

The Christian's Preparation To Be Single Long-Term

By Aaron J Carey

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Printed by DiggyPOD, Inc., in the United States of America.

First printing, 2020.

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Introduction: Disclaimers and Clarifications About the Purpose of this Book and its Title

- This book is intended for those who are set on following the God of the Bible and living by His rules. Everything written is implying that the reader has this intention or ought to have this intention.
- This is therefore not a self-help book or anything along those lines. I think it's tragic that close to everything I've seen in terms of instruction about being single is derived from such a perspective or paradigm rather than a Biblical Christ-centered one, despite the latter being the right and true perspective that this topic, and every topic altogether, should be addressed from.
- This book is moreover not meant to discourage the single adult Christian from making reasonable preparation to be married. In fact, if you are not near old enough to be married, or marriage isn't

even a significant issue to you, then I don't recommend that you read this at all right now. Please especially do not read this if you are under the age of twenty, unless directed or recommended to do so by a Christian parent or Pastor.

- I am writing with the implication in all I say that marriage is good and not something to be despised. The reality which is being addressed is that a good, godly marriage is not always possible and/or the best option for the single adult Christian at the moment. And death, unfaithfulness, and apostasy are realities which can dissolve a Christian's marriage as well. Therefore, the Christian should be prepared to be single long-term as well. Nothing said here should be taken as encouraging or permitting the Christian spouse to be unfaithful to their end of the marriage covenant.

- There need be no competition or conflict between Christian preparation for marriage and Christian preparation to not be married, in the sense that I'm dealing with in this book. Nothing in this book should be interpreted to conclude that such a conflict is being promoted. The two preparations should go hand in hand; and be complementary to one another, actually. They are both situations Christians might face; and life can change in the blink of an eye, as well as not change at all for a long time in certain ways.
- Nothing said in this book should be taken to imply that it is better for the adult Christian to be married rather than single; nor to be single rather than married. I am simply addressing a reality that faithfulness to Christ makes being single advantageous and/or necessary for some people in some circumstances. This is something which some find difficult in certain ways to a certain measure. This book is to be taken merely as a tool to help prepare for facing such a reality.

- When I use the term *evangelicals*, I mean those who profess to believe the Bible to be wholly inspired by God; and also profess the need for each person to be born-again through faith in Jesus Christ. By *conservative evangelicals*, I mean those evangelicals who to a significant degree have not followed the trends of society nor modern innovations in worship, that have affected Christendom. These are terms that are, more than anything else, generalities to reference the circles which those who diligently seek the God of the Bible are likely to find themselves among soon enough, if not already. No comment is being made about the Biblical accuracy of any specific group, nor about the rightness or wrongness of being part of any particular group, *except* a few references about a few particular groups which I don't even consider as being evangelical when really examined; and another exception would be any group which is closely associated with one particular type of theology which I will briefly mention. Dealing with such

matters is not the main purpose of this book; and examining such matters is, by and large, beyond the scope of this book. The terms *evangelicals* and *conservative evangelicals* are necessary generalities which I am using. They should be taken as nothing more than that.

- With the above said, I am also not saying that being Biblically accurate, and belonging to a church group which is Biblically accurate, are not extremely important. They are! And one key reason why a Christian needs to prepare to be single long-term is that they indeed need to strive for Biblical accuracy and not compromise in doing their best to follow that. Doing so may very well lead to fewer options for marriage or (with those already married) cause their spouse to leave them. Following God's Word certainly includes pursuing doctrinal accuracy and proper church practice. This necessarily makes which church one is a part of to potentially matter a lot; and this also may necessitate one changing

churches, perhaps several times (as Biblical light is faithfully walked in, causing more light to be shed upon the one walking in the light- see **Luke 8:18** and **Luke 16:10**). Being part of even the most faithful, accurate church will not profit anyone who does not have a true heart for the Lord and who isn't striving to please Him in everything. Yet a key aspect of having a heart which is surrendered to Him, and of having an intent to please Him above all else, is pursuing faithfulness to Scriptural accuracy, without compromise, in regards to which church one belongs to. A *big* reason for this book is to strengthen the Christian to follow God's Word boldly and fearlessly, without being weighed down by fears of ending up single for doing so. And thus, one goal of this book is to help the Christian to be in a place (in their heart and mind) to trust the Lord greatly as they pursue faithfulness to God's Word in regards to matters related to church and Christian fellowship.

- And nothing said here, whether by the topic of this book or anything that is written in this book, should implicitly be taken to discourage the possibility of any single adult Christian ever righteously being married in the Lord. Rather, the purpose of this book is preparation for the adult Christian to be single long-term *if* that should be necessary or deemed to be better, especially in regards to being faithful to the Lord.

Chapter 1: The Importance of Preparation for the Christian to be Single Long-term

When I was in my early twenties I had a dilemma- a dilemma which is obviously very common among young adult Christians. The temptations and trials of being single were very difficult for me. I earnestly questioned how I could bear them much longer. What if I was still single when I was thirty and still had to bear the same trials then? What if I was still single even longer after that? How could I ever get through such a thing righteously? It seemed near impossible, if not altogether impossible.

And to make matters even worse, the older Christian men whom I knew and considered my mentors, couldn't help me much when I talked to them about these things. I commend them for at least not giving me bad advice; but they couldn't offer me a lot of good advice either. They had all gotten married by their mid-twenties or they had first turned to the Lord after they were married already. I even got the sense that they found my fears as

being reasonable and that they shuttered at the thought of a Christian man having to stay single much beyond the early stages of adulthood. I'm glad they didn't elaborate much on those fears and try to discourage me; yet they also couldn't do much more than keep their fears to themselves and give me the few words of wisdom which they were able to give regarding these things.

And as I looked across the landscape of conservative evangelical Christians that I encountered at church meetings and conferences, I saw the same basic problem. The leaders and older men had little to no experience with being a single adult Christian *for the long-term*. I can even tell you of one man, whom I respected at the time, who was a Bible teacher visiting a church near where I lived. He was being asked about bearing the frustrations of singleness by another young man in his early twenties whom I knew personally. Well, this teacher basically taught this young man that God didn't want him to have to put up with such frustrations. He thus gave him the implicit expectation that God would surely provide him a wife before he had to suffer

much more with his frustrations. The young man ended up turning away from the Lord within a year or so, after the father of a young woman he had asked to court refused to let him proceed in that. He became bitter and turned to fornication. What did he expect? He had been taught that God didn't want him to have to put up with the frustrations of being a single man for very long. And though his blood is surely on his own head for his wicked decisions, he surely lacked solid instruction and good examples in how to do this from those whom he looked up to as faithful Christian examples and mentors.

Sadly, I could tell many similar stories of Christian young people, whom there was so much reason to hope would be faithful to the Lord and be shining Christian examples, who have turned away from the Lord, or who at least have hindered their own spiritual growth and neutralized their own witness for the Lord significantly, through decisions related to lack of preparation and/or unwillingness to bear the sufferings of being a single Christian long-term. Bitterness over failed expectations, fornication, pursuit of marriage partners

who gave clear signs that being a faithful Christian was not their top priority, running through stop signs which were reasonable to believe as being from the Lord, compromise of Biblical convictions, and many other bad things so they could (finally just) get married (and not have to be single anymore). And not only this, but also married people refusing to follow Truth faithfully out of fear that their spouse would leave them (i.e. fear that they would end up alone and be single again).

Problems related to this matter are an epidemic in the Body of Christ. *I can say confidently that at least half, if not significantly more, of the Christians whom I have seen fall away from the Lord, have done so with fear of and/or unwillingness to be a single Christian long-term (i.e. a long-term single adult living by the rules of the God of the Bible) as a significant, notable factor in their falling away.* This is tragic! Yet such casualties of faith do not need to happen.

Now, approximately fifteen years after I was first sharing my concerns and seeking counsel from Christian

mentors about abiding as a single Christian long-term, I am sharing what I wish others had been able to tell me then. Thus I am also sharing what I would tell myself if I could go back in time and counsel myself then. Yet being single in my latter thirties, I can say assuredly that being a single Christian long-term does not need to destroy you. There are ways to not only survive, but also to spiritually thrive in this state- *even if* you (like most) have strong inclinations which oppose this. If you will pay close attention, I will be as brief as possible and share with you, as if I had just one day and one chance only, the things I can offer to help you better prepare to survive and thrive spiritually if you are facing such a challenge or should ever need to face such a challenge. At the very least, getting assurance that you are not alone in your struggles, and that others have gone through similar things, could in itself strengthen you much and be very beneficial to you.

Chapter 2: The Overarching Reason not to Fret Over One's State in Life

Every person who has ever lived, and every person who ever will live, has a crisis of the highest magnitude. It is a crisis which transcends finances, health, comfort, and even love and marriage- and any other matter. It is a crisis that can end up as our greatest blessing or can end up as our greatest curse.

We were created by a holy God who by His very nature is infinitely important, perfectly good, all-powerful, possessing authority of the highest magnitude, and who made man in His image with an implied accountability therein which is inescapable. He has appointed a day in which He will judge all people in righteousness and without partiality (i.e. without respect of persons) through His Son Jesus Christ. He is a consuming fire; and our responses to Him will be tried in the light of His blazing holiness, down to the smallest details which we could possibly be aware of, even our most secret thoughts and intentions (**Hebrews 12:25-29**).

