isaiah 53:2-6).

Today in your singleness, may you find that the greatest love delight is this: the Gospel is a kiss. May it ravish and rapture your heart as you think on His glorious, tender love for so cruel and wounded a creature (1 Peter 3:18, John 3:16).

Respond

- Think about the most romantic love stories you know of. What are they like compared to the Gospel? In what ways do they always fall short?

- Read through Isaiah 53 today and take notice of Christ's sacrifice and love.

Prayer

Write out a prayer praising God for His everlasting love.

DAY SEVEN

ARE YOU DAILY
BEHOLDING
THE BEAUTY
OF CHRIST & HIS
SWEET GIFTS?

In Every Season

“Consider the work of God: who can make straight what He has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.”

Wherever You Are, Be All There

All of life has highs and lows. In singleness, there will be highs and lows, just as there would be in marriage. We live in a broken world and are broken people, therefore this life is going to have hardships. Ecclesiastes 7:12-14 tells us to be happy in the day of prosperity, but in the day of adversity, to consider that our good God has also made that day. John Piper puts it as such:

- “Romance, sex and childbearing are temporary gifts of God. They are not part of the next life. And they are not guaranteed even for this life. They are one possible path along the narrow way to paradise. Marriage passes through breathtaking heights and through swamps with choking vapors. It makes things sweeter, and with it come bitter providences.”

Adversity and struggles are not just part of life as a single—they are also part of married life. Therefore, we must learn to live fully in the joy of each and every moment that the Lord blesses us with. In the words of Jim Elliot, “wherever you are, be all there.” We have a daily choice to behold the beauty of Christ and His sweet gifts He gives us or to instead dwell on all that weighs down our spirit.

Learning to Be Content

The Apostle Paul talks about learning to be content in all circumstances (Philippians 4:11-13). His contentment did not just happen; he learned contentment through Christ. How did the Apostle Paul learn to be content in all things? Through rejoicing in the Lord, bringing everything to the Lord, in prayer and by

thinking on excellent things (Philippians 4:4-9).

Through Christ, we too can learn contentment in all circumstances, even unwanted singleness. Learning to be content in singleness comes through: 1) rejoicing in the Lord even in unwanted singleness; 2) bringing our desire and request for marriage to the Lord; 3) letting go of anxiousness about if marriage will ever happen; 4) thinking on the things of the Lord; 5) relying on the Lord's strength to sustain us in our singleness, remembering that His grace is sufficient.

Respond

- What are the high points of your singleness? Write them down and take a moment to thank the Lord.

- What are the low points of your singleness? Write them down and bring your sorrows to the Lord in prayer.

- Read Philippians 4:4-13. How much time have you spent dwelling on how discontent you are in your singleness today? What did you behold about the beauty of Christ from this passage?

Prayer

Ask the Lord to help you learn to be content in Him in your singleness and to fill you with His daily strength in your singleness.

DAY EIGHT

DO YOU BELIEVE
THAT GOD'S
PLAN FOR YOUR
LIFE IS GREATER
THAN YOUR
OWN?

God's Providence

“God’s providence is His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation for His own glory and the good of His people.”

Every Detail

God's providence reigns over every single detail of our lives. He is always at work, orchestrating behind the scenes. In the book of Esther, God's providence is on display—here are just a few examples:

1) Esther providentially becomes queen; 2) The king providentially has the book of memories read to him and is read the story of Mordecai saving his life; 3) Haman providentially is outside of the king's chambers when the king is seeking advice on how to honor Mordecai; 4) The king providentially extends the golden scepter to Esther.

From the book of Esther and other places in Scripture, God's providence can be clearly seen. Therefore, you can rest assured that you are single still because that is God's will for you right now, He providentially is at work in your singleness.

- “Let's think about that for a moment. We're single because that's God's will for us right now. Is that discouraging to hear? It shouldn't be. That's when we need to remember that our most important identity is not being single; it's being saved. God has done for us something far more important than getting us to the wedding altar. The gentle words of my pastor, C. J. Mahaney, are a good reminder: Your greatest need is not a spouse. Your greatest need is to be delivered from the wrath of God—and that has already been accomplished for you through the death and resurrection of Christ. So why doubt that God will provide a much, much lesser need? Trust His sovereignty, trust His wisdom, trust His love.” (Carolyn McCulley).

So though to you it may feel like God is delaying in fulfilling your desire for marriage, really, He is providentially working out a plan that is far greater. His plan for your life may or may not include marriage, but one thing you can be certain of is that His plan for your life is far greater than anything you could imagine.

