

No Matter if You're Single or Married, You Still Need This One Thing

Single people, searching for Mr. or Mrs. Right or simply hooking up because marriage seems like too much work. Married people, disappointed and miserable because they're not getting from marriage the thing they need most. And when they don't find what they're looking for, single or married often end up looking for love in all the wrong places. There's one thing single and married both need.

Men seek it most commonly through sex. Women seek it more often through emotional engagement and communication. But the core need is much more similar than it is different. Male or female, single or married, young or old, the driving force is much the same. Once basic needs for survival are met, there's something else we will do just about anything to get. And it's because God made us this way.

Created for Intimacy

Much like our need for air, food and water, without intimacy we shrivel up and die. Surely God knew that this need would get us into trouble. We could list multiple ways in which seeking to find intimacy in all the wrong ways has led to endless pain and destruction. And we can't meet this need on our own; we need another.

And needing another makes us vulnerable. What if that person doesn't reciprocate? What if they hurt or betray us? And yet for most of us, the search goes on.

Made in the Image of God

Both men and women are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).

One of those ways in which we are like Him is our need, desire and capacity for intimacy.

Think of what we know about God. The Trinity—God the Father, God the Word (Son), God the Holy Spirit —is three persons, yet so connected that we are told to think of them as One God. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” (Deut. 6:4). There no walls between them in any aspect of their being.

When God created marriage in the garden of Eden, He designed it to be a way whereby we on earth could experience the intimacy He experiences within Himself. “Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).

True Intimacy

Understanding this about us and about God, here’s what true intimacy is: Intimacy means no walls between—physically, emotionally or spiritually.

The enemy certainly understood this better than we have, and he has used this need of ours to bring untold destruction. Once sin entered, our attempts to experience intimacy have often only resulted in more pain. How tragic!

But our need, desire and capacity for intimacy remain.

How can we move closer to experiencing true intimacy in our broken world?

Suggestions for Intimacy

1) If married, pursue intimacy with your spouse.

I hear from both husbands and wives every day who are living in the pain of a marriage without intimacy. Husbands, frustrated that their wives seem so closed to their attempts at sexual connection. Wives, hurt and lonely because their

husbands seem emotionally distant or completely uninterested in sex. Spouses of both sexes miserable over the lack of connection, broken communication, conflict and apathy in their marriage.

If you're a husband, pursue intimacy with your wife. If you're a wife, pursue intimacy with your husband. Learn what it takes to help your spouse feel safe. Demanding intimacy never works; you must seek the key to make your invitation to closeness appealing. Look for the barriers to intimacy, and work to overcome them. If you're reading this, don't wait for your spouse to initiate; *you* do the work. That will include sex, but just as important, it will include emotional and spiritual connection.

2) If single, don't settle for less.

Not everyone can be or desires to be married. I lived single for 48 years before getting married, and I'm single again after my husband's death. I understand the sexual drives and emotional needs of long-term singleness.

But settling for "love in all the wrong places" is not the answer. Sex with someone not your spouse or seeking sexual fulfillment from an image or video online will only leave you more broken and lonely. The lies culture and the enemy tell, promising to meet your needs the "easy" way, will never satisfy your true need for intimacy.

What do you do? If you desire marriage, focus on becoming the kind of person the spouse you would want would find most desirable. And until and unless you marry, consecrate your intimacy needs to God daily. Some of our restoration awaits eternity, and that's OK.

3) Seek intimacy with God.

That sounds religious—and unrealistic. But through long periods of singleness I learned that it is neither religious

nor unrealistic. And having learned that, I had much more ability to connect with my husband during our years of marriage.

God never created marriage to meet the needs only He can fulfill. And any human being you could ever marry is broken too, unable to meet all the needs for intimacy that you have. Most marriages can become better, and God will bring many single people a spouse. But at its root, seeking true intimacy with God is vital regardless of your relationship status. Once you have experienced intimacy with God you will have much more to bring to your marriage, your friendships, your ministry.

God is the only one who will never leave you, who understands you perfectly, who loves you unconditionally. Between Him and you is the only place to find true intimacy—no walls between.

Your turn: *How have you sought intimacy in the wrong places or ways? Where is God inviting your heart to pursue intimacy now? Leave a comment below.* {eoa}

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