We must prepare to meet Him (**Amos 4:12**), not only once through repentance and a new birth in Jesus Christ (though this is essential for us), but also by thenceforth seeking to constantly come into line with the requirements of His Law, to serve Him acceptably, and to prove amidst the trial of life that we believe that He is really worthy to be worshiped *as God* (**1 John 2:3-6, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11**). He offers His grace through Jesus Christ to pardon those who will acknowledge that they've turned from Him and deserve His condemnation, when they will also turn from not living under His authority and will wholeheartedly set themselves to strive to come into line with how He ought to be worshiped. This is delineated in His Word, the Bible (**1 Peter 2:24-25, Luke 8:21, etc**). To live by His grace is to maintain such a heart and attitude after embracing it, in hope of His promises of mercy and redemption in Jesus Christ to those who so abandon themselves to Him (**Titus 2:11-14, Revelation chapters 2-3, etc**). This is walking with a living faith in Jesus Christ, whereby one obtains God's grace or favor (**Romans 1:16-17**).

The world system, our fallen flesh, and the devil himself greatly oppose such an attitude and life. To overcome them and to walk by an acceptable, living faith before God continually requires a *fierce determination* to do God's will through the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (**Acts 11:23, Acts 13:43**, etc). This involves suffering, not suffering to atone for sin, but rather suffering to come into line with the very purpose of Christ's atonement- to bring us back under God's authority and favor through Himself; and therein to transform us into His image through His Holy Spirit, as we follow the dictates of His Word, which was inspired by His Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:12-17, 2 Timothy 3:15-17**).

Those who exercise and endure in such a living faith until their death or Christ's second coming will reign with Him eternally. On the other hand, those who won't put on His yoke or who cast off His yoke essentially refuse to live under His authority and despise the purpose of His atonement. These will be cast into the fire of hell *eternally* as enemies of the Almighty God who created them to be blessed in His righteous worship

and service; and who went to the utmost means in, and through, His Son Jesus Christ to redeem them from the condemnation of rebellious, fallen mankind (**Matthew 13:36-50, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12, Hebrews 10:26-39, etc.**). His Truth and Righteous authority will be vindicated in us whatever we do with His grace. However, His grace prevailing in us and being demonstrated in us is a special victory- and one which *we* can't afford to not obtain! Ultimately, God seeks to redeem a special, holy people to Himself through Jesus Christ. We are in a crisis regarding whether or not we will be a part of that people; and our influence in responding to the Lord surely is significant enough to affect others who are in this crisis (as all are), for good or for bad- and potentially in *very huge* ways.

If you basically know all this already, great! It is good to be reminded of it often. I needed to be reminded of what I wrote just now as I wrote it. Now consider: Would you not tell someone who needed to hear the gospel and embrace the gospel (see also **Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 16:25-27, and Revelation 14:6-7**) that

everything else is small compared to this and our response to it? Of course you would (I hope)! Yet do we apply this sound logic when life challenges us, especially when it tempts us to compare our lot in earthly matters with others or to be disappointed when our own lives are not going as we hoped they would?

Consider that beautiful, wealthy young couple which you may be tempted to envy. They are in the same conflict as you, under the same trial, with the same basic hope and danger set before them. Consider that person whom you consider miserable- maybe alone, in poverty, in poor health, or all of these. He or she may seem the polar opposite in happiness compared to that beautiful young couple; yet which one is really worse off has nothing to do with any of these things! And that is because *ultimately* how they respond to God in their circumstances, and whether they use their circumstances faithfully in His eyes, is *truly* all that will ever matter about them *soon enough*! We would have been tempted to conclude that the rich man was much better off than Lazarus, had we seen them both when they were alive-

but not after they had both died! (See **Luke 16:19-31** if you are not already intimately familiar with the story).

Every Christian will acknowledge that this life is just a preparation for the next life and that the things of earth will pass away. But if we *actually consider* that truth to be trite, we really still have a vision problem and our belief of God's Word is at best unstable. Jesus is really going to return! You and I are really going to stand before the Great God, who made the Universe, and be recompensed by Him according to our works (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, Rev 22:12-15, etc**)! Our works will prove whether we have really loved Him and believed in Him (**John 5:24-29, Luke 13:23-27, etc**). Christ's blood will atone for and wash away the sins of those whom He deems truly love Him and believe in Him, as the Great Ruler and Deliverer that He is - and for none other (**1 John 1:7, Luke 6:46-49, Romans 2:4-16, James 1:12, James 2:5, etc**)!

Our accountability to God implies that life is a test wherein He examines our choices in the light of His

Word; and thereby also examines our gratitude for the opportunity which He has provided through Jesus Christ to be reconciled with Him and justified in His sight. Whether you are rich or poor, whether you are strong or crippled, whatever your marriage state is, or whatever your lot is in anything else pertaining to this life does not make you better or worse off in the biggest issue for you. For none of these things relieve you from the trial which you are under, and the court date which you have, with the Almighty God! If you are happy, comfortable, and feel blessed- you still have this dilemma to deal with. And if you are overwhelmed with grief, uncomfortable, and feel anything but blessed- you yet have a bigger crisis to deal with! And that is the *very same* dilemma which the people that seem the opposite of you right now have! There is truly no partiality with God nor any discharge from the ultimate trial which He has placed upon each and every man and woman.

If we make this our primary concern then and keep this before our eyes continually, in doing so we truly have the best preparation to be a single Christian

long-term! And that is really the very best preparation for any other challenge of life also. And I guarantee you that those who have fallen away from the Lord for *any* reason lost sight of this great, ultimate trial- or they wouldn't have been so brutally stumbled by the circumstances which life threw at them that caused them to turn away from the Lord.

Even Jesus in His incarnation and humility was under trial from His Father and never let this slip from being His primary concern to attend to. If we are going to faithfully follow Him and inherit salvation through Him, we need to squarely fix this before our eyes also and learn not to let them look away from this incredible and weighty *reality* of our existence, which will never cease to be reality on this side of Judgment Day and eternity.

“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though

he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:7-9)

Chapter 3: Unfortunate Realities Which we'd Better not Blame God for

It is commonly known that an adult being single long-term is not a highly appreciated thing among North American Christians. Moreover, it might almost be a taboo subject altogether. As I do a Google search here on a morning in August 2020 I type in “prepare not to be married”; and then I put the word Christian outside the quotations. Guess how many results I get by this search? Zero! Now I put in the same phrase, except one word less, to change the topic to “prepare to be married”; with Christian also outside of the quotation marks. Guess how many results I get now? 576,000!

Why is there so much said and taught about preparation for marriage, but virtually nothing on preparation for long-term singleness? I don't believe there is a single answer to this, but there are reasons no doubt. Now we'll look at some reasons for this lop-sided emphasis, which I believe are likely to be valid ones.

Potential Reasons for the Imbalanced Emphasis on Marriage Among Christians

I believe one reason is an overreaction to Roman Catholicism's exaltation of celibacy and its (unbiblical) mandate that their clergy be unmarried. And there's no doubt that after you take away the overestimation of celibacy, and the necessary requirement of celibacy for those who are officially regarded as spiritual leaders, then there is not much reason that many adults would ever even want to think about it much, let alone go through with it on a long-term basis!

I believe also that there has been a reaction among evangelicals in recent decades, especially among conservative evangelicals, to a neglect in the prior decades regarding family and raising children (that is, really raising them- meaning home-schooling them rather than sending them to public schools; or even sending them to private schools, if at all possible). And it is a good thing overall, that there has been an emphasis on parents really giving themselves to raising godly children

and doing what is reasonably in their power to work towards that goal.

I also strongly guess that evangelical leaders in recent decades have not had to deal much with being single long-term themselves for a key reason that is easy to overlook: They have, by and large, gone to mixed Bible colleges and seminaries where there were also present numerous female students who were hoping to find a husband who was on track to be a preacher/Pastor-type figure. So a key result of this, and in my estimation it's obvious, is that there have not been many evangelical preachers/Pastors who have had to deal with singleness and celibacy beyond their mid-twenties, if even that. And whether holding off on marriage and being celibate until the mid-twenties is even significantly beyond wading into the territory of long-term singleness is questionable.

Understanding the “why” aspect of how singleness and celibacy are anything but popular among Christians in our day isn't the main point of this book,

but it is very important that we understand that we have to live in a world that is shaped by the influences of previous generations. And it is also the nature of life that several of the circumstances which we face are totally beyond our control. While I don't claim to know all of the specific reasons, I do know that the above factors are present to a notable extent among North American Christians regarding long-term singleness. So if you're seeking to be faithful to the Lord today as a Christian adult who is single long-term, then having to face that matter is especially challenging, since you are doing something which the Christian leaders and other Christian mentors in your life have likely never had to do to a great extent.

Another Factor

In the distant past, and recently (and yet today), there have been many people who have sought to twist Scripture and promote an agenda contrary to Scripture. And there have also been those who, to one degree or another, have sought to return to the Bible and heed its

counsel in the fear of God. Yet even people who do this with much resolve can under-react or overreact, in small or subtle ways, to bad influences which they sought to challenge and expose as bad influences indeed. There have no doubt been people who have sought to emphasize righteous concepts related to marriage and family which they saw were truly necessary to emphasize and defend, due to threats and bad influences from within and without the church. Yet they also may not have seen the whole picture so well as they sought to do this, nor considered that sometimes it is better for a man or a woman to remain single- and therefore singleness is truly a good thing to promote and hold up as a righteous, godly option for a Christian- and something which is also not necessarily opposing Biblical Truth regarding godly, Christian families the slightest bit! They also may not have considered that some people turn to the Lord in vastly different circumstances than they did, without the same opportunities for marriage early in their Christian life and/or their early adulthood like they had. They may also not have considered that singleness due to divorce can be a righteous concept when a marriage covenant has

been violated through marital infidelity or when it was impossible to continue in the marriage while being faithful to the Lord at the same time (example: one shouldn't stay married to someone who persists in trying to make them watch ungodly things).