Lilias Trotter puts it as such: “When God delays in fulfilling our little thoughts, it is to have Himself room to work out His great ones”

Even when you don’t understand, God is providentially working out His great thoughts and plans in your life that are for His ultimate glory and your ultimate good. God will provide for you in your singleness—He will sustain you in it for as long as He has singleness for you. Just as God sustained the Israelites in the desert with manna for forty years, He too will sustain you in what you see as a wilderness of singleness. He is our manna and living water—He alone can satisfy and fill us up in every season of life, singleness or marriage.

Respond

- When looking back on your life, what are some areas where you can now see that God was working even when things did not make sense to you?

- Is it discouraging to hear that God's will for your life right now is singleness? Why should this not be discouraging? How has God used your season of singleness to draw you closer to Him?

Prayer

Write out a prayer asking the Lord to help you trust in His providential work, even in your singleness. For further study, read through the book of Esther.

DAY NINE

ARE YOU
WILLING TO
SURRENDER
YOUR DESIRE FOR
MARRIAGE UNTO
THE LORD?

Counting the Cost

“O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its
flow may richer, fuller be.”

The Cost of the Cross

Jesus Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death (Philippians 2:5-11). He became sin on your behalf, so that your sin could be forgiven in Him (Romans 5:8). In Christ, you are restored to a right relationship with God and will get to live with Him for all eternity.

- “If Jesus had been unwilling to surrender to humanity’s worst crime, humanity’s salvation would have been impossible. But at calvary the Lord of the Earth surrendered Himself into the hands of evil men. Yet, paradoxically, no one took His life from Him. He laid it down of His own will, offered Himself to the Father, poured out His soul to death, became broken bread and poured out wine for the life of the world. We live because He died. The power of the Cross is not exemption from suffering but the very transformation of it” (Elisabeth Elliot).

In Christ, our suffering is transformed into something meaningful. God never wastes our suffering. He uses it all for our good and His glory (2 Corinthians 4:16-17). This is what He did on the cross and this is what He is doing in your life; He is using all of your suffering, even your loneliness and singleness. “The same Christ who wept at the tomb of Lazarus weeps with us in our lonely despair (Thomas Goodwin).” 2 Corinthians 4:16-17 states:

- “So we do not lose heart. though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.”

Laying Down Your Life For Christ

Jesus calls us to follow Him by denying ourselves and laying down our lives for His sake.

- “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.’” (Matthew 16:24-25)

What exactly does denying ourselves look like?

- “Self-denial, as Jesus taught it, does not involve denying oneself things (for example, dessert or ice cream or even legitimate forms of entertainment), as much as it involves denying one’s own authority over his or her life (John 12:23-26). This is the great challenge. The three verbs in this challenge are significant. The first two, “deny” and “take up,” are imperative, indicating a decisive action. The last one, “follow,” is a present imperative indicating a continuing action. To deny oneself means in every moment of life to say no to self, and to say yes to God” (Dr. Constable).

What does denying ourselves look like in singleness? It looks like:

- 1) Surrendering our desire for marriage to the Lord;
 - 2) Denying and fighting against sexual temptation;
 - 3) And acknowledging God’s authority over our singleness.
- Leslie Ludy sums it up beautifully:

- “Surrender isn’t just about giving up the selfish, immoral vices in our lives, but also a willingness to lay down the good and perfect gifts that come from God, such as the desire for marriage, friends, family, and so on. Surrendering those good gifts doesn’t mean we will never have them, or that the desire for them is wrong. Rather, it means yielding them to God to do with as He sees fit, without demanding them as our right or making our happiness conditional upon them.”

Denying ourselves does not come naturally to us. It is not something we can do in our own strength. This is only something we can do when we are abiding in Christ and walking by His Spirit, relying on His strength and grace to help us. When denying ourselves, we must ask ourselves what we truly want. Do we want what we want when we want it or do we want what God wants, no matter the cost? Elisabeth Elliot explains how our loneliness can be received as a gift:

- “Loneliness is a wilderness, but through receiving it as a gift, accepting it from the hand of God, and offering it back to Him with thanksgiving, it may become a pathway to holiness, to glory, and to God Himself.”

Your loneliness. Your singleness. It may feel like a wilderness, but if you are willing to accept it and offer it back up to the Lord, it will become something beautiful. The Lord will use your surrendering to grow you in Him, to give you more of the good portion, Himself (Psalm 16:4-6). In Summary, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Jim Elliot).

