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It’s Complicated: Singleness

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

1. Introduction
   1. Review
      1. First lesson: God creates sex as a way to depict the church’s spiritual union with Christ
      2. Second lesson: Sex is reserved for marriage, and so we don’t engage in sex, or any form of *sexual* activity, because it would fail to mirror the mystery of that union
      3. Third lesson: Christians don’t date to date, but to discern marriage[[1]](#footnote-1)
   2. Today’s (final) lesson: Singleness is also important and worth pursuing
2. Undercutting the False Marriage Assumption
   1. We generally tend to think we have to get married (i.e. “it’s just what you do”)
   2. Paul says marriage is not the only calling; in fact, there is a *higher* calling we need to consider: singleness
3. Christian Singleness
   1. Allowance
      1. Frees up Christians to pursue the things of Christ, to do his kingdom work, and advance the gospel, without being distracted by earthly things
   2. Possibility
      1. Singleness is a gift from God
         1. Not the state of being single itself
         2. But not being distressed by singleness
            1. There are people who don’t struggle with sexual desire, and are not burning with passion (1 Cor. 7:9)
      2. Pursuing singleness for selfish ends does not please God, only when it is pursued for the sake of Christ
4. Single Though Not Called
   1. Even if you’re called to future marriage, singleness should be treated as a calling for the current season of your life
      1. Three Main Reasons:
         1. To learn what it means to love God and to be loved by God
         2. To be fully satisfied in God’s love for you, so we don’t seek from others what only God can give – otherwise, you will always be disappointed
         3. To have God expand our vision of what satisfying and meaningful relationships look like through the church, the family of God[[2]](#footnote-2)
            1. In this, we can *thrive* in our singleness while we wait for marriage
5. Conclusion
   1. While there is a proper way, time, and season for Christians to date and then marry, singleness is also a biblical calling, which we’ve lost in recent history, but are called to seriously pursue and pray for
   2. It is a higher calling than marriage, because it typifies our direct union with Christ, and it frees us up to do his kingdom work without being distracted by worldly things
   3. Though not everyone is called to be single for their entire lives, we are called to be single in this current season
   4. The point is not just to wait for marriage, but to thrive and flourish in our waiting *as we become more and more satisfied in God’s love and rediscover the sanctity of human relationships outside of marriage*

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do people not like being single? How does that lead us to idolize dating or marriage relationships?

2. How does the gospel address the way in which the world makes sense of singleness and dating/marriage?

3. What does it look like for us to embrace our current calling to be single, and how is Christ calling us to thrive during this season of waiting?

4. What are obstacles in your life that would keep you from thriving in this way? How can your leader and life group members tangibly and practically support you in this?

1. This lesson was delivered by Matthew Denney at Calvary Youth Group’s annual Valentine’s Day banquet: “Clarity: that in dating or not dating, it’s important to be clear about what is going on in the relationship, either not having romantic relationships with people you’re not dating or dating in a way that is intentional and clear. Charity: that you show Christian love to others in the way you honor them and their feelings as a Christian brother or sister