So it's overall very possible that many who have rightly sought to emphasize the great importance of Christian marriage and intact family units, with their proper and exceedingly important roles for husband and wife, yet also overlooked the need to balance this with an emphasis on the proper place for singleness in the context of Christianity. And in doing this, they also thus failed to discern the need to really prepare Christian adults to be single long-term if/when marriage isn't a righteous option, or marriage isn't the optimal state, at the time for them. And this is a big reason why, when I meet a church-going Christian, I can confidently tell them that I bet they've never heard a sermon on being single for the Lord- except perhaps sermons geared towards single young adults that were really mostly, or altogether, about preparation for marriage.

So when you have a generation or more of leadership which has little personal experience with a particular matter, and also to a notable extent didn't really discern the need to *thoroughly prepare* those under their leadership for facing such a matter, then you're going to have a generation or more of Christians who are overall ill-prepared to deal with the same matter also. And then that generation (and probably at least the following generation too) are going to have a harder struggle than necessary when they have to face that matter themselves.

More Unfortunate Realities to Consider

Moreover, if you were not raised in a home that was a faithful Christian home or anything close to that, then you are more unlikely to be prepared to enter into a Christian marriage when you are a young adult. And that in turn makes it more likely that you'll have to manage your way, to a very great extent, through a difficult area which the Christians of previous generations failed to help you prepare for! And of course a big reason for that

is because Bible-believing Christians tend to marry young when they do marry. So when you miss out on marriage as a Christian young adult, or you come into the fold later in life having never married, divorced, or having been widowed, the pool of potential marriage partners for you has greatly dwindled already. Most who are anywhere your age, who might have been potential marriage partners when you were younger (if you had been in the church and also ready to get married), have already married rather young or forsook the Lord. And ironically, in a sad way, many in the latter group actually forsook the Lord over some issue fully or closely related to the challenges which this book deals with.

And then there is another major problem which single Christians in this generation who want to live God's way have to deal with. And this is the overall just plain lack of other single, like-minded Christians who are even righteous candidates for being potential marriage partners (even if you are a young adult Christian who may be otherwise ready for marriage).

I remember having a debate with a Jehovah's Witness leader when I was in my mid-twenties. I was seeking to vindicate the truths of the Bible which the Jehovah's Witnesses reject in favor of their own heretical follies. This JW leader, probably thirty-some years older than me, looked at me as our debate was wrapping up and said something like "I used to meet a lot of young people like you- born-again Christians who are zealous for their faith. I don't meet many people like you anymore." There was nothing notably malicious nor sarcastic in his voice. I have no reason to believe that he was not just exclaiming a thought, based on evidence, which had crossed his mind.

What a sad testimony of how the devil has successfully worked, both within and without churches, to undermine confidence in Scripture and the proclamation of Biblical Truth! Sadly, America (and many other nations too) now have, like Israel had by its description in **Judges 2:10** (and probably much more so actually), a generation that has arisen which knows not the Lord. This is a large-scale failure that many

individuals bear some blame for, but which also greatly transcends the wickedness and/or failures of any one individual. One consequence of this is that many things are generally harder in many ways for a young person who does indeed know the Lord now, than they would have been in previous generations, including righteously going about getting married.

Why Blame Isn't Righteous nor a Good Solution

To whatever extent you may agree or disagree with my assessment of why Christians now are so generally ill-prepared to handle singleness long-term, yet also so likely to have to actually deal with it, the fact remains that God doesn't typically shield His people from the disadvantageous circumstances which wickedness, lack of diligence, lack of insight, or just plain honest mistakes of people in previous years have caused. The same is true when it comes to economic circumstances, education opportunities, national calamities, and many other things.

When we find ourselves in difficulties which we perceive as extraordinary and/or especially difficult to handle, we *cannot* blame God (as the natural tendency is to do), lest we cut ourselves off from the help which He is willing to give, and which He has generously offered, to those who call on Him and trust in Him. We also can't blame individuals for generational failures which may have led to our disadvantageous and/or difficult circumstances. It is not just to blame one or a few people for something which, even if it is as harmful as we perceive it to be, is something which multitudes contributed to. The people even whom we'd be tempted to blame most are also likely to not even be among the most guilty for it, if they are even guilty at all for it.

This is all related to casting down temptations to blame others, especially God, when we find ourselves worn down by difficulty and/or confused and desperate for answers as to why things can seem so difficult. And this all goes beyond not being married as a Christian long-term, but those who abide in such a situation will very likely know what I'm talking about and understand

its relevance for their situation. The only exceptions of course might be those especially rare people who don't even see singleness long-term as an adult, while also living by God's rules, as much of a challenge at all (and I may not have ever even met one of these).

In relation to any of these unfortunate circumstances which might affect us, and any others not discussed here, there is no need to despair over them when we face them, since there is no circumstance which God does not have provision for us to conquer through Him. If we will only believe His Word and patiently commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing through them (**1 Peter 4:19, Psalm 78:7-8, etc**), we can righteously conquer in them- big-time!

“He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” (Deuteronomy 32:4)

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” (Romans 11:34)

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress (which long-term singleness can be to some people sometimes), or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” (Romans 8:35-37)

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no

**variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James
1:12-17)**

Chapter 4: Handling Friendly Fire: One of the Hardest Problems an Unmarried Christian Adult can Face

So ultimately the long-term single adult Christian now has inherited, and needs to face, at least three trends that are a perfect storm which make his or her state, as difficult as it may already be to handle, especially acute and complicated in its difficulty. We have a Christianity in our day which:

1. Exalts and esteems marriage and family, while placing little value- or maybe even zero or negative value- on Christian singleness (beyond early adulthood especially); and as a result, implicitly pressures its ranks to get married and start a family.
2. The same people who are thus implicitly pressured, in many instances, have few to zero options for obtaining a godly Christian spouse whom they can even righteously and realistically marry and start a family with. And this is

particularly true if they come into the fold past early adulthood, become single past early adulthood due to being divorced or widowed, or have spent their early adulthood in business and activities which focusing on marriage then would have interfered with (hopefully righteous and godly things); or perhaps they simply got left out as the Christians paired off in early adulthood to marry and start a family. Moreover, some may honestly believe before God that it is best they yet remain single, even if marriage were a righteous option for them at the moment.

3. Leaders and mentors in the Body of Christ are *very likely* to have had a *relatively easy time* (I don't mean there wasn't necessarily any difficulty involved at all) finding a spouse in early adulthood, due to attending a mixed Bible school (or something similar to that); or because they belonged to the previous generation or two, in which there had quite possibly been a significantly higher percentage of its members turning to the Lord in their youth or young

adulthood. And as a result, good and truly helpful instruction, counseling, and encouragement to handle being single past early adulthood are sorely lacking in churches, and among Christians, in general. And moreover, some leaders and mentors may actually fear long-term singleness *for themselves* should their spouse leave them or die well before they do. As I found out first-hand, sometimes the best that they can honestly do is say little, while trying not to pass their fear and feelings of discouragement about the matter on to the single person who is seeking their help.

And on top of these yet, you have two more realities which are inescapable if you are to be faithful to God (and this is our ULTIMATE GOAL!) as a long-term single adult Christian.

1. You cannot righteously forsake church and Christian fellowship just because you feel uncomfortable and/or out of place often in the

midst of it (**Hebrews 10:25**). Moreover, you cannot discount Christian leaders and reject aged Christians as mentors just because they are questionably or ill-prepared to handle this one matter. The world does not revolve around us and our issues and circumstances. Though I am writing this book to help those in a particular circumstance with the potentially hard issues which may very well accompany it to some extent, the fact remains that over 99 percent of the Bible doesn't directly deal with this matter. And even if this issue were a full five percent of Christianity (and I am virtually sure that is an estimate which is way too high), the fact would remain that there is 95 percent of Christianity which is about other things. We *still* need God's people and God-ordained leadership for many, many valid reasons even if they could be no help at all to us in this matter.

I said in chapter one that I estimate that at least 50 percent of all turning from the Lord and

falling away from the faith is related to unwillingness to be a single adult Christian long-term. And I stand by that- but understand though that “the faith” is the entire package of Christianity; and we are talking here about living by God’s rules and doing things God’s way which is delineated in Scripture. There may be one obstacle on an obstacle course which is way more likely than any other obstacle on it to disqualify a competitor, but the very point of overcoming that obstacle is to run the other 90-some percent of the course! If you fail to do *that*, you are disqualified whether you overcame that one particular obstacle or not! Any attitude or hang-up which draws us away from following the entire package of Biblical Christianity (to the honest and true best of our ability) IS our defeat! So if you forsake a church for any reason which is not Biblical and/or if you give up pursuing a Biblical church and Christian fellowship altogether, then you are disqualifying yourself and falling away from the faith. Please do not do

this! And it should also be pointed out that if we were to let this relatively small, though maybe very difficult and tricky aspect of Christianity, to be a factor in us forsaking church/Christian fellowship and/or any other aspect of Biblical Christianity, we would then actually be eligible to be included in the statistic of those who fell away from Christ due to unwillingness to be a single adult Christian long-term. For we would then be allowing our hang-ups related to this issue to cause us to not live by His rules nor overall do things His way.

2. As a result of all these things, there will be friendly fire from well-meaning church leaders, preachers, and other church members that the long-term single adult Christian will have to face. What I mean by that is, there will almost inevitably be sermons and other things that they will hear, as they are involved in church and hearing the preaching of God's Word, which may seem like salt on wounds, hard stings, or at least

be things which somehow make the Christian who is single past early adulthood perplexed and maybe even to feel unnecessarily guilty.

