

# **The Beauty of Christian Singlehood (Human Sexuality)**

1 Corinthians 7:25-35 on August 3, 2025

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Last Sunday we began a 5-part sermon series on Human Sexuality.

Here's the schedule:

July 27: A Way That Seems Right (Intro to Human Sexuality series)

August 3: The Beauty of Christian Singlehood

August 10: The Beauty of Christian Marriage

August 17: The Beauty of Innocence, Modesty, and Purity

August 24: A Compassionate, Truthful Response to LGBTQ+

([www.efcbemidji.org/sermons/sermon-list](http://www.efcbemidji.org/sermons/sermon-list))

If you missed last week's sermon on "A Way That Seems Right," it would be a good idea to go to our website's sermon archive and give it a listen. We spent some time in Genesis setting the foundation for our discussion of Human Sexuality. Because God is the One who created us, He alone has the authority to determine what's sexually ok and not ok. So our contextual anchor and compass for understanding Human Sexuality, is our Creator Himself, which includes His written Word, the Bible.

Throughout this series, there will be times when we'll touch on some more "PG-13" themes. Now, I know that a number of you mentioned that you thought last week's sermon was pretty tame, and that's fine, we all have different comfort levels in that regard. Be that as it may, I'll need a bit more latitude for this particular sermon series, and I don't want anyone to be caught off guard, so not only are we offering a full hour of Beginner's Church and Kids Church, but we're opening up the Youth Room to any pre-teens and younger teens who might want to help out during the sermon time.

I should also mention that throughout this series, there may be times when a number of us have some follow-up questions, or would simply appreciate an opportunity to discuss the sermon. With that in mind, Pastor Eric and I have reserved the Fireside Room for the next 4 Sundays at 11 a.m. You can simply grab whatever coffee or refreshments you'd like from the gym, and then walk on over to the Fireside Room.

The fact is, even with 5 full sermons, we won't be able to cover everything that the Bible has to say on this topic, or to answer all of the questions and concerns that are represented in a group this size. So, we're providing an opportunity for a "Fireside Chat."

TODAY, we're going to talk about four different seasons of Christian Singlehood.

**Christian singles may be in a season...  
...when we're too young to be married,  
or we're simply not ready for all that marriage entails.<sup>1</sup>**

Song of Solomon 8:4 declares, "Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires."<sup>2</sup> Song of Solomon's wise words, from some 3,000 years ago, still ring true: "Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." It is very wise not to rush into marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:28 warns, "...those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this." I share this verse with starry-eyed couples all the time. Yes, love is grand, but love is also a big commitment, and it comes with serious and sobering responsibilities. Before any of us makes this kind of a life-long commitment, we should clearly acknowledge, that "Those who marry will face many troubles in this life."

Some of us are currently in a season when we're still too young to be getting married, or, regardless of our age, we simply aren't yet ready for all that marriage entails (and there's no shame in that). How young is too young? And even if I'm not too young, how do I know if I'm ready? Well, answers to these questions differ from person to person, which is why we should surround ourselves with godly counsel from people who are a good deal older than us; and a good deal wiser than us. Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

Proverbs 14:8 says, "The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception."<sup>3</sup> So in addition to getting wise counsel from others, an honest self-assessment is one of the smartest and wisest things that a single person can do. Don't rush in; trust God's plan, listen to His wise counselors, and wait for His perfect timing. This leads right into our 2<sup>nd</sup> season...

**Christian singles may be in a season...  
...when we're carefully seeking the right person to marry,  
while we wait on God's perfect timing.**

Unfortunately, our American culture has grown incredibly UNcareful about sex; we've become known for unbridled passions and moral depravity, much like the Corinthians. Advances in modern medicine and birth control, as well as the easy availability of condoms, have reinforced our modern-day sexual recklessness. The current practice for many of today's American singles is to find someone on a dating app, hook up for some hot and heavy sex, and then move on to the next person. Now, this certainly shouldn't be the practice for any singles who call themselves followers of

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<sup>1</sup> I also wonder about certain people who simply aren't equipped to take on the responsibilities of marriage, whether that be someone with mental or emotional frailties or otherwise. That said, my wife and I have found the show "Love on the Spectrum" incredibly insightful and heartwarming.

<sup>2</sup> See also 2:7 and 3:5.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 14:15 agrees, "The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps."

