

Theology of Dating and Singleness

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Series: What it Means to Follow Jesus

Supplemental Material

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MOSAIC CHAPEL

Note to Married People

It's deeply important that you engage in this topic. Married people are often the ones that create culture in a church. If we want single people to not only feel accepted, but wanted and valued in a community of faith, we must have a healthy theology of dating and singleness and live it out.

It's important that a community of faith has a healthy theology of singleness. 45% of adults in America aren't married, and only about half of those (58%) desire to be.

We need to respect people's unique stories and callings. We shouldn't assume or pressure single people to pursue relationships. People are single for lots of reasons:

- Haven't met anyone they like
- Recovering from a failed relationship or divorce
- Focused on other things: career, education, personal growth
- Wrestling with issues surrounding gender and sexuality
- Choice – They may not be interested in marriage

In addition, the Church can glorify marriage and make it seem as though it's the only viable option for Christian adults, and that it should be the end goal for everyone. But what's the overarching goal for all of our lives? To be overwhelmed by the love of God and transformed by His Holy Spirit to think and act more like Jesus.

Marriage is not the culmination. It's a continuation of this process. And a path that's not for everyone.

Biblical Values Regarding How to Treat Others

These values ought to be applied to all our relationships, both romantic and platonic. They should be brought to our dating life, how we live in community with one another, and how we treat people, including single people in our community.

- We personally should be submitted to Jesus (Matthew 16:24-27, James 4:7-10, Philippians 2:5-8, Romans 12:1-8, Mark 14:35-36)
- Honor one another (Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 5:5-6, Colossians 3:12-14, Philippians 2:1-4)
- Respect people' unique stories and callings (Psalm 139:13-18, 1 Cor 12:12-31, Ephesians 2:8-10)

Theology of Singleness (1 Corinthians 7:8-9, 25-40)

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 7: Being single is a gift, and if we are married, if we are not careful, a spouse can become an idol and our marriage can become selfish and inwardly focused.

In the Christian faith, singleness is a viable and extoled option. Marriage is a temporal earthly endeavor, but our eternal home is in heaven, where you will not be married.

A church needs to have healthy room and space for single adults. Single adults need to have the freedom to live out their giftings as single people. We do individuals, and the community at large, a disservice when we have the attitude that real ministry or real leadership is done by married couples.

A healthy community of faith has room for both married and single people to grow, flourish, be challenged and live out their God given gifts and callings.

Theology of Dating

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Dating is hard! The media glorifies it like it's some easy, casual thing, but it's not! It can be awkward and challenging and feel like it's attacking your self-esteem.

Bible: Dating isn't in the Bible. There wasn't a modern-day equivalent of dating in biblical times. People weren't pursuing compatibility, personality traits, and common goals. They weren't asking someone their Enneagram number. In biblical times, marriages were arranged. They were based on family relationships and economic status.

There's no such thing as Christian dating. But there are Christians who date. So what does it look like to take biblical values into the modern realm of romantic relationships?

We can date in a healthy, God-honoring way. We can learn to navigate different personalities and experience joy and hardships. We can practice self-control. And really figure out, what is God calling me to?

Theology of Dating

- Be wise and do what's best for others (1 Cor 10:23-24)
- Honor God in everything we do (10:31-33)
- Act like Jesus and keep our desires in check (Ephesians 4:22-24)
- Seek common values and faith beliefs (2 Cor 6:12)
- Choose companionship wisely (1 Cor 15:33)
- Build others up and encourage them (1 Thess 5:11)
- Ask God and let Him answer (Matthew 7:7, Psalm 34:10)
- Save sex for marriage (1 Thess 4:3-5, Song of Songs, 1 Cor 7, Hebrews 13:4, Rev 14:4)

God loves Sex (in the context of Marriage)

- Genesis 1:26-28 – after he created humans, he tells them to rule over creation and make babies! What is the primary purpose of sex? Procreation.
- There is not a clear verse in the Bible that says, “don't have sex before marriage.” Instead what the Bible does is establish that sex is meant to exist within the context of marriage, and the only appropriate outlet for sexual desire is marriage (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:24-25; 4:1, 2, Deuteronomy 22:13-19, Song of Songs, 1 Corinthians 7:2, 7:9, Hebrews 13:4, Revelation 14:4)

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

If this is something we've done, can God redeem it? Of course. Is there forgiveness and overwhelming grace? Definitely! Does making this choice prevent God from using us for his glory? Of course not! But is there value in not making the mistake in the first place, and saving yourself the heartache? Absolutely. And is it ever too late to course correct? Of course not!