Dealing with the Genesis 2:18 Sting

An example of what I mean is how Preachers/Pastors tend to gravitate to **Genesis 2:18** in their preaching, regarding how God said that it was not good that the man be alone; so He would make him an help meet for him. And so as the preacher preaches, he probably makes a joke or two about how the man really does need help; or about how the woman brought more problems than she brought help; or something along those lines. Then he gets serious and talks about the excellence of the marriage arrangement; he talks about how being a husband and a father is such a challenging, excellent, high calling; he preaches on how being a wife and a mother is the paramount of a woman's existence and the most supreme calling which God could ever give to anyone. While he so speaks, the long-term single adult Christian (unless they are really strong or just not paying

attention too well) is just sitting there feeling worthless and wondering what he/she did wrong. In such messages, it is *highly unlikely* that the intention of the message was actually to shame the long-term single adults. Nevertheless, that may very well be what happened. How are we to handle this?

It's important to understand that being a godly spouse is a high God-ordained calling; and it's proper to preach about its importance and excellence. It's not wrong to spend a lot of time talking about it. The Bible talks a lot about it! And obviously it's hard to talk about this without *seemingly* implicitly shaming the unmarried adults. It would definitely be unreasonable and oversensitive to think that such topics shouldn't be given an important place in preaching because they might make single people feel excluded or unnecessarily guilty. And it would also be wrong to assume that a preacher who talks about these things a lot is being malicious or demeaning. Charity demands that we give other people the benefit of the doubt, whenever they aren't guilty of wickedness beyond a reasonable doubt (**1 Corinthians**

13:5). And sometimes a preacher/Pastor might even acknowledge singleness as a godly option, and a potentially high calling also, when he talks about these things- and thus accordingly exhort the single people some too.

However, the most likely thing to happen in the current evangelical climate is that the preacher will neither be malicious, nor greatly insightful, in dealing with single adults as he preaches about marriage and related things. What is most likely to happen is that Biblical insights on marriage will be given, possibly with exaggeration to some degree; and probably also overlooking that there is another side of the coin, an “it is also written” which doesn’t diminish the importance of marriage, with its responsibilities and blessings, one bit- yet which also upholds the legitimate place of singleness for Christian adults, along with the responsibilities and blessings which come with that. This is a blind spot or an oversight on the preacher’s end, but guess what? If that is his biggest problem, or near his biggest problem, he still very well may be a true man of God who should be

followed and supported in his ministry. We all tend to be at least a little bit biased based on our own experience and perspective. And if we overreact to feeling neglected or excluded when marriage is being given much attention in the church, while little to nothing is said about singleness, then we ourselves are probably even more than a little biased by our own experience and perspective!

Marriage and family *are* extremely important. Intact, orderly, godly families are a foundational aspect to having both a strong church and a well-ordered society. They also have the potential to be about as powerful a witness for the Lord as anything can be. We should rejoice when a church produces these, even if we aren't directly a part of that. And we should also be the needed examples of the valuable lessons that can be demonstrated, and of the good that can be done, through Christian singleness (for as long as we remain single, that is).

Nevertheless, it's important not to feel unnecessarily guilty or worthless when Scriptures like **Genesis 2:18** are being preached on. It is important to understand that though **Genesis 2:18** is spoken beyond just applying to Adam and Eve in their own persons, it is still not a principle that applies to every man and every woman at all times- even if they are truly surrendered to God and walking holy and acceptable in His eyes. You just have to read **1 Corinthians chapter 7** to tell that this is in truth the Apostolic perspective.

There are indeed times when being single long-term is God's will for an adult Christian and something potentially very advantageous in God's service also. And if we are zealous for the Lord and eager to do that which is pleasing to Him in the opportunities we are afforded, we can prove that well ourselves! There are many tasks for God's kingdom which mainly just demand a surrendered heart to God and availability. These also might be tasks which few or none even know about and/or appreciate besides God Himself, who sees in secret. And in *many* (though far from all) cases, single

Christian adults are the best or only fit to perform such tasks. These can be of great value in the Lord's sight, especially in that there is sometimes very little reason to do them unless a person *really lives to God* and values His approval *much more* than anything else. And that may very well be the only thing which is received for a while too for doing such things, since God's best rewards nearly always come at an indefinite point in the distant future and/or in eternity. And because there was very little reason to do such things, besides the hope that God indeed is faithful and will reward those who diligently seek Him (see **Hebrews 11:6** and **Matthew 6:4**), then there is reason to believe that such acts of faith will be regarded by Him as being quite precious. And if so, they will thus be rewarded by Him accordingly eventually, since He is in truth faithful. Such acts then can be some of the purest and most valuable expressions of a living faith in Christ.

But let me clarify: Being surrendered to God and acting on His Word because you truly believe Him is what makes an action valuable in His sight. Visibility or

invisibility before other people isn't what determines the value of an action. Sometimes obeying God and glorifying Him *must* be done before other people—otherwise Jesus' exhortation to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven (see **Matthew 5:16**), would be useless or even bad. Many godly characteristics and deeds *ought to, and need to*, be demonstrated publicly. What matters is that we are in truth surrendered to God, and are willing to do what His Word requires, whether people see it and appreciate it or not. However, what we do when no one is watching, and what we do when we can really do something that is good just as well secretly rather than openly, such are valuable litmus tests of the true thoughts and intents of our hearts. They reveal *a lot* about whether we are worshiping God in spirit and in truth. So opportunities to do things which are right in His sight, which no one else would know about and/or appreciate when being done, *can be great tests and great opportunities* to glorify God, that have exceedingly great value to Him, when we do well before Him in them. And that is the case whether we are married or we are single.

Being a celibate, single person is not the super-spiritual thing which has the potential to elevate someone to a height of spirituality and usefulness which a married person could never attain to, like the Roman Catholic Church would have us believe (at least by implication because of its mandatory celibacy policy for its priesthood)- but it is sure not a degraded thing to be ashamed of either! And if you are under a spiritual leader who doesn't seem to fully comprehend that, put aside any hurt feelings you have and believe that having God's approval is all that really matters! And if at that point you still think he ought to have his perspective about this corrected, then humbly approach him and lay out your case before him. It may do him and the church a lot of good. If he won't even acknowledge the truths and the counsel the Apostle spoke about singleness in **1 Corinthians chapter 7**, then he may very well have an issue which goes beyond a flawed perspective on this matter- possibly even the *very greatest bad issue* of having a controversy with God due to not trembling at His Word, as if it were not the binding decree of the King

of the Universe that it is (**Isaiah 66:2, John 12:46-49, Hebrews 3:12-15, etc!**)

And by the way, we have no more right to tell God that it is not good that we (personally) be alone, than we'd ever have a right to tell God that He was wrong to say that it was not good that Adam be alone!

The Proper Outlook Regarding the Excellence of Marriage

I also heard one of those sermon compilations on the internet recently, where one of the preachers in it said something like “marriage is the greatest instrument of sanctification that there is.” Beside this particular preacher’s much bigger problem of being a Calvinist who actually believes that God chooses people to salvation unconditionally, sanctifies people totally against their wills, and all the other nonsense that comes with Calvinism, this preacher also does not see the whole picture on the marriage issue.

I don't doubt that someone who has never been married loses out *to some extent* on a bunch of lessons that getting married long ago *could have* taught them by now. And I can see how long-term single people who indeed live alone (not all do by the way, some even have children under their care or live with others for various legitimate reasons) would not typically be well-equipped for certain situations in life and ministry. But again, there is another side of the coin and another perspective to consider along with these things. There are challenges and lessons to learn in either state; and sometimes they are even mutually exclusive of each other (in terms of potentially being faced and comprehended to a great degree at the same time).

Someone who has been a missionary to a 3rd world country might think that living in a 3rd world country is the greatest instrument of sanctification that there is. And in regards to their own life, he or she may actually be right! But God doesn't lead every person who surrenders to Him into the same exact dealings in the very same circumstances either. **“What man is he**

that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.” (Psalm 25:12) There are trials and temptations in America, and in other nations that definitely aren't 3rd world countries, which living in a 3rd world country will to a great measure actually make easier for a person or exempt them from altogether. And of course, some people who never have gone to a 3rd world country as missionaries are truly godly people who have matured greatly in the Lord. On the other hand though, some who have gone to 3rd world countries as missionaries are nevertheless wicked and not one bit better off for having done so!

It is how we respond to God in our present circumstances that really matters to Him. If/when we are responding right to the light of His Truth that we do have, we can trust that He will arrange our circumstances to best lead us towards Christian maturity, valuable service for His kingdom, and to overall help fit us for glory. Yet whether it is our location, our vocation, our marriage/family situation, etc- there is no such thing as a one-size fits all set of circumstances which is the

necessary combination to bring every individual Christian to be the mature, chiseled, refined, sanctified vessel that God intends to make of him/her.

Here's another thought: Maybe having other people think that we are missing out on the greatest instrument of sanctification, is in itself, a great instrument of sanctification (see **Galatians 1:10**). I would have to guess, and I am nearly sure of it, that Jesus Himself faced a lot of reproach and misunderstanding due to being single. Likewise with the Apostle Paul and other great men of God in Biblical times who were single.

The single Christian also often has a special opportunity to demonstrate the following things: We will all have to stand before God *alone*. There is also the aspect of not having another person to uphold you emotionally in the ways that only a marriage partner can. Therefore, singleness is a great opportunity to develop inner strength, security in the Lord, and bodily discipline. These are things which every Christian needs to exercise and develop, yet things which the long-term single adult

Christian indeed has an opportunity (really, the necessity) to especially excel at. And in maturity in these things, there are also potential great opportunities to help others in key ways as an example and counselor.