Jesus, but this overly sexualized landscape sure does make it difficult for Christian singles to find a good person to marry. 1 Peter 4:3-5 says it this way, “3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. 5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

Here “The Beauty of *Christian* Singlehood” shines through brightly, because instead of recklessly abandoning our sexuality to the unfortunate evils of today’s hookup culture, we’re making the most of this season of singleness.<sup>4</sup> Christian singles are investing this time in gaining a better self-understanding, and intentionally improving themselves in terms of spiritual maturity and marriageability. They’re also clarifying for themselves exactly what they’re looking for in a future spouse, and they’re holding to a godly standard, even if that standard means waiting longer to get married than they’d prefer.

In addition to 1 Corinthians 7, there are a number of places in the Bible which give good counsel to singles who are carefully seeking the right person to marry. 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 exhorts us, “14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?<sup>5</sup> Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.”<sup>6</sup> It’s not all that flattering perhaps, but the agrarian picture in verse 14 is that of two oxen hitched up to the same yoke. This is meant to illustrate how difficult it can be in a marriage when the two people aren’t pulling together toward the same spiritual goals.<sup>7</sup> So no matter how cute or charming he or she may be, a must have, knockout criteria for any eligible Christian spouse, is a rock-solid faith in Jesus.<sup>8</sup>

1 John 2:3-6 puts it plainly, “3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do

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<sup>4</sup> “Hookup culture refers to a social environment, particularly common on college campuses, where casual sexual encounters, often with no expectation of emotional intimacy or a committed relationship, are frequent and accepted. These encounters, or “hookups,” can range from kissing to intercourse, and the emphasis is often on physical intimacy and pleasure rather than building a deeper connection.” (Google AI Overview)

<sup>5</sup> Belial = “BEE lih uhl” W. Murray Severance and Terry Eddinger, *That’s Easy for You to Say: Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Bible Names* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 39.

<sup>6</sup> This advice matches up with the end of 1 Corinthians 7:39, “but he must belong to the Lord,” as well as 1 Corinthians 9:5, “Don’t we have the right to take a *believing* wife.” Also see Deuteronomy 7:3-6 and 1 Corinthians 9:5.

<sup>7</sup> This being said, consider 1 Corinthians 7:12-14.

<sup>8</sup> Consider Proverbs 31:30.

what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.” If you’re looking for the right person to marry, then make sure that they’re someone who lives like Jesus. Obviously, none of us can ever do this perfectly, but anyone who’s sincerely trying to live like Jesus did, is a really, really good catch. That’s a person worth waiting for, and worth committing your life to, “‘til death do you part.”

**Christian singles may also be in a season...  
...or in a lifetime, when we’re content and happily single.**

In other words, there are a number of Christian singles, who simply aren’t looking for a marriage partner. Now some of us married folks might have a hard time believing this, but it’s absolutely true. A number of Christian singles are good with being single; they don’t see it as a problem to be solved or a deficit to be overcome, and frankly, neither did the Apostle Paul. So even though we often quote Genesis 2:18, “...It is not good for a man to be alone,” we need to keep in mind that, in 1 Corinthians 7:7, the Apostle Paul declares, “I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.”

You see, Paul Himself was a Christian single, and he viewed his unmarried status as an absolute *gift* from God!<sup>9</sup> As we study the life of Paul, and read about all that God did in and through him throughout the New Testament epistles, it would be hard to imagine Paul pulling this off while being married and raising a family. In wishing that everyone were single like him, Paul is declaring, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that Christian Singlehood is one of God’s good gifts!<sup>10</sup> This agrees with what Jesus teaches in Matthew 19:11-12, “11 Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”<sup>11</sup> I realize that it may feel a bit awkward to be talking about eunuchs, but these are the words of Jesus Himself. A eunuch is usually defined as a castrated male, although there are certainly female versions of this as well. Regarding the immediate context of verse 12, a Christian man or woman either one, could choose to live like a eunuch for the sake of God’s Kingdom. (*In other words, some Christians may choose*

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<sup>9</sup> In 1 Corinthians 7:7, “Paul views his [unmarried] celibate lifestyle as a ‘gift from God’ that made it possible for him to accept his unmarried state and use it in the service of his Lord.” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1931 footnote on 1 Corinthians 7:7.

<sup>10</sup> My dearly departed mother-in-law, Jan Collette used to tell our daughters: “Life begins when you get married.” A number of people would agree with her: “no wife, no life.” But is that what Scripture says about Christian Singlehood? NO.

<sup>11</sup> Consider the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 who came to faith in Jesus, and read Isaiah 56:3-5.

*to renounce marriage, and embrace a life of celibacy as a way of devoting themselves wholly, to serving God.)*

This fits right into our category of those who are enjoying contented and happy singlehood. These folks are feeling fulfilled, even BLESSED, to be right where they are, because that's exactly where God has called them to be. Paul develops his case for Christian Singlehood even further in 1 Corinthians 7:32-35, "32 I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord."