To surrender your singleness to God as a living and holy sacrifice is where true joy and contentment is found in singleness (Romans 12:1-2). For when we are willing to die to our own desires and to embrace God as who He is, our all-satisfying Lord, we will find that He alone fills us up. Liliias Trotter said it as such:

- “And a like independence is the characteristic of the new flood of resurrection life that comes to our souls as we learn this fresh lesson of dying—a grand independence of any earthly thing to satisfy our soul. The liberty of those who have nothing to lose because they have nothing to keep. We can do without anything while we have God.”

Liliias says that we can do without anything while we have God. It is true, while we have God, we can live without anything, even without our desire for marriage being fulfilled. Once we are home with the Lord, it won't matter that we never got married or had children—we will be forever in the fullness of joy. Our hearts will be full in Christ, finally completely satisfied and set free from all sin. And until then, the Lord's grace is sufficient to help us walk through our season of singleness. Corrie Ten Boom, a God-fearing woman who never married and survived grave suffering at Ravensbruck concentration camp, prayed these words about her singleness:

- “Lord Jesus, You know that I belong to You 100 percent. My sex life is yours also. I don't know what plans You have for my life, but Lord, whatever it may be, use me to realize Your victory in every detail. I believe You can take away all my frustrations and feelings of unhappiness. I surrender anew my whole life to You.”

Corrie surrendered her singleness to the Lord and we can too. This does not mean that the Lord has singleness for us forever, but this does mean that we are accepting that as a possibility, saying “whatever thy lot, thou has taught me to say, it is well with my soul.”

A Wedding Day Arrest

The book *Tortured for Christ* tells of a story about a young woman who truly knew what it meant to count the cost of following Christ and to lay down her life for the Lord. On the way to be married to her beloved, the communist police arrested the young woman for teaching children about Christ.

- “On her wedding day, the girl was dressed as a bride—the most wonderful, joyous day in a girl’s life! Suddenly, the door burst open and the secret police rushed in. When the bride saw the secret police, she held out her arms toward them to be handcuffed. They roughly put the manacles on her wrists. She looked toward her beloved, then kissed the chains and said, ‘I thank my heavenly Bridegroom for this jewel He has presented to me on my marriage day. I thank Him that I am worthy to suffer for Him!’” (Richard Wurmbrand).

On what was supposed to be such a glorious day of celebration, the young woman instead faced arrest. Yet she thanked the Lord for considering her worthy to suffer for Him. She placed her hope in the eternal and not in her temporal circumstances, because her love for the Lord far outweighed all else in her life. We may never have to suffer in the way this woman did, yet are we willing to have this same attitude—that Christ is worth following at any cost?

Respond

- Read Philippians 2:1-18. Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. How can you daily lay down your life for Christ/deny yourself in your singleness?

- How have you been thinking about your singleness? In what ways have you turned singleness into a demand that you must have to be satisfied?

- Read Hebrews 12:1-3. Sexual temptation can easily entangle us if we are not on guard. How can you be on guard against sexual temptation?

- Hebrews 12:2 tells us to set our eyes on Jesus. How can you set your eyes on Jesus instead of your singleness today? Be practical and specific.
- Hebrews 12:3 states that Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him. What joy do you have to look forward to in Christ Jesus?
- Have you ever viewed your singleness as a gift from God and offered it back to Him with thanksgiving? If so, how did this impact you. If not, consider doing so now.

Prayer

Use the space below to offer your singleness up to the Lord. Ask Him to grow your love for Him so that you desire to follow Him, no matter the cost.

DAY TEN

HOW DO YOU
GIVE THANKS
IN YOUR
UNWANTED
SINGLENES?

Thanksgiving

“Give thanks in all
circumstances; for this
is the will of God in
Christ Jesus for you.”

The Will of God

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, tells us to “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

God’s will for our lives is for us to rejoice in Him, pray to Him, and to give thanks to Him in all circumstances. In our singleness, we can still be joyful in the Lord and give thanks to Him for who He is, what He has done and what He will do. We must remember that every good gift and every good thing in our lives is from God (James 1:17). When we take our eyes off what we believe we are being denied or need to be happy and instead thank the Lord for saving us and for every gift that He has so graciously blessed us with, it changes our perspective. We begin to remember that we all deserve nothing but the wrath of God, yet God sent His only begotten Son to save and restore wretched sinners to Himself (Romans 5:8). Not only that, but He also so graciously gives us sweet gifts in our lives that we do not deserve. Let us not forget to thank Him for every good thing in our lives.

Lastly, remember that true joy can never be found in circumstances and if we look for it in them, we will always end up disappointed because we are broken and live in a broken world. Our circumstances are always changing, but God is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). In Him is the fullness of joy; He alone is where joy can be found, even in unwanted circumstances. Therefore, in our unwanted singleness, let us rejoice in the Lord, pray to Him and thank Him for every good gift He has blessed us with knowing that no earthly gift can bring the lasting eternal joy that the gift of salvation can.