On the other side of the coin, every Christian needs to be submitted to God- yet few or none can demonstrate this more obviously and effectively than a faithful Christian wife can in relating to her husband. And every Christian is called to serve and be patient with those under them, in whatever area of authority they are placed in, yet few or none can demonstrate this better than faithful Christian parents can in dealing with their children. Likewise, few or none can better demonstrate the (so incredibly, greatly needed) proper example of God's benevolent, righteous Lordship over mankind than a Christian husband and father has the potential to do in dealing with his family.

So is marriage, at least potentially, a great instrument of sanctification? Of course it is! But is it *absolutely, one hundred percent necessary* for

sanctification to any degree, in regards to every individual? No way. Jesus, and at least one of His chief Apostles (Paul), prove that beyond any doubt! But on the other hand, we do at least have to glean from the lessons that faithful married Christians have to offer, and apply them wherever it is appropriate in many of the trials that we face, and in many of the opportunities we have, to glorify God. Along the same lines, the church will suffer much when there aren't adults among it who faithfully handle long-term singleness; or when the church fails to glean from and apply the lessons that those who do this have to offer. And quite possibly, an entire book could be written about the different lessons that married Christians and single Christians can best demonstrate. Those that have been mentioned here are just a few notable examples.

Cautions Over These Matters

What is written here is not really written so you can better vindicate yourself should you feel unappreciated or ashamed for being single. Rather, it is written so you can

have security before God in relation to your single state; and so you will be better able to cast off agitation over this matter- especially agitation related to church and Christian fellowship, since all must seek to partake of these in order to be faithful to the Lord and to walk in the faith once delivered to the saints. And when you *actually* have security in God about this, the temptation and pressure you may feel to vindicate yourself over it *will go way down*. This is also written to help bring our perspective in line with reality, so we neither have an overly exalted nor degraded view of Christian singleness.

It's essential, especially when dealing with other Christians who are overall seeking to do right before God, to give others the benefit of the doubt when it comes to their lack of perspective which may make us feel uncomfortable or unappreciated or something along those lines. This is a true exercise of long-suffering, which is an essential aspect of Biblical charity or love. *And without that, we are nothing (see 1 Corinthians chapter 13).*

And I believe that any honest person would have to admit that it's a lot easier to celebrate marriage and family than it is to celebrate singleness and celibacy. Telling a single person congratulations on holding up another year could be taken as sarcastic or otherwise insulting quite easily, even when there was no intention to be such. And what is a church supposed to do otherwise? Have an annual virgin festival or celibacy festival? That does sound awfully Pagan! And such a thing probably would actually become at least a little Pagan soon enough- and even a little bit of Pagan influence is way too much (see **2 Corinthians 6:14-18, etc**)! And singles conferences and things of that nature tend to easily turn into cloaked, or not so cloaked, matchmaking events. A responsible church would actually have good reason to see it as prudent (and prudence is a good thing which the Bible commends) to not have anything to do with them.

The single adult Christian has a responsibility to not expect, and not insist on, open appreciation or validation from the church- lest they be found before God

as a murmurer and a complainer (**1 Corinthians 10:11**). Or at the very least, be found before God as a Christian merely outwardly, who doesn't truly worship Him from the heart, and who esteems the praises of men more (**Romans 2:28-29**). And that in itself is bad enough to keep one out of God's kingdom.

For sake of our own confidence towards God, and so we don't believe ourselves to be guilty for the wrong reasons, we need to be secure in the fact that God's Word gives us the right to remain single. And in some circumstances, the most godly and responsible thing to actually do (at least for the time being) is to remain single. And in some cases, that is *the only* righteous option for the time being. How many people have forsook the Lord, or set themselves up to eventually forsake the Lord, by marrying someone whose conversion to Christ was questionable or someone whose stability and maturity in Christ were sorely lacking? So very, very many! And moreover, how many have set their children up to be robbed of a home where both of

their parents were faithful Christians, by making a bad marriage decision? Again, incredibly many.

Preachers and church members need to understand that when they exalt marriage and raising a family frequently, without also giving proper place to the advantages and potential excellency of singleness, they are indeed in danger of placing unnecessary stress and pressure to get married on single Christians. *And even worse, they are in danger of pressuring them towards marriage outside of God's will.* It would also be possible to do harm in another direction, by directly or implicitly shaming godly Christians for considering marriage to godly people, in situations in which there is no good reason to say that the marriage would be irresponsible and/or unfitting.

Chapter 5: The Unknown Future: The Great X-Factor

In the town I live in now there is a set of train tracks, which several trains run through per day on a route running between two major cities. There is one overpass for the train track on one side of the town, but at every other street which intersects the train tracks, as the train is running through town, you've just got to wait for the train to altogether go by, detour to get to the overpass, or just altogether abandon your plans to go to the other side of town. What can make this such a complicated and difficult choice is how some trains only take a minute to go by, while others can take half an hour or more. And unless there is a schedule available to the public which I do not yet know about, there is an uncomfortable decision to make- since you simply do not know when the train is going to end so that crossing the tracks again will be possible for you. If you knew that it would only take two minutes, or you knew that it would take thirty-five minutes, that would make a huge difference! Your decision about what to do would be so much easier to

make, even if the best decision wasn't the most comfortable one for you.

This reminds so much of the conflict which the single Christian has when it comes to waiting for marriage and decisions about marriage. There is so much information which you do not know, and which in many cases is impossible for you to know, that it can make your head spin. When will an opportunity to righteously get married come which you are not likely to regret taking? Will such an opportunity ever come? Is it better that you never get married at all? Is there even one person "out there" that is a good fit for you? Will the marriage option before you, which you have your doubts about, be the only chance you'll ever have? Isn't it better that you just get married and not have to live alone anymore? Might it be better for you, and also in a way maybe even a great relief to you, to just give up on marriage altogether? These questions, and many others, can plague a single person's mind. And it's an uncomfortable truth that God isn't going to give you the answers you wish you had as you wonder about them in perplexity. And furthermore,

even if you think that He has shown you a hint about the answers you seek, it is highly probable that it was really just your own imagination playing tricks on you.

Using the Uncertain Future to Our Advantage

However, there is a way to turn the unknown future, and our overall lack of information, to be our helper rather than something which plagues us. *And if there is one tip which I could go back in time and share with myself in my early twenties, it may very well be this truth:* One thing that the inexperienced Christian is not likely to know much about, and something that the experienced Christian can also easily forget or minimize, is how not only do you not know when you will find relief from your afflictions (whatever they might be), but you also do not know, until your moment of utter need, how God might help you in your afflictions so they do not overwhelm you (as you follow Him and trust in Him). And though you can't have a sure hope about the timing of relief from afflictions and uncomfortable uncertainties about your life which may plague you, you

can indeed count on God's help as you go on with Him. And *that* is all we ever need!

Unexpected Help in Situations That Look Impossible

I have truly found that there has indeed always been a way available to manage frustration as a single Christian, so as not to be overwhelmed by sin and/or despair in it. And it often happened through distractions (that didn't involve relief through sinning) which I had not counted on previously. There has also been renewed inner strength, which came when needed, that I had not really made a factor in my previous worry about the future- especially when I was in my early twenties and thought that being single into my thirties (living God's way) would be impossible.

I remember a time in my late twenties when I was nearly worn down, not only due to the frustrations of singleness, but also due to the frustrations about a lot of other things. There was another Christian guy, a good friend of mine living at the house I was renting, who felt

basically the same way. Things were not going well for us, disappointments abounded, and the basic sentiment was “I can’t believe this is happening!” We were truly in great danger of turning from the Lord at that point. To make matters worse, one of the frustrations that we were undergoing was that the fellowship situation with the Christians we had been meeting with had basically fallen apart. Christian fellowship wasn’t a major aspect of life; and apart from my housemate and a few other individuals (whom I am thankful for and probably underestimated the value of then), wasn’t available otherwise. So even the exhortation and encouragement of a church body just wasn’t available anywhere that I was aware of at the time (which I could go to in good conscience without violating my understanding of Scripture in order to be a member there). Yet the help which ended up saving us in that frustrating time came in the form of a few displaced individuals, who requested to move in with us for a season, whom I also in good conscience could not turn away. For almost a year, these individuals were enough distraction and frustration in themselves that every other frustration got pushed aside and became a lot easier to

bear! They were not the help we wanted nor expected; yet the distraction they provided was actually somehow what we needed. It shouldn't be a surprise to us that the help we need so often comes from opportunities to help others, even those that may not be very pleasant to help.

Life Isn't Static; and Some Implications of this Related to our Topic

If we don't throw in the towel or compromise when singleness seems overwhelming, the sensation of being overwhelmed by it *will subside soon enough*. I had thought previously that things would be a lot more static; and that long-term adult singleness was either something a person simply eventually adapted to altogether or failed to really adapt to at all. Maybe a few people do basically totally adapt to it and end up going decades without being frustrated by it. And obviously, some people do fail to adapt to it at all due to their own choices not to go on with God in it. But I mean for myself, and I would also strongly guess for most people who should find themselves in the situation of being a single adult

Christian long-term (and of course any Christian *could* wind up in such a situation), it is not a matter of fully adapting to being single nor is it a matter of needing to fail to adapt to it altogether. There *will* be emotional ups and downs; and there will be other difficulties that will greatly vary in their intensity. And through battles related to these things, experience *can* be gained regarding how to wisely handle them and to see them from the perspective of Biblical wisdom. And a major aspect of that is learning to see them better from the standpoint of their relative significance in light of Judgment Day and eternity (hence the importance of chapters 2 and 7).