Now, by no means is Paul's goal here to slam us married folks, or to make us feel like second-class Christians.<sup>12</sup> His goal is to prod us into carefully considering "The *beauty* of Christian Singlehood." Far from being less important than married folks, Christian singles stand on at least an equal footing with those of us who are married, and even have certain advantages over us, in terms of their ability to focus and fully devote their time to serving the Lord.<sup>13 14 15</sup>

**Christian singles may also be in a season...**

**...following the loss of a spouse, either through death or divorce.**

We see examples of this in the lives of saints like the widow Naomi, in the Old Testament book of Ruth, who counseled her daughter-in-law Ruth

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<sup>12</sup> Although, I suppose that one could argue from 1 Corinthians 7:37-38 that the Christian single "does better" than the one who marries.

<sup>13</sup> Christian singles, who are called to singleness either for a season or for a lifetime, can be used for God's purposes in AMAZING ways, and they can bring God great glory through their singleness. And this is true all the more, in troubled times like the ones in which Paul was writing to the church in Corinth.

<sup>14</sup> See 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, "...For the world in its present form is passing away."

<sup>15</sup> If you're a Christian single, then you are in good company: > We've already mentioned that the Apostle Paul was single. Paul was a man who, once he encountered Christ, committed his entire life to serving Him boldly and sacrificially, travelling all over the known world proclaiming the gospel of grace. > We should also mention that the OT woman Naomi was single. Back in the OT book of Ruth, Naomi was an elderly widow and mother-in-law to Ruth, who cared for her during the morally depraved time period of the Judges. Naomi counseled Ruth regarding her marriage to Boaz, who then bore a son together named Obed, who was in the lineage of Christ. > We dare not forget to mention that Jesus Christ was single. The Gospels make it clear that Jesus had no home or wife or children of His own (*despite what the fictional account in the DaVinci Code has suggested*). Jesus Christ was a fully human, SINGLE man, who dedicated Himself to living wholeheartedly for the gospel, and who was obedient even unto death on the cross. > We could also mention that the Prophetess Anna was single. In Luke 2:36-38 we learn about this dear elderly widow who worshipped at God's temple night and day, and who looked on baby Jesus with her own eyes and told everyone around her about the redemption He would bring.) ***If you are a Christian single, then you are in good company!***



regarding her marriage to Boaz, who then bore a son together named Obed, who was in the lineage of Christ. And the widowed prophetess Anna, in Luke 2, who worshipped at God's temple night and day, and who looked on baby Jesus with her own eyes, and told everyone around her about the redemption that Christ would bring. These two women, as well as many other devoted followers of Jesus, demonstrate that even though there is terrible heartache when we lose a spouse, there is also a genuine opportunity for redeeming this season of singleness, and making the most of it for God's glory.<sup>16</sup>

There is a substantial benefit to singles being part of a local church, both to the church, AND to the single person:

- > On the one hand, Christian singles often have far greater reserves of available time and flexibility than do married folks, so they're able to serve the church in unique and powerful ways.<sup>17</sup>

- > On the other hand, Christian singles need the wholesome fellowship and family social interaction that a local church can provide.

So there is a symbiotic, even synergistic relationship, between Christian singles and the rest of the church family.

Well, regardless of which season of singleness someone may be in,

**Christian Singlehood...**

**...reminds us of God's good design of sexual purity for all, and celibacy for some.**

Sexual purity = God's will for all, to abstain from sexual immorality.

Celibacy = a choice by some, to abstain from marriage, as well as from sexual immorality.<sup>18</sup>

This good design is pleasing to God, and it's a requirement for any Christian single who wants to honor their Lord and be used for His purposes. Every deeply devoted follower of Jesus is called to honor God

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<sup>16</sup> Now, people in these situations may or may not be seeking a new spouse. Be that as it may, Paul talks about the potential for widows and widowers to remarry in 1 Corinthians 7:8-9,39-40. And he also talks about potential remarriage for those who've been divorced in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, as do other parts of Scripture. Consider Malachi 2:13-16. Scripture seems clear that the marriage bond should only be broken on the grounds of death (see 1 Corinthians 7:39) or sexual immorality (see Matthew 19:9), and not for the "any and every reason" suggested by some in Jesus' day (See Matthew 19:3). Matthew 19:6 declares "What God has joined together, let no one separate." However, note the concession made by Moses in Matthew 19:8, as well as Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 7:15 "if the unbeliever leaves... The brother or sister is not bound in such circumstances." It's also worth considering that abuse, neglect, and abandonment might be potential, divorceable infractions found in Malachi 2:16, "does violence to the one he should protect," and 1 Corinthians 7:3, "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife." Also consider Deuteronomy 21:10-11 and 1 Peter 3:7.

