

CULTIVATE: THE BIBLICAL VISION OF SINGLENESS

1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-8, 25-35

APRIL 29, 30 - 2023

PASTOR RICKY JENKINS

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Introduction:

Pastor Ricky began today's lesson with a reminder that our series "*Cultivate: The Marriage Series EVERYONE Needs to hear*" uses the verb '*cultivate*' because relationships require WORK and only WORK when we WORK. He also reminded us that the BIBLE speaks to everyone, even when the subject matter seems to focus on a specific topic which at first glance might not apply to everyone.

Last week we looked at THE BIBLICAL VISION OF MARRIAGE, defined as a lifelong, covenantal relationship between one biological male and one biological female. God invented marriage to show HIS LOVE FOR THE WORLD. Married people need to mirror the love, the goodness, the grace of God by planting seeds: Unconditional Love, Constant Forgiveness, Gospel Long-Suffering Character.

Lesson:

God also has a wonderful purpose for SINGLES. We need:

1. To know that just as there is DIVERSITY among Marrieds, there is great DIVERSITY among Singles.
 - God's view of Single is different from the world's view
 - Being Single at 20's, 30's etc. is very different from being Single at 60's, 70's etc.
 - Being Single and never married is very different from being married and divorced, or married and widowed, etc.
2. To celebrate what SCRIPTURE has to say about Singleness.
 - 1 Corinthians 7:6-8, 25-35 celebrates the value of singleness rather than the centuries' old church view of *overvaluing* marriage and *undervaluing* singleness.
 - Paul notes that singles can actually do more for Jesus.
 - Consider Biblical examples of singles: Paul, several prophets, Jesus
 - Mary Van Weelden, "*Single people in the church are often the recipients of unsolicited 'words of encouragement' - words which, if not rooted in the truths of Scripture, can inflict pain and cultivate despair. These well-intended platitudes miss the mark of edifying talk. For those who haven't experienced a long season of singleness, it can be hard to know what to say to those who have.*"

SEEDS TO CULTIVATE IN SINGLENESS

1. REHEARSE THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

- **Singleness is not something BROKEN that needs to be FIXED.**
- **Singleness needs to be celebrated both in the church and in culture.**
- In 1 Corinthians 7:7 Paul emphasizes that our married state, our singleness are both unique, individual GIFTS to be celebrated. Both originate with GOD.
- Paul also notes in vs 28 that singles enjoy EXCLUSIVE devotion to JESUS ONLY, whereas married people have worldly troubles, perhaps spouse or children as distractions from total focus on Jesus.
- If Marriage was created to show God's love for the church, Singleness was created by God to show the church's love for God.

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2. REMEMBER THE BIBLICAL PROMISE

- Marriage cannot complete a person, only Jesus can.
- If we have been saved by Jesus, then we are complete in Jesus.
- Contentment is Jesus - not Jesus plus something or someone - it is a blessing in and of itself.

3. RECOGNIZE THE BIBLICAL PLAN

- We must remember God's plan for our lives, which might not always be what we think.
- If we are in a "holding pattern" we need to think about what is NOW rather than yearning for what might be NEXT.
- How is God 'moving' us in our Singleness for His purpose?

4. SEVEN THINGS CHURCH FOLK SHOULD STOP SAYING TO SINGLES

- **SO.... When are YOU gonna get married?** (Best to remember - if God wouldn't ask someone the question, neither should we. Let's lift them rather than negate them)
- **You're so amazingly handsome/pretty - why aren't you married yet?** (Let's celebrate their uniqueness rather than hint that something must be wrong with them)
- **Your turn is coming!** (Are we negating the Biblical truth that they are not first class citizens bound for heaven...that we marrieds are better?)
- **You'll find someone soon! It happens when you stop looking!** (Have you ever found anything you stopped looking for? Proverbs says, "he that finds a wife finds a good thing!")
- **I wish I had more time like you.** (Do we really know if they have more free time?)
- **If you weren't so picky, you would've found someone by now.** (Don't we believe we should be discerning or picky when choosing a mate for life?)
- **I miss the dating scene. I bet you have the time of your life!** (Dating is tough.)

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-8 again. What is the 'gift' from God about which Paul speaks? Why does Paul call these 'gifts'?
2. How are these 'gifts' integral parts of BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE?
3. Discuss the states of 'singleness' and 'married' as FROM God rather than form our own 'plan'. If this mindset different from world cultural view? How?
4. Discuss how neither single nor married can 'complete' us. How neither is part of the BIBLICAL PROMISE of contentment.
5. How can 'singleness' and/or 'married' be considered part of our ministry...part of the BIBLICAL PLAN for our lives?
6. Why does Paul say he prefers singleness?
7. In your own life, either single or married, discuss how either impacts your ministry.
8. Do you have single friends, relatives? How has the narrative gone with them in the past? Have you ever said any of the "SEVEN THINGS"?
9. How can the narrative be changed by all of us to celebrate singleness as God has directed?