One day you may very well feel like you can't go on even another day. If you call on the Lord though and don't compromise Truth, you will get through the day righteously; and then the one after that. And you will very possibly even recover so well that you will actually come to days where being single long-term seems easy—maybe even so easy that you might wonder why long-term singleness ever seemed hard and troublesome to

you. You may even be endangered around that time of entering into a false security and false confidence, which you will then have to strive to fight off, since you may feel nearly indestructible. Of course, you will also quickly get reminded that you're not indestructible. And hopefully, you'll also learn your lesson quickly and get your perspective adjusted back much closer to what it ought to be, so that your dependence on God becomes more like what it was when you knew you needed His help greatly just to get through another day. And eventually, you may again come to a day where you feel like you can't go on any longer as a single person... and this may very well be a cycle that tends to repeat itself, with varying intensity- and also with deeper lessons in the Lord available to you each time you go through it. *You never need to turn from the Lord though nor be emotionally wrecked nor make a bad decision to try to get out of the cycle.* As long as you need to endure this cycle you can draw closer to the Lord, not compromise your purity, and overall be a victorious Christian- despite your possible emotional turmoil and the various challenges you may face that make life (at least seem)

extra complicated and/or difficult. God will *surely not fail* to help those who diligently seek Him on His terms **(James 1:2-8, 1 Corinthians 10:13, etc)!**

But be warned: It's not hard for most to acknowledge these things in principle- we need to believe and embrace them *so tightly* that we *yet* acknowledge them, and act accordingly, when we're suffering.

The Inevitability of Suffering for Doing Right in God's Eyes

Along with these things, it should be pointed out that a key factor in the insecurity many have over being single is that they overestimate the security that married people can obtain in marriage. That is, without deceiving themselves and obtaining a false security in marriage. This is where the importance of the next chapter comes in, as we look at why even married Christians need to prepare to some measure to be single long-term. The unstable, non-static, unpredictable nature of life makes this a reality too. It is also important to understand that

married people can have great problems, great frustrations, and that marriage can be a great trial which some find even harder than being single. It is also evident that even overall good and godly marriages often involve a lot of work and stress.

The way that leads to eternal life is simply narrow; and there is just no way to live God's way without suffering for it, even in areas of life where there is more than one righteous option available. To a great extent for most people, whether they were to be married or single long-term, doing things God's way in either state would bring them a considerable amount of suffering. Please understand that and take it to heart! If you do, it will be a lot harder to pity yourself and mope about not being married; and it will also be a lot harder to do the same over being married for that matter! This is another key truth that I would tell myself fifteen years ago, if I could counsel myself then. I am as sure as I can be that no one ever really emphasized to me then that doing things God's way is going to bring a lot of suffering, no matter which option you take. This is life,

we should not contend with God, and we should be thankful for the chance we have to worship Him and glorify Him in however following after righteousness before Him, in our particular circumstances, demands that we suffer.

Dangers of Unwarranted Declarations of Future States

As nice as knowing certain aspects of the future may seem, the bottom line is that knowing none of it is ultimately better for us. In many ways trials are a lot easier to bear when we do not know how long we will have to bear them. If someone had told me in my early twenties that I'd still be alive in my late thirties, having never married, I may very well have found that impossible to bear at the time. But only having to face a challenge one day at a time, with an indefinite end to it, each day having the experience accumulated from previous days, is actually a great blessing overall. This is an arrangement which is truly better for us.

It's therefore also not good to determine that you need to be married by a certain day or age (or to think that you need to get out from any circumstance because you're not comfortable with it by a certain day or age). Doing so is only increasing pressure on yourself to make a bad, highly consequential decision which you will end up bitterly regretting. And it is also not good to rashly say that you'll never get married out of frustration and/or a wish to just put an end to the matter. If you truly walk with God for many years as a single person, there may come a day eventually when you do think you've realized you will definitely never get married. But if such a day ever comes, you will have gained the wisdom, perspective, and experience to be content with that realization if/when it occurs. But that will not be the case if you should declare such a thing for yourself in your teens, twenties, thirties, forties, or even your fifties (yes, I don't think it's wise to even consider coming to such a conclusion until one is in their sixties or at least on the verge of death- and if you've ever said such a thing rashly, repent and ask God to forgive you for your foolish words, in hope that perhaps He won't hold you to them).

I remember once seeing a guy vow to never get married on a Christian discussion forum; yet within a few weeks the same guy was looking for advice on obtaining a wife! But related to these things on a positive note, I recently heard of a woman who got married for the first time at the age of fifty-two. She had never been married before in order to not compromise her convictions. What an encouraging example!

Along the same lines, never tell someone that God will surely help them find a spouse by a certain day, age, or even necessarily ever. Don't disillusion a struggling and/or confused Christian with such an unfounded guarantee. And also don't tell a lost person anything which would lead them to believe that a marriage partner will be theirs should they decide to follow Jesus (and hence be sure to never give an unbeliever the impression that you will be there to marry them if they should make a profession of Christ). All this can do is aid in robbing someone of eternal life by greatly warping their understanding of Christianity. And though a subsequent marriage, stemming from such a great

misrepresentation of the gospel, is almost certain to be a failure altogether in this life anyways, it will be a failure for sure on Judgment Day and eternity (in terms of its consequences- obviously all marriages are dissolved in the afterlife- see **Matthew 22:30, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, etc**). Likewise, such guarantees cheapen the glory of God and diminish the true promises of the gospel. Being justified before God, being reconciled with God, and being in fellowship with God are truly the greatest, best, and most necessary things that we could ever obtain. The very concept that God would ever throw anything else into the package as a bargaining tool to persuade man to worship and serve Him is humanistic and idolatrous! As Paris Reidhead said in his classic sermon ‘Ten Shekels and a Shirt’: “Let’s be done, once and for all, with utilitarian Christianity that makes God a means, instead of the glorious end that He is.”

The One Certainty We Can Hope in and Count on in Confidence

If we want certainty about the future, the only actual certainty that there is, and the only one which we actually need, is that the God of the Bible will be faithful to His Word. And along with this, we can have the certainty that the relatively few definite events predicted in His Word, that have not yet occurred, will eventually happen. The God of the Bible will surely be faithful to His promises towards those in line to receive them; and He will also be faithful to His threats towards those in line to receive them. If we diligently seek to please Him and trust in Him, we can be sure that He will give us the help that He deems we truly need, when we indeed actually need it. And how we feel about our current marriage situation, our job situation, or whatever earthly situation we find ourselves in will change over time—even if we need to remain in it for a long time.

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isaiah 57:15)

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount

up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:26-31)

Chapter 6: The Married Christian's Preparation to be Single

This chapter's title is not a typo. I suspect that some will read it and say something like "What kind of ungodly nonsense are you promoting! Married Christians need to focus on their marriage. Are you trying to promote divorce or be a fear-monger?"

I'm not trying to promote divorce and I am not minimizing the importance of married Christians fulfilling their duties related to marriage. And I am also not trying to scare or terrorize anyone, except maybe those who are living in a fantasy world in their own mind and are in desperate need of a reality check. I am only seeking to give a reality check and to echo Biblical exhortations which prove that the Bible teaches the need for the married Christian to prepare to not be married anymore.

Jesus Said It First, Not Me

Look carefully at who is included in the list in this exhortation which Jesus gave to potential disciples in Luke's Gospel: **“And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”** (Luke 14:25-27)

Obviously Jesus is using the word “hate” here in a comparative sense of value in relation to Himself. He isn't teaching malice or ill-will. Nevertheless, even when this exhortation is rightly understood, it is hard enough! The fact remains that to be a faithful follower of the Biblical Jesus until the end (**Matthew 24:13**), you need to be ready to possibly never get married if you're single; *and* you need to be prepared to be single again if you are married. This is important to emphasize, since many Christians fall away due to the latter, like many fall away due to the former- yet maybe even much more so in the case of the latter.

The Limits of Security in Marriage

And this is related closely to a point made in the previous chapter, regarding how a key factor in the insecurity which many have over being single is that they overestimate the security that people can (realistically) obtain in marriage. You think you'll just get married and not ever have to deal with being single again, do you? Well, not so fast. Even if you are ultra-careful about who you marry as a Christian, and still find someone you think is a good fit in the Lord, they *could* turn away from the Lord *someday*. You following Biblical Truth to the best of your ability and understanding may not, for one reason or another, be compatible with whatever/whomever they might eventually choose to follow. What are you going to do then? Compromise Truth so you can keep them and not have to be single again? That would be idolatry. And it is certainly better to have to be single again than it would be to be counted as an idolater by the Lord. Idolaters provoke the Lord to jealousy and go to hell (**1 Corinthians 10:22, Rev 21:8, etc!**)!

And if you were not so ultra-careful regarding whether the one you chose to marry was really a good fit for your long-term pursuit of the Lord, or if you were married already before your own conversion to Christ, then this is all the more likely to be an issue for you. And even if you and your marriage partner both stay faithful to the Lord together, you are not very likely to die at the same time- and one of you may go well before old age. Life can change *in an instant!* Don't think that you will never need to handle being single again. Settle it in your heart rather that this may very well indeed happen. This is not a "gloom and doom" outlook. This is simply reality. And acknowledging reality, and walking with a realistic outlook, is an aspect of putting on the belt of truth. And the belt of truth is a key piece of the armor necessary for warring against the devil, and for being prepared to stand in the evil day, which the Apostle mentions in these regards in **Ephesians chapter 6**.

The Potential Legitimacy and Necessity of Divorce

By every lawful means love your spouse; and help them in every appropriate way to thrive in the Lord and to be faithful to the Lord! Don't use any of this to deal treacherously against your spouse and to put them away for a carnal, unrighteous reason. God indeed hates divorce- and woe to the one who initiates a divorce to serve their own agenda! Yet divorce is prescribed by God as a remedy when a spouse commits fornication or is impossible to be dwelt together with in faithfulness to the Lord (read **Deuteronomy chapter 24** and **1 Corinthians chapter 7**). Woe also to the one whose sin makes divorce a necessary remedy for their wronged spouse!