<sup>17</sup> Consider Titus 2:3-5 and 1 Timothy 5:9-10.

<sup>18</sup> "Celibacy and chastity, while often used interchangeably, have distinct meanings. Celibacy refers to the state of being unmarried or abstaining from marriage, while chastity is a virtue encompassing the proper use of one's sexuality according to one's state in life. Celibacy is a choice to abstain from marriage and sexual activity, whereas chastity is a virtue expected of everyone, regardless of marital status, and involves living out one's sexuality in a way that is morally appropriate for their situation." *Google AI Overview*.

with our sexual purity, and Christian Singlehood is a commitment to sexual abstinence during the entire season of singlehood, whether that be a short time, a long time, OR a lifetime. This level of sexual purity is often only associated with priests or certain other religious leaders, but it shouldn't be limited just to them. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 says, "18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies." The fact is, every Christian will have at least some season of singleness in their lifetime, and because we love God, and we're filled with His Spirit, we can refrain from sexual activity during that time, and find great joy and fulfillment in life as we serve Him faithfully.

The Guardian published an interesting article titled, "These evangelical men saved sex for marriage – they weren't well prepared."<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> The gist of the article is that Christian campaigns for sexual purity like True Love Waits, Purity Rings, etc. have done more harm than good, and they've sexually ruined many Christian men. While I can appreciate their overall concern for men who weren't well-prepared for marriage, and I can agree that we parents need to do a good job with our kids' sex education, I *can't* agree that saving sex for marriage could ever be a bad thing.<sup>21</sup>

So while this article is helpful in getting us to think about the importance of teaching our children about Human Sexuality, and helping men and women navigate any confusion or shame they have about sex, I can't accept the implication that saving sex for marriage is bad because it prevents us from being prepared. Sex is one of God's very good gifts, which should be fully and freely enjoyed within a marriage covenant, but sexual purity and celibacy are also God's good gifts, and they should also be fully and freely enjoyed. Psalm 119:9-11 answers a key question: "9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. 10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Friend, *purity* is a beautiful gift from God, and pursuing a godly life of purity, is a beautiful way to honor Him.

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<sup>19</sup> You can read the article at the following link, but fair warning, the initial image that pops up on the cover is a bit provocative: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/jun/17/evangelical-sex-marriage>

<sup>20</sup> My wife, Debbie, shared this article with me. As an evangelical man myself, who did indeed save sex for marriage, but actually DID feel pretty well prepared, I was interested in what this article had to say.

<sup>21</sup> Nor could I agree that having more "romantic practice" before marriage (depending on what they mean by this), will help us better connect with our spouses once we're married. I also can't agree that being more accepting of pornography could somehow be healthy for our kids.

I also read an article by a guy named Thomas Brewer titled, “Honoring God with Our Bodies.” It’s actually one of the things that God used to prompt me to preach this series on Human Sexuality. Tom writes, “Sexuality is not incidental to who we are; it’s woven into the fabric of our personhood. Yet Christians have often struggled to speak about sexuality in a clear, biblical, and forthright manner. Many are hesitant to discuss the subject with their children or to address it in the church. But if we don’t teach a biblical theology of sexuality, the world will GLADLY fill the void....

...From the earliest days of the church, believers have been marked by their moral integrity, and the pursuit of sexual purity has been a defining characteristic of their faith.”<sup>22 23</sup>

Sexual purity is one of the things that makes our faith special. It’s one of the hallmarks of a deeply devoted follower of Jesus. Not that we always do this perfectly, but we pursue it out of reverence for God.

Well, let’s wrap up today with this summary:

**Christian Singlehood...**

**...is a wonderful opportunity, even a gift, for serving God fully.**

Whatever season of Christian Singlehood you may be in, whether for a limited time or a lifetime, I would urge you to carefully consider what a wonderful opportunity you have, to serve God in this season.<sup>24</sup>

Your singleness has the capacity to be such a gift:

a gift to you,

a gift to the church,

and a gift to the world around you.

*So make the most of it!*

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Brewer, *Tabletalk magazine*, June 2025.

<https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2025/06/honoring-god-with-our-bodies/>

<sup>23</sup> To get a sense of the moral system in which our children are growing up, I recommend reading the Gospel Coalition article by Alastair Roberts, “Five Principles of the New Sexual Morality” August 15, 2014. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-principles-of-the-new-sexual-morality/>

<sup>24</sup> With all that this sermon has talked about in mind, I urge you to now read through all of 1 Corinthians 7 again.