

For Now, Make the Most of Your Singlehood

I'll shoot straight. I am married, but I remember what it was like to be single. I remember thinking about how it seemed like such a curse.

I hated Valentine's Day. It seemed as though the entire country was going out of its way to remind me that I couldn't get a date. However, my time single was also an incredible opportunity for ministry.

Some of the greatest ministers in Christian history were single. Paul was single when he wrote his letters (though he had almost certainly been married at one point). John Chrysostom impacted the Greek Orthodox church in ways that are still being felt 1600 years after his death.

Augustine never married, and he set the course for western Christianity at about the same time as John. More recently, Martin Luther didn't marry until he had been ministering for years. John Calvin was single most of his ministry (he married a widow to provide for her). C.S. Lewis married Joy Gresham for similar reasons as Calvin's.

In today's society, the singer Carmen chose bachelorhood to devote himself to ministry. And our founder and Messiah, Jesus Christ, was single in a culture that had no word for "bachelor."

Being single gives you much more flexibility in ministry than being married. Think about a missions trip. If you are married, you have to plan for your wife to go with you. Or make plans not to be gone too long. Are the kids going? If so, what if junior falls and bruises his noggin? Broken arm? He ate the plant the native specifically pointed out to you as dangerous? If you don't take the kids, where will they stay

for the trip? Can grandma remain sane long enough?

As a single person going on a missions trip, you only have to plan for yourself. You will likely be part of a group, but you are still only making arrangements for yourself. If the group wants to stay longer, then you only have to worry about your own circumstances back home. Only your boss has to be talked into it, not your wife's boss, too.

These advantages also apply to local ministry. You don't have to worry nearly as much about the places you are going. If a better ministry opportunity comes up in another state, you are the only one who has to pull up stakes. No need to worry about getting into the right neighborhood for school. You can buy the cheap, economy car with great mileage instead of the minivan that drinks gas like the town drunk drinks cheap whiskey in those spaghetti westerns you like so much (or sci-fi in my case).

Paul writes that the single person can be wholly devoted to the Lord, while the married person must worry about his or her spouse (1 Cor 7:32-34). This is true.

And let's not forget that you don't have to worry about remembering birthdays and anniversaries. You don't have to explain why the ending of Phantom of the Opera makes you cry.

Yes, being single has advantages, but the single life isn't for everyone. Just as there are advantages, there are stresses that come with being single, but you already know about those.

If God has called you to marry, marry when the time is right. Until then, make the most of serving single. And watch another sci-fi flick for me.

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