But when the spouse who is victimized by sin (that is in the category of sin which makes obtaining a divorce a righteous necessity) won't cooperate with God's remedy, they are then committing many evils. They are then complicit in their own victimization, they are siding with their wicked spouse in their sin, they are choosing their spouse over the Lord, they are jeopardizing their own soul, and they are making things harder for any children they have than even a divorce

would make things (especially in light of Judgment Day and eternity).

What Adam Sought in his Transgression

Consider that Adam's transgression which caused mankind to fall was basically rooted in that he was not willing to let go of Eve and be separated from her. He knew well that had he not partook of the forbidden fruit, he obviously would not have been kicked out of the garden with her. Eve had been deceived about the consequence of eating from the forbidden tree, being led to believe by the serpent that she would not surely die for doing so. Adam, on the other hand, wasn't deceived in his transgression (**1 Timothy 2:14**). That is, he knew and understood fully what the consequence of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would be. Yet he did so anyways, *because* he chose to value his wife above being in God's favor and preserving the infinitely valuable life that was in him, which comes only through being rightly related to God!

Settle it in your heart then that inordinate love for your spouse will never be your own spiritual ruin which causes you to fall from God's grace.

Some Horrid Consequences of Men Inordinately Loving Their Wives and Not Laying Their Marriages on the Altar of God

Again then: **“And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:25-27)** Hence promises like the following are no joke; and circumstances can make being eligible for such promises a matter of great temporary loss and sorrow. **“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or**

wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.” (Mark 10:28-30)

Why have feminism and immodesty gained so much ground and taken root in so many churches, even in ones that are (or were) commonly regarded as conservative evangelical churches? It has much to do with how men have been afraid to say “no” to their wives as they have sought to follow the degenerative trends of the world in fashion. Why are they so afraid? In many cases, it has a lot to do with fear of losing them! And in turn, Pastors/church leaders have not intervened either in many such cases. They thus allowed the standards of the church to be compromised- quite possibly because they also have been afraid to say “no” to their own wives who (at least to some extent and in principle) were doing the same things!

Why are evangelical men, who claim to believe the Bible wholly, often so unwilling to consider that **1 Corinthians chapter 11** is indeed teaching that women ought to cover their heads as a normal part of their attire? It often has a lot to do with how they don't want a fight from their wives (though if for other reasons, they are not adequate regardless). They often try to say that the passage was just for that culture or that the hair itself is the covering. *Yet so often*, they are already automatically disqualified from understanding the passage right. And that is because they are not even willing to follow it, no matter how evidently an honest analysis of the chapter should prove that men are indeed commanded to command their wives to cover their heads (with a head-covering that is distinct from their long hair)!

Am I saying that a proper view on, and practice of, head-covering is essential for one's salvation? I am saying that an individual's subjection to God's Word is essential for their salvation- and if we come to God's Word willfully holding onto our own biases, then we are sure not subject to God's Word! So *refusal* in a man to

even honestly and thoroughly examine God's Word, with the readiness to insist that his wife cover her head, if the Bible should indeed evidently say he ought to do so, *may very well* be his damnation!

Yet head-covering may not be the issue of contention. That could be anything God's Word deals with. Both husbands and wives can choose their spouse above God, and so damn themselves, by taking the side of their spouse in a controversy that they unjustly have with an individual, family, or fellowship; or by taking their spouses' side in a controversy that an individual, family, or fellowship justly has with them! And maybe most common of all, by permitting a spouse to side with a wicked (in God's sight) teen or adult son/daughter who is corrupting their fellowship and/or their other children. As the one spouse justifies and/or refuses to restrain the wicked son/daughter, the other may back off or even come to just explicitly agree with their justification of wickedness (see **Proverbs 17:15**). The illogical things people repeat or invent to try to prevent their home and/or their fellowship from abiding by Biblical and

common sense laws of separation (remember “**a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump**”) in order to not have to contend with their spouse, or others in their household, are endless.

The bottom line is that pursuing the Lord and keeping His Word *may* bring a husband or wife into controversy with their own spouse which makes it impossible for the marriage to continue without the Lord being betrayed. Those who are married should settle it in their hearts then that they will make it as easy as possible for their spouse to not have to choose between them and the Lord, by being utterly faithful to the Lord themselves, regardless of the pain that doing so may put them through. They should also acknowledge that their spouse *may* deal deceitfully with the Lord; and so put them in a position where siding with the Lord means their marriage quite possibly ending. Single people who are intent on being faithful to the Lord, walking in the Truth of His Word, and inheriting salvation through Christ should choose a marriage partner with this in mind- even if that means rejecting opportunities to marry which are

questionable in light of this reality. Yet they should also acknowledge that there is no way to guarantee that such a controversy with their spouse won't ever happen, even if there is no apparent reason to believe that it will at the time of marriage. All should also seriously acknowledge that even marriages of faithful Christians can be dissolved through an untimely death well before old age; and that the trials of singleness are not necessarily behind them for good.

Necessary Clarifications and Explanations

It is also important to mention that this chapter has been dealing in generalities over things related to the chapter's topic. Certain cases might potentially need to unfold over drawn out periods of time, which require patience and waiting, regarding finding out what will happen with the marriage- rather than an instantaneous decision to go through with a divorce from a rebellious spouse for good. But you must still be ready and willing to lose your spouse if need be in standing for God's Word. A spouse who has committed adultery can

righteously be divorced - but it may very well be good to give them some time to repent - and to then take them back if (and only if) there is reason to believe they are truly repentant. A spouse who moves away from a church fellowship for an unrighteous, unwarranted reason should not be followed in that. Yet it is good to pray for them, and to give them some time to change their mind and come back, before a divorce is finalized. Likewise with a lot of issues that can put following the Lord faithfully in conflict with remaining with one's spouse.

Some obvious exceptions would be if the spouse just goes ahead and files for divorce; or just overall makes it plain enough that they won't ever be coming back. John Wesley was a man who was extremely useful for the Lord, despite having a failed marriage in which his spouse left him for good. In his journal he wisely stated of this "I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her." There is also the potential issue of needing to protect children from bad influence which could require more decisive, swift action. One protection of being part of a Biblically accurate, faithful fellowship

with wise leadership is that they can offer good skill and wisdom to best handle the nuances of each particular controversy.

And it is also worth mentioning that it is right and appropriate to remain with a spouse who is an unbeliever, or a backslidden Christian, *when* their stubbornness against the Lord is not interfering with one's own faithfulness to the Lord nor is a significant corrupting influence upon any children in their home. This is a practical implication of the following passage: **“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases:**

but God hath called us to peace.” (1 Corinthians 7:12-15)

“**Dwell with**” here in this context is speaking of the unbelieving spouse dwelling with the believing Christian *as* the believer remains faithful to the Lord; not to the unbeliever merely being willing to live with them as the unbeliever commands and/or significantly influences them into complicity with their sin. And obviously then “**depart**” in this context is speaking of the unbeliever leaving the believer in terms of bodily presence *or* the unbeliever’s refusal to allow their spouse to follow the Lord faithfully without their own interference or significant disturbance with that. If this were not how the passage ought to be taken, it would negate the Bible passages already looked at in this chapter and many others. God’s Word surely never contradicts itself!

There is a time to bear long with an unbelieving, or spiritually lagging spouse, to win them into following the Lord wholeheartedly- *but not when* attempting to win

them means actually being pulled in their own bad direction. This would actually be losing in relation to the Lord! A faithful, patient, caring Christian can fight towards winning their spouse to the Lord, and make great efforts towards righteously preserving a marriage, even a marriage that is falling apart and maybe even close to ending. *Yet* there are God-ordained boundaries which that can (and should only) be done inside of. To step outside those boundaries and/or to reject clear evidence that someone is a severe spiritual and/or physical danger, that must be fled from or told to leave, is playing with fire. There is a time to either get out or tell them to get out; and if they leave, they should definitely not be chased. And I have indeed known of, and personally known also, people who have hurt themselves and their children much by not heeding this counsel.

I even knew one woman who literally went insane to a significant degree, due to wavering over leaving her psychopath husband and (unnecessarily) putting up with his antics. She kept hearing different things about whether or not she should divorce him from

confused evangelicals. She wavered so much that she even divorced him; and then shortly afterwards remarried *him*. She eventually came to her senses, and enough good Bible understanding, to divorce him and *really* put him out of her life. Not surprisingly, she afterwards recovered significantly enough spiritually, mentally, and emotionally to the point where she was able to work a job- something which had been totally out of the question for her for several years prior.

It's also important to note that a spouse may be willing to dwell peacefully with a faithful Christian where they currently are. However, to remain faithful to the Lord a Christian may need to move for the sake of being part of a more Biblical church or to fulfill some other Christian responsibility which is essential in their circumstances. When a Christian stays faithful in being where their current understanding of Truth and their known opportunities to glorify God dictate that they should be, their spouse may very well not be willing to come with them at a certain point (or not be willing to stay with them at a certain point- since a spouse also may

want to make an unwarranted move, when the righteous thing to actually do is stay put).

How long can you righteously put off fulfilling an essential Christian responsibility so you will not be separated from your spouse, whom you know or suspect won't remain with you as you actually fulfill it? At what point would you be putting him/her ahead of God? To give them some advance notice about what you know you ought to do, and some time to think about it, is appropriate and good whenever possible. And that is especially so for a Christian wife, who needs to obey her husband with a meek and quiet spirit that is subject to him, in every way that is not opposing the Lord. Yet even when this is done, and she is as respectful, meek, and accommodating to him as she ought to be, there are some responsibilities towards God (the very highest authority) which surely can't be put off for too long before one is at risk of telling Him (by stalling on fulfilling them) that they have other priorities which they consider to be more important.

