

The Most Critical Task You Need to Accomplish as a Single

I wanted to get married, but nothing was happening. I spent many years wondering what was so wrong with me that no one would choose me. The few relationships I did have never went anywhere. The loneliness left me shuffling between feeling desperate and hopeless.

But I finally grew up. There were things I finally learned as a single that changed everything. Joy and meaning replaced the loneliness and hopelessness. And when God brought my husband Al into my life, I was ready.

I got married when I was 48 years old. I'm convinced that if I had not learned these things before getting married, I would have been completely miserable even with a husband. And a number of times I've considered whether God might have brought my husband into my life sooner if I had learned these things sooner!

Learning these things will not guarantee God will bring you a loving spouse. But *not* learning them will guarantee misery and pain whether you get married or not. And if you do learn them, your life can be full of joy and meaning.

Here are three of the most important things I learned as a single.

1. Know God as Your Source

As a human being, it's natural to look to the people closest to you to tell you who we are. You may assume having a husband or wife will result in your needs being met and no more loneliness. In a healthy marriage, some of your needs *are* met,

but no human being can define you, tell you your worth or meet all your needs.

God created you and me with needs that only He can fill. Perhaps He knew we would be unlikely to seek Him fully if we could get our needs met otherwise. Learn what it means to go to Him with your confusion, loneliness, doubts, dreams, needs and desires. Learn what He is like and how He wants to relate to you. That's the only way you'll ever feel satisfied, whether married or single.

2. Choose to be Happy

You'll never be happy married unless you learn to be happy single. Too many people expect marriage to make them happy; it doesn't. Happiness comes as a result of your own mental choices. Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying, "I've come to the conclusion that most people are about as happy as they choose to be." I agree.

I learned that I could choose to be happy. My internal mental, emotional and spiritual state was not dependent on circumstances or people around me. Yes, I'm affected by people and circumstances, but my feelings are my own choice. If you learn to take charge of your own thoughts and feelings, you can experience joy, and even intimacy and fulfillment, whether married or single.

3. Become the Right Person

If you want to marry a prince, become a princess. If you want to marry a princess, become a prince. That means focusing on becoming the person who can attract, connect with and thrive in relationship with someone who is healthy and happy. Nobody likes being around someone who is desperate, miserable, needy, controlling, bitter or fake. Whatever parts of your past need healing, seek it intentionally. Whatever parts of your character need growth, pursue it with purpose.

Becoming the right person will not guarantee a happy marriage, or any marriage for that matter. But becoming the right person is perhaps the most critical task to accomplish as a single person. It's the only way you will have any chance of becoming happily married. (If you don't learn this before marriage, you'll go through a whole lot of misery after marriage.) Even if marriage is not what God has for your future, you will be so much more fulfilled and useful for His kingdom regardless of your relationship status.

Being single is not just a prelude to being married. Embrace learning these lessons, and your future will be so much happier and more meaningful.

Your Turn: *Have you been spending your single years simply waiting for the right person to come along? Which of these lessons do you need to learn most? Leave a comment below.*
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