



**Educate  
+ Engage**



SERIOUS  
RELATIONSHIPS:



Not in  
a Relationship

### OVERVIEW

Previously we talked about how serious relationships don't begin with Mr. or Mrs. Right, but with God and you. We learned that the first rule of dating is to love God first and most. "And You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30, NKJV).

Now we will focus on singleness.

### **Scripture Passage**

I Corinthians 7:7-9

"For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

### EDUCATE

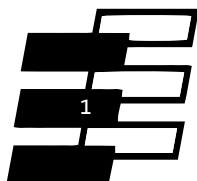
*Discussion Questions:*

1. *Do you think our world pressures people to be in a relationship? Why?*
2. *What negative things do people say about being single?*
3. *What does being an Apostolic single person mean? (one who lives a full life with God, family, the church, and friends, but is not in a serious romantic relationship.)*

Romantic relationships often isolate people from other vital relationships. Single Apostolics must realize they are not alone. God is an ever-present help. Family often provides love and support. The local church offers community and encouragement. Deep, meaningful fellowship can be found with inner-circle friends.

*Urban Myths*

If somebody says, "Once upon a time," you know that what follows is a fairy tale, but an urban myth is a story many people believe because there is an element of truth to it even though it is false. An urban myth is created by taking fact, exaggerating it, and tying it to something untrue.



A few years ago an urban myth circled the internet that Mr. Rogers—a beloved host of the pre-school show “Mr. Rogers Neighborhood”—wore his cardigans to hide the tattoos on his arms from his days as a Navy SEAL. Everybody say, “Urban myth!” Someone in here right now is thinking, *That’s not a myth; my second cousin’s coworker’s neighbor said it’s true.* Yet, this story, although containing bits of truth (such as him wearing cardigans), is an urban myth. Let’s examine some myths and misapplied truths about relationships.

### **Myth 1: Dating and marriage are easier than being single.**

All romantic relationships are complex, not easy. Otherwise, an 80 percent failure rate in dating and a 50 percent failure rate in marriage wouldn’t exist. Serious relationships do not simplify life. Rather than only dealing with yourself, you must negotiate two schedules as well as conflicts, misunderstandings, preferences, personality types, and moods. Relationships add complexity.

According to Pew Dating Research, half of singles are not looking for a relationship, and 67 percent of people who are dating say it’s not going very well.

### **Myth 2: Marriage is a cure for loneliness.**

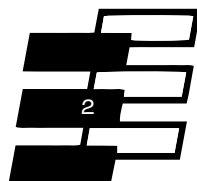
Marriage is not the cure for loneliness. Remember, wishing you were single is worse than being single! Unhappily married people who feel rejected or misunderstood can also feel alone.

### **Myth 3: Serious relationships minimize problems.**

Most relationship difficulties arise from problems people already had and brought into the relationship. We all deal with our own weaknesses and imperfections. When we are in a serious relationship, someone else experiences them with us, and we experience theirs. Instead of yielding less problems, serious relationships often multiply them.

### **Myth 4: You are happier when you date or marry.**

Single people are just as capable of happiness as people in romantic relationships. The most miserable people are in unhappy, unhealthy relationships. In fact, *Health Digest* presented a study that suggests people in dating relationships are emotionally less healthy than people who are not dating.



Let's unpack the importance and advantage of being single—**not** in a relationship. Being single is not like leprosy; being a reckless, irresponsible dater is the danger to avoid.

### The Apostle Paul's Perspective

The apostle Paul was a huge fan of singleness. Consider his words in I Corinthians 7:7–9: "For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion." Paul refuted the idea that singleness is incompleteness and contended that it is good.

*Discussion Question: Why does God choose a season of singleness for everybody?*

### God was intentional about giving the first man and woman time to be single.

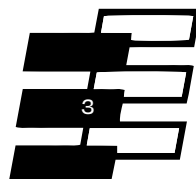
Adam spent alone time with God before Eve ever entered the scene. He was given the jobs of keeping the Garden and naming every animal. Scripture suggests that Eve also had time apart from Adam. Adam did not wake up from his surgery and see Eve; God brought her to him (Genesis 2:22). For a while Eve wasn't with Adam. Eve had her own orientation with God before she ever met Adam. God decided when their single season was over.

### Master Your Season

Singleness is a season God wants every person to master. Before entering serious relationships, we need to learn to live at our maximum level as individuals.

1. *Master contentment while you are single.*

Have you ever witnessed kids being dragged kicking and screaming out of a McDonald's Play-place? What's happening in that moment? They're not thankful for the cheeseburger, the fries, the milkshake, or the playtime. They just want more. Discontentment focuses on what we want instead of what we have.



**Contentment is the result of having no higher ambition than living God's plan for your life on His timetable.**

Paul said in Philippians 4:12: "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation." Contentment is not natural but learned. We should master contentment in our singleness. People not content as singles will not be content when their relationship status changes on Facebook.

### *2. Master companionship with God.*

Jesus is with us always. (See Matthew 28:20.) He was in your life first so we should give Him priority consideration in all things. Christianity was never meant to be something with which we spritz our weekends without being deeply connected to God in our everyday lives.

Our spirituality cannot be predicated on someone else's. Paul admonished in Philippians 2:12: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." If we can't navigate life alone with God, we won't be able to navigate life with another person alongside us. When we get into a serious relationship, we aren't just bringing someone into our lives, we are bringing them into our relationship with Jesus Christ.

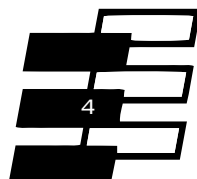
### *3. Master a life of God-Dependency*

Some people mistakenly think they can't survive without a boyfriend or a girlfriend. But you can survive without a boyfriend or girlfriend. You can't survive without oxygen, food, water... and God! Paul asserted of God in Acts 17:28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being."

**God is not an additive to life; He is our life.**

He is the source of everything. Jesus taught in John 15:5: "For without me you can do nothing." When we are God-dependent, we view God as the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

If someone tells you they can't live without you, run! They can live without you, but they can't live without God. You cannot do what only God can do in their life.





### 4. Master Submission.

"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

God places parents, guardians, and pastoral leaders in our lives to guide us. Get under the wings of that protection. God is not going to bless you if you reject the authority He has placed in your life. Someone once said that you never know how submitted you are until you disagree with your leader. Your submission will stand trial. Untested submission can't be trusted.

Along those lines, don't waste your time on someone who:

- Resists having someone who has "veto power" over their decisions
- Doesn't speak well of those who have authority in their lives
- Doesn't respect the boundaries set by their pastor because they set their own standards

### 5. Master Stewardship

Stewards are entrusted with managing and caring for things that are not their own. First Corinthians 4:2 reads: "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." Scripture admonishes us to steward all the resources God places in our lives. As stewards, we are responsible to utilize and manage our time, talents, and treasure to the glory of God.

### Closing

Some of you have the gift of singleness and it suits you. Some of you are in the season of singleness, although you are positive you don't have the gift. You are not in a serious relationship and you don't like that. You long for partnership.

## ENGAGE

If you are single but don't want to be, pray for God to help you be the partner He wants you to be and meet the partner He wants you to meet. Or pray for God to take you through the process of surrendering to His purpose and timing. Until then, understand the benefits of being single, even if only for a while. For those of you God has blessed with the gift of singleness, understand that you are complete in Him and have a unique opportunity to bless His Kingdom.