Preserving marriage at *any* cost is *not* right. Preserving marriage is *not* God's number one priority. Those who teach otherwise are teaching wrongly and doing much harm.

A Word on Remarriage

When a marriage has been dissolved, and cannot both righteously and realistically yet be salvaged, there is implied permission to remarry- but only on the terms which any single Christian considering marriage must abide by. And of course, you have to let the ink dry on the divorce settlement, no matter how hopeless a righteous reconciliation with the spouse being divorced might be, before even beginning to go about obtaining a new marriage partner is a righteous possibility.

Though a thorough examination of the divorce and remarriage issue is somewhat beyond the scope of this book, a recommended book on this topic which faithfully handles and resolves major questions that people and fellowships are likely to face over matters

related to it, in light of the totality of Scripture, is “*What The Bible Really Teaches about Divorce and Remarriage*” by Mark Bullen.

Chapter 7: The Faithful, Almighty God: The Christian's Glorious End

In chapter 5 it was discussed how guarantees of the single Christian obtaining a marriage partner are invalid, cheapen the glory of God, and diminish the true promises of the gospel. Also discussed was how being justified before God, being reconciled with God, and being in fellowship with God are truly the most necessary, greatest, and best things that we could ever obtain. And also how the very concept that God would ever throw anything else into the package as a bargaining tool to persuade man to worship and serve Him is humanistic and idolatrous. It is important to remember these things. And along with these things, remember this key implication in them: *Marriage, no matter how happy or even useful towards God's service that it might be, is not the end-goal of our existence!*

If we feel a void in singleness, the answer for it is not to get married. It matters not even (regarding the inability to fill the void) if it's to a strong Christian who

really loves you in the Lord, and will stand by you in serving the Lord, through thick and thin. If we lack assurance that God loves us or cares for us or anything like that, marriage is not going to be *mainly* how we find the assurance and comfort we need. Likewise, if you are married and think that your wonderful spouse is God's *greatest* evidence of His love and care for you, your faith is not on solid ground. The true hope and confidence of a Christian *ought to be, and needs to be*, rooted in things that transcend our earthly circumstances, including our marriage state. Circumstances can be good or bad, as well as rapidly changing, for both the wicked and the righteous.

You may say "But the married Christians are so happy and I'm so miserable." Or you may say "I'm nothing without my family"; or maybe "What good is life if I can't be married and raise a family?" If you already have a family, do all in your power to fight for Truth and to have them in a place where the nurture and admonition of the Lord is a constant in their life! But don't compromise Truth to keep them; and don't compromise

Truth to obtain a family if you don't have one. If you do that, you are denying the Lord; and therefore you are also turning from the very Source of life and the Only One who truly gives life its ultimate, everlasting meaning. If we don't believe that He is sufficient in Himself to be our reward, then we are truly miserable and off-base, whether we consider ourselves to be happy or to be miserable- or whatever we consider ourselves! *The ultimate goal for us, if we are aiming at the right target, is to behold God's face in righteousness on the day of resurrection (Psalm 17:15, 1 John 2:28, Jude 24, etc)!*

The Lesson of the Big White Dog

There is a big white dog that has tended to hassle me as I walk to work. It comes out into the street whenever I walk by and angrily lets me know that I need to move along. I've noticed that it tends to do the same to others. It can seem quite terrifying. I've often yelled at it, sometimes with much intensity, thinking that if I didn't do so, it would probably bite me. I can bypass this dog if I really try by taking a longer route to work; and I have

indeed done so sometimes. One day recently I found that one of my co-workers lives just a few houses away from this dog. When I asked him if that dog a few houses away from him ever hassled him, he laughed and said something like “Oh, you mean the big, fluffy white one? Yeah, I just rub its head and tell it to get back on the porch. It’s not going to hurt anyone.”

Seeing that my co-worker is this dog’s neighbor, he probably knows the dog better than I do. I have possibly overreacted then to its apparent terror by unnecessarily taking alternate routes to work and yelling at it louder than necessary. This reminds me much of how people tend to fear being single while living God’s way more than they ought to. In both cases (and definitely so in the latter case), the thing that looks so terrifying isn’t really the thing to be terrified of; and the thing more to be guarded against is the consequence of a potential bad reaction to the thing that seems terrifying. And a bad reaction to the fear of long-term singleness has the potential to do harm to us that is *vastly worse* than walking a few extra minutes to avoid a dog, yelling at a

dog louder than it needs to be yelled at, or even getting bit by a dog that would have left you alone if you had not shown fear or aggression when it confronted you.

I can say truthfully, that as fearful as being a long-term single adult Christian looked for me in my early twenties, it is something that seems a lot less fearful after having gone through into my latter thirties. I can't say it was never a problem, but I can confidently say that I don't believe it was ever my biggest problem- or really ever even close to being such. Even if it should ever *seem* to be someone's biggest problem, that would only indicate that there are underlying spiritual and emotional issues in them which need to be addressed, that finding a mate wouldn't really solve anyways. And as we looked at in chapter two, and will look more at as this last chapter unfolds, it is *impossible* for this to *ever* be anyone's *truly* biggest problem anyways!

Like a big dog whose bark is much bigger than its bite, the adult Christian being single long-term is simply not the terrifying thing that it can appear to be

Surely There is an End: Consider the End!

**“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”
(Revelation 21:6-7)**

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever

and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.” (Revelation 22:1-6)

This is the happy ending which we ought to diligently seek; and the ending which we can count on coming to *if* we are judged of the Lord at the end as having remained faithful to Him! A happy wedding can at best foreshadow this ending and give a small foretaste of it. God seeks to conform us to His image in Christ, to redeem us fully to Himself, and to make us co-heirs with Christ who reign with Him forever and share in His glory **(1 Peter 5:10)**. What more could we ever want or need! And if *He* should deem that we *really need* this thing or that thing to aid us in doing His will and following His plan of redemption as disciples of Christ, in order to make it to that ending, He has promised not to withhold that from us either (if we are faithfully following His Word and doing His will already, with what He has already given us). *Yet* the things which *we think* we need

may very well be not the things that God knows we actually need.

Read carefully: “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate

to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:21-32)

If only we would consider meeting God on Judgment Day constantly; and therefore strive continually to come into line with His purpose (also shown in the passage just quoted), it would help us to bring our view of our circumstances in life into their proper perspective; and also help make our major decisions a lot more black and white (by and large). And if God should see it fit to allow you to go through the longing and/or heartbreak that lacking a marriage partner, or being deprived of a marriage partner can bring, then give Him glory and use such a circumstance to make you follow after the Lord harder! Let the aching of this

present life and the unfortunate realities of this fallen world cause you to better esteem the coming of the fullness of Christ's heavenly kingdom, with all its deliverance from the fall and everything related to it, as the utterly unspeakably wonderful and totally fulfilling thing which it will be for those whom He deems as fitting to inherit it!

“And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” (Hebrews 11:15-16)

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with

him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of

God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (Colossians 3:1-17)

Matthew 6:24-34 could also be quoted here regarding the anxiety and excessive care which many tend to have about marriage- something which is not even a necessity like food, drink, and (usually, to some extent) even money and possessions- things which we are warned in this particular passage not to be anxious over nor to take excessive care for.

The Best and Only Certain Way to be a Confident Partaker of God’s Love

But was Eve not a gift that was a sign of God’s love to Adam? Was not their union a sign of God’s love

to them both? Yes, but there are truly better ways to partake of God's love, whether He has given you a spouse or not. **“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21)** And related to this, in accordance with proper Biblical understanding, you can particularly know God's love and be filled where you most lack by looking out for the needs of those who are in your life, those who are around you, and those whose path you come across- and you can *give* accordingly! We have a fallen tendency to want to get, *while actually* our bigger need is to give! And if you want to be a blessing and give in the context of a marriage, don't wait until you are married to consider, and do, what you righteously and appropriately can to meet the needs of those whom you are in a position to help. Otherwise, it's then reasonable to conclude that your desire to give in the context of marriage was actually basically rooted in a mind primarily set on your own pleasure and fulfillment anyways.

Look at God's rebuke to a covetous king of Judah; and the contrast made with the king's godly father: **"Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord."** (Jeremiah 22:15-16) See then the Apostle Paul's testimony about himself, which we are to follow in principle in our own circumstances (see 1 Corinthians 11:1). **"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."** (Acts 20:32-35)

Keeping Our Eyes on Judgment Day and Eternity

If you should feel weakened in not being married, or should you feel weakened in being married for that matter, or should you feel weakened in any other circumstance really, when you let that weakness drive you to the Lord rather than away from Him, even this can be used for your good. **“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)** If you truly use this impetus to help make yourself as diligent as you can be to obey the instructions of His Word and to depend on Him in prayer, *then* His strength will be found in your weakness, life will continue, and hopefully as it does you will continue to seek Him with your whole heart and to do what is right in His eyes- until eventually God summons you before Him (this last thing will happen anyways, of course). When we consider that He created and sustains this vast Universe by His omnipotence; and that mountains and islands will flee

from before His face; *and yet* we cannot be discharged from standing before Him on our court date with Him, a favorable or unfavorable judgment from Him then is going to overshadow the details and characteristics of our lives which were basically beyond our control and/or were basically not a matter of righteousness nor unrighteousness in His eyes.

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on

the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:12-17)

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11-15)

“And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no

more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”
(Luke 12:4-9)

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 Corinthians 7:29-31)

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