Mope No More

Contentment doesn’t mean singles should mope through life waiting on a mate.

As a journalist, I ask a lot of questions. I ask questions such as: “When did you first sense the call of God on your life?” “Have you ever been arrested?” “What is your wife’s name?” “Is that a church or a cult?”

There are times, however, when curious readers and those who I meet as I travel in ministry ask me questions. Their inquiries run the gamut: “Do you have children?” “What’s your denominational affiliation?” “What made you choose journalism as a career?”

The list goes on. But the one question I’m inevitably asked is: “Are you married?”

There was a time when it seemed as if I was asked this more often than I was asked my name. Whenever I’d say, “No, I’m not married,” the person would dig even deeper.

“But why? I don’t understand; you appear to be a very nice woman. Why aren’t you married?”

Without fail, some well-meaning brother or sister in the Lord would offer me a plethora of suggestions about how to land a husband who loves God and who is intelligent, caring, handsome, protective and an excellent provider.

If I would allow them to torture me long enough, they would even try to “set me up” with one of their cousins who doesn’t

love God and who is unintelligent, uncaring, unattractive, unprotective and slothful. This would happen to me quite a bit.

As a result, whenever I'd attend church functions where large numbers of married couples were in attendance, I would feel awkward, as if my "other half" was missing. And though I was involved in a singles ministry and enjoyed the fellowship of others like me, I eventually stopped attending the functions because they seemed like just another night out.

For too long, single women and some men have bought into the lie that they are somehow incomplete because they're not married. Unfortunately, the church perpetuates this sort of thinking, but it's definitely not true, and it's unbiblical.

There was a time when I constantly asked God about marriage. His response to me is my encouragement to you: Learn to be content in Christ as He unfolds His plans and purposes for your life—but by all means, have a life!

Scripture tells us "godliness with contentment is great gain" (see 1 Tim. 6:6), and it is. But contentment doesn't mean people should mope through life waiting on a mate.

For instance, I refused to purchase a home when I was in my mid-20s because I was "waiting on my husband" to do that. I can remember when I put off taking a luxury vacation for the same reason. But now that I'm in my 30s, I no longer make decisions based on marital status.

And nowadays, I hang out with both married couples and singles. I don't isolate myself because I believe that in the

body of Christ we need one another.

There are countless singles in the church who are raring to advance the kingdom of God, who want to influence their communities with creative ministry, but it doesn't mean they want to be used as an automatic labor pool because they don't have a mate. Neither do they want to be overlooked for ministry opportunities because they're single.

When the church embraces, affirms and ministers to the unique needs of singles, then these people, in turn, willingly and abundantly bless the church with their unique gifts and their individual sense of God's purpose in their lives.

If you're single, you've probably heard all the catchy little sayings directed at us: "Jesus is your husband"; "Wait on God"; "He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing, so go hide yourself!"

All this sounds great in theory or makes us laugh on Sundays, but living it daily can be a big challenge for some singles, though it isn't impossible.

Look at Jesus' life. He was in perfect relationship with the Father, but He was confronted with the same issues singles grapple with today. Through the years, TV producers have even tried to "set Jesus up" with people such as Mary Magdalene in their portrayal of Him, which is unscriptural.

But Jesus was isolated, alienated and often felt alone (and sometimes was). Yet His message of covenant love isn't directed at one particular group. It never has been. It's for every single one of us.

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