Respond

- Read 1 Peter 1:1-9, Colossians 1 and Romans 8. Make a list thanking the Lord for all He has done for you through Jesus Christ.

- Colossians 1:5 says that you have a “hope laid up for you in heaven.” How does this truth give you hope even in your temporal unwanted singleness?

- Write out 10 things in your life that you are thankful to the Lord for:

- Re-read Colossians 1:9-14 and pray through the verses.

For example: "Lord, please fill me with the knowledge of your will and in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, help me to walk in a manner worthy of You Lord, help me to please You and to bear fruit for Your name sake, let me increase in knowledge of who You are and strengthen me with Your power and might, help me to endure my singleness with patience and joy in you, thank you Father for qualifying me to share in the inheritance of eternal life through Christ, Lord thank you for delivering me from the domain of darkness and transferring me into the kingdom of your beloved Son. All Praise, glory and honor to You!"

Prayer

Use the space below to write out a prayer to the Lord thanking Him for every good gift in your life and for the greatest gift of all, salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

DAY ELEVEN
HOW TO BRING
YOUR DESIRE
FOR MARRIAGE
TO THE FEET
OF JESUS?

A Prayer

“Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust. Lament invites us to grieve and trust, to struggle and believe.”

A Prayer of Surrender and Trust

What do you do with your sorrow over the unmet desire for marriage? You bring it to God in prayer, laying it down at His feet—entrusting your future to Him.

In 1 Samuel, a woman named Hannah is sorrowful about not being able to bear a child, yet verse 9 states that Hannah “rose.” This word “rose” means that Hannah took charge of her situation. Hannah took charge of her situation by turning to God in prayer (1 Samuel 1:1-11; 18-20).

When reading Hannah’s prayer, it might at first seem like she is bargaining with God. Yet that is not what she is doing at all. Hannah is surrendering her desire to bear a child to the Lord and is essentially saying, Lord, I have always wanted to have a child for myself and now I want to have a child for you and your glory. We can see this because after Hannah prays, she then leaves in peace. Hannah has peace even before knowing if God will give her a child because she gave her desire for a child over to the Lord and is at peace knowing that the Lord will answer her prayer in the way that is most glorifying to Him. Her peace does not come after she gets pregnant, but before. What a beautiful example of how we can pray.

We can come to the Lord with our desire for marriage, admit how we have, at times, wanted it for selfish reasons and ask Him to help us to want marriage for His glory alone. It is then that we can leave it at His feet and entrust that He will answer with what is best for us and most glorifying to Him.

Learning to Lament

Lets also take note of Hannah coming to the Lord in her sorrow. 1 Samuel 1:10 states that Hannah was “deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.” It is not wrong to bring our sorrows and disappointments to the Lord. To cry out to Him in a prayer of lament. Lament is essentially a prayer in pain that leads to trust. Lament allows for sorrow and rejoicing in the Lord to co-exist (2 Corinthians 6:10). It helps us to turn toward God when sorrow tempts us to run from Him. Lament is not a one-time occurrence but a way of life for the Christian.

- “Lament is different than crying because lament is a form of prayer. It is more than just the expression of sorrow or the venting of emotion. Lament talks to God about pain. And it has a unique purpose: trust. It is a divinely given invitation to pour out our fears, frustrations, and sorrows for the purpose of helping us to renew our confidence in God” (Mark Vroegop).

Therefore, we can bring our sorrow and disappointment about singleness to the Lord, knowing that He hears our cries. Then once we bring our sorrow and disappointment to Him, we can embrace the truth that God is in control and that He knows what is best for our lives and His glory. John Piper puts it as such: “Occasionally, weep deeply over the life that you hoped would be. Grieve the losses. Feel the pain. Then wash your face, trust God, and embrace the life that He’s given you.” For God has said, ‘No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly’ (Psalm 84:11). Therefore, even though marriage is a good gift, so is singleness, and you can trust that singleness is what God has deemed best for your life in this season, even if you don’t agree or understand why.

Prayer

Bring your sorrow and disappointment about singleness to the Lord. Make your request for marriage known to the Lord. Ask Him to let your desire for marriage be for His glory. Then go in peace, knowing that He has heard your prayer and that you can trust that He is a good Father, who knows what is ultimately best.

Spiritual and Emotional
Support / “Bear one another’s
burdens, and so fulfill the law
of Christ. Galatians 6:4 / A
Resource from Kindred *Soul*
Counseling