

Single & Satisfied

The world has said that you *must* have a mate in order to be complete, and if you don't, there must be something terribly wrong with you. There were times I believed that lie. I'll never forget the woman in church who said to me, "Helen, you'd better hurry up and get married, or you are just going to dry up like an old raisin, and nobody is going to want you."

Another woman said, "You better get married soon, the biological clock is ticking. Tick, tick, tick. You'd better get busy and find a man." For years those words would vex my soul.

We are often led to believe that if we are alone, we are half a person. That is a lie! You are a whole person, and you are already complete—in God! A husband will *complement* your life, but he will not complete you.

The word "single" means more than unmarried and separate. It also means unique, remarkable, extraordinary, whole, sincere and pure.

This Isn't What I Asked For

From the time I was a little girl, I desired to be married. I received prophecies as a teen-ager and assumed I would meet "Mr. Right" in college and marry after graduation. But that didn't happen.

Every year, I had slogans to keep my faith and hope alive:

In 75, I will survive

In 76, God will fix

A man from heaven in 77

God won't be late in 78

A mate divine in 79

A gift from the Son in 81

God will come through in 82

A blessing for me in 83

He is coming through the door in 1984

You can imagine the myriad of emotions I went through over a period of 20 years until I finally married in 1994. Sometimes I was believing and trusting. Other times, I was doubting but holding on to the promises of God. Depression tried to settle in, but I refused to let it consume me.

At one time or another we have all blamed our appearance for our lack of a mate. You also may have thought it was your upbringing, your lack of education or your past.

Your blessing of a mate is not being withheld because you fell into sin or failed God in some way. It's not because you have been married and are now divorced.

Moreover, you are not out of the realm of blessing because you were pregnant and unmarried or decided to have an abortion. God hasn't given up on your future because you have made unwise choices in the past.

God has an ultimate plan for you. If you have a promise from Him for a mate, you will have one. His purpose for your life will be fulfilled, and His timing is perfect.

While You're Waiting

There are several things you can do while you're waiting for God's promise to come to pass.

1. Know who you are. God gave me a wonderful analogy one day as I was riding in a limousine. I was going to pick up a church guest, and a young man with whom I'd had a short dating

relationship passed us in his Thunderbird.

As he drove by the limo he recognized me and waved. At that moment, the Lord said to me, "Helen, you wanted a Thunderbird, but I'm going to give you a limo."

Many women are satisfied as long as they get a man—any man. They don't care whether he is a Thunderbird, a Toyota or a Volkswagen Bug. Many wonderful women would even settle for a tow truck because they are so desperate. They feel they have passed the age where anyone would want them. But a tow truck picks up things that aren't working—things that need repair.

On the other hand, a limousine picks up royalty—a woman of distinction, who knows who she is and where she is going. Young women in the church settle for less than God's best when they choose a husband who will put them down, let them down and then take them down with him.

God wants to bless you with someone who will build you up. But first of all, God wants to make you whole. Then, when His perfect timing comes for your mate, you will attract another whole person. There is such power in a relationship that consists of two *whole* people!

2. *Speak life to yourself.* Practice the Lord's presence daily, and allow the beauty of your life with Him to be evident on the outside. Recognize the power God has given you, and then begin to speak to yourself. Tell yourself the truth about who you are in God.

More than self-esteem, have "God-esteem." Get God's Word inside you. Develop a personal, more intimate relationship with Jesus. Worship Him and praise Him continually (see Ps. 34:1).

In the natural realm, do everything you can to improve on what God has already given you. Get a new hairstyle, shed a few pounds, treat yourself to a makeover. Read, enlarge your

learning capacity. Know what is going on in the world around you.

Most men want more than just a pretty package. They want to be able to open the package and find the goodness of heaven on the inside. They want someone with whom they can laugh and enjoy life. As you pray, God will show you what to do both naturally and spiritually.

3. *Purify your heart.* In your journey toward wholeness, you must allow the “dealings” of God to bring order and discipline to every aspect of your life. There are several attitudes which, if left unchecked, will keep you from receiving God’s best.

* *Compromise.* Some single women in the church, because they are unable to wait for God’s timing, completely discard the tenets of holiness and become involved in immorality.

You must ask God to deal with any areas of compromise in your life. And you must learn to say no to fleshly habits, hobbies and attitudes that are not pleasing to the Lord.

* *Blaming others.* Many of us attribute our present position in life to the way we were treated in the past by other people. But what is really important is not what happened to us but how we deal with it.

You are not responsible for what other people do to you, but you are responsible for your reactions to what they do. If a “hypocrite” is standing between you and God, he is closer to God than you are!

Don’t let what someone did to you years ago keep you from a fulfilling future. Make a decision—today—to forgive those who have wounded you.

* *Jealousy.* At one time during my single life, God confronted me about the jealousy and bitterness in my heart toward

married women. I would look at them holding their husband's hands and get mad. I would think, *I'm just as cute as they are, just as intelligent and just as nice. So why do they have someone when I don't?*

God told me I wouldn't receive my blessing until I was delivered from the spirit of jealousy. He also reminded me that His timing is perfect and that I needed to trust Him.

I repented and began sowing into the lives of married women. I started giving their husbands money when I would hear they were having an anniversary. You see, I was planting seeds for *my* anniversary. In the process, I was set free.

* *Apathy*. As a pastor, I saw many women, especially older single women, who had lost faith and found themselves with a spirit of hopelessness. They no longer believed that God cared about their personal lives.

This type of attitude literally ties God's hands. You have to believe in spite of your present circumstances that He will come through for you.

* *Self-pity*. You have to fight against the spirit of self-pity that tries to attach itself to you. Your own words will keep you in prison. But you are not the only one who is lonely and going through difficult times. God showed me how to fight this spirit while helping other single women.

Several years before I married, I started inviting five or six single women to my home for dinner on Valentine's Day. One was a single parent who brought her daughter, another was separated from her abusive husband. Others were either divorced, widowed or never married.

I made our time together very special. Each of the women received a Valentine card from Jesus, telling her how much He loved her and encouraging her. I chose a special gift for each lady, and I cooked them all a wonderful meal with love.

It became an evening of joy. I was able to rise above my own pain and minister to sisters who were also hurting. We laughed together and played games. We didn't feel sorry for ourselves, because we were learning to make Jesus the lover of our souls.

Change Your Outlook

Many people felt sorry for me after my 40th birthday. I remember standing up in church and saying, "Don't feel sorry for me. I have a promise from God that I am getting married.

"I may be old, but you will see me come down this aisle and get married." I wanted to see the fulfillment of the Scripture that says, "Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished" (Luke 1:45, NIV).

I learned to love my life as a single woman. You see, if you don't love your life now, you won't love it after you get married. Marriage does not fix everything in your life.

In fact, it can add pressures you didn't know as a single woman. So learn to enjoy your singleness. Serve God with all your heart, mind and soul. Get involved in the things that will advance His kingdom.

Not every single woman will marry. But if you have a promise from God for marriage, wait for His perfect timing. Don't go out and try to find a man; let him find you.

In the meantime, and for all time, make Jesus the lover of your soul. He knows every heartache and every tear. He understands you when you are unable to verbalize what you are thinking and feeling. He is faithful. Jesus is your ultimate mate, and you are His beloved!

Helen Stubblefield Trowbridge and her husband, Tim, founded Trowbridge Ministries International. She is an evangelist, musician and author of Can You Wait One More Hour?