

We Are Family
The Place Where Singleness is Esteemed and Reclaimed
I Corinthians 7

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, April 2, 2017

The forever family of God – the Church – is comprised of singles, married couples, and married couples with children who all have equal standing, status, gifting, and worth in the kingdom of God.

As the Church, we're a family of singles and married couples who have all experienced the same solution to our biggest problem. We love the same Savior, struggle with many of the same problems, and are living for the same purpose to bring glory to God, so we have far more in common with each other than different.

In **I Corinthians 7**, Paul, who also wrote about the glories of marriage in Ephesians 5, advocates singleness and extols its advantages.

I. Both Singleness and Marriage are Good

Paul says both are good! It seems like a simple statement unless you're reading your Old Testament and you realize that biological families and having babies was what it was all about under the Old Covenant, but that's not what you see in the New Testament.

I Corinthians 7:8 "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am."

In **Isaiah 53** we find one of the greatest prophecies about the sufferings of Christ.

Isaiah 53:5, 10 "But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed....Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him; He has put Him to grief; when His soul makes an offering for guilt, He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in His hand."

The phrase, "He shall see His offspring," sets the stage for a new Covenant that will advance God's Kingdom and multiply God's people not through physical procreation by birthing babies, but through spiritual regeneration by the power of Christ's death and resurrection.

Whether you're single or married, you both have the same opportunity and capacity to get in on what God is doing in our world that is far greater than growing biological families.

Jesus Himself drove this point home in **Luke 11:28**. Jesus said the mother of God is no greater than obedient Christians, married or single, who choose to live out the Gospel and produce spiritual offspring!

The New Testament is filled with single men and women who lived for what matters most and saw God advance His kingdom through them like John the Baptist, Paul, Silas, Luke, Titus, Apollos, Lydia, Phoebe, Phillip's four unmarried daughters, and Jesus.

II. Both Singleness and Marriage Portray the Gospel and Our Ultimate Relationship with Our Bridegroom – Jesus

Eph. 5:32 is the verse where we get the glorious picture of marriage being about something bigger than just the marriage itself.

Ephesians 5:31-32 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church.”

Paul never intended to communicate that singles couldn't be a billboard that puts on display the glory of Jesus Christ and His love for His Church. Look at **2 Cor. 11:2-3**.

Even the best marriage can't by itself fill the void in our souls meant for God. Without a love relationship with Jesus Christ, married couples will put too much pressure on their spouse to fulfill them.

Likewise, singles also need to see that marriage is never ultimate. If a single Christian doesn't cultivate a love relationship with Jesus, they will put too many demands on their friends and too much pressure on their dream of marriage.

2 Cor. 11 is a picture of spiritual marriage of the church to Christ and it's a marriage in which all Christians participate, including the unmarried, children, widows, widowers, bachelorettes, bachelors, and those who have been divorced.

The word 'sincere' in that passage is the Greek word, 'haplotes,' which literally means 'single-hearted.' To be single-hearted is to be unmixed in your devotion, so that you can give yourself entirely to Christ with a heart that belongs exclusively to Him.

According to **I Cor. 7:32-25**, singles are in a better position to accomplish this because they won't have distractions and demands of marriage.

III. Both Singles and Married Should Learn from Each Other, Love Each other, and Serve God Together in the Same Forever Family

God's Spirit wants to bless us and sanctify us as much through our single brothers and sisters as He does through married couples, so you're missing out if you don't take time to find ways to get closer to our single brothers and sisters in Christ.

IV. Both Singleness and Marriage Share the Same Ultimate Purpose – the Glory of God!

Both singleness and marriage are tremendous platforms to bring glory to God! Both have some huge advantages and some great disadvantages, but the New Testament doesn't exalt one over the other as a way to glorify God.

Both married couples and singles will face unique trials that God can use in our process of sanctification to make us more like Christ. Both marriage and singleness will have unique rewards for each person who sought to maximize ways to glorify God in your singleness or in your marriage.

The day is coming that whether you were married or single in this life won't matter because we will all be married to Jesus Christ and what will matter most will be that we spent our lives and used our gifts to point people to the greatest treasure, Jesus Christ, so that we could have spiritual offspring.