

The Game of Life Series – Part 2

Succeeding Single

Pastor Brian Coles

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Good morning. Today we are continuing our series called The Game of Life. In this series we wanted to speak to some of the major stages of life that we may find ourselves in. Last week Pastor Brian Flewelling spoke on succeeding in marriage. Today I'd like to talk about Succeeding Single.

As we look at succeeding single, it is helpful to realize that the principles and habits that we will look at this morning are completely transferable to every stage in life. In one respect, whether you are married or not, we all spend a lot of time with ourselves. Everywhere I go there I am. How you manage yourself, self-talk, habits, convictions, disciplines, don't magically change because you get married.

It is in our singleness that God intends to build within us the character of Jesus, the Fruit of the Spirit, the desire for his kingdom, a passion for the lost. That we would be growing in him physically, spiritually, and emotionally. So that we can walk in the calling that God has given us. No matter what it is.

If you're single, grow in Christ. If you're married, grow in Christ. If you're divorced, grow in Christ. If you're a widow or a widower, grow in Christ.

Particularly if you are single here today and you do desire to be married one day, know this. Marriage is best enjoyed when two complete and spiritually mature people come together. The best gift you can give to your future spouse is to become that person before you marry them.

1. The scriptures speak highly of the blessing and calling of singleness.

In fact, as you look at the teachings of Paul and Jesus you actually hear them trying to ease the fears of people who want to get married that it's okay.

In Greek thought there was strong tendency to despise the body and the things of the body; finding one of two views.

- "The body is utterly unimportant; therefore, we can do what we like with it and it makes no difference if we allow its appetites to have their fullest play."
- "The body is evil; therefore, we must bring it into subjection; therefore, we must completely obliterate, and if that is not possible, we must completely deny, all the instincts and desires which are natural to it."

It is that second way of looking at things with which Paul is dealing here. The Corinthians, or at least some of them, had suggested that, if a man was going to be a Christian in the fullest sense of the term, he must have done with physical things and must refuse to marry altogether.

1 Corinthians 7:32-38

32 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. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— 34 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. 35 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.

36 If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. 37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. 38 So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better.

Jesus gives such a shocking teaching on the covenant of marriage that his disciples respond to his by saying it is better not to marry.

Matthew 19:12

¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

¹¹But he said to them, ^a"Not everyone can receive this saying, but only ^bthose to ^cwhom it is given.

¹²For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs ^dfor the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

it is good and right to desire marriage, but it is also good to be content in your current position. And there is a very real tension that we must learn to live in.

Eternal perspective makes the waiting bearable.

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready" (Rev. 7:17; 19:7).

2. The calling of singleness is to live a life of undivided devotion to the Lord.

So, we need to ask ourselves the question, "what are the road blocks to living and undivided life to the lord"?

Road Blocks

- lonely
- something wrong with being single
- unseen
- programs verbiage in church around couples or kids
- getting plugged into programs
- isolation
- Stop watching chick flicks, romantic movies, novels
- get stuck in Neutral don't just wait
- Get into relationships that aren't "dating", but you live in a "this really looks like dating but isn't" relationship
- The comparison game, "why are they getting the life that I've been waiting for"?
- THE LIE: my life will not be meaningful unless I'm married
- Shame of divorce, separated, NOT HERE. Don't you think that! NOT HERE

Benefits

- Jesus was single, so you are auto magically more like Jesus than the rest of us.
- Able to say "yes" to things
- mobile
- able to respond to God
- After a busy season go home and recover
- Awareness it's the Lord that completes you, his purpose, his calling
- Awareness of the community found in the church
- Time for devotion, prayer

Purity is not a single or married issue. It's a human issue.

3. Singleness can be a time of accelerated growth and healing.

The law of intentionality

If you're going to grow, you're going to grow on purpose.

What am I doing to develop myself?

What am I doing to develop others?

"The greatest gap in the world is the space between knowing and doing."

(John C. Maxwell)

Growth does not happen alone. Have people in your life that will challenge you and help you grow in your faith. "These people are not getting me to where I'm supposed to be"

Show me your friends and I'll show you your future.

There are many ways to plug in here at Petra.

Cleansing Stream, Support Groups, Restoring the Foundation, Conquer Series, Ministry Teams, leading a Small Group, Men's and Women's ministry.

Psalm 34:18

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Single Parent

What are my new priorities? I can't get an A+ in everything. Your number one mission as a single mom and single dad, the number one mission of my life is to pass your faith to your children in the things of your faith.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 New International Version (NIV)

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Redeem the time. Use it to the most every season.

Single parenting: father to the fatherless, he fills voids.

Find some people that will pray for you and your family regularly.

Come to church ready to serve. Don't define yourself by what is hard in your life.

Self-care

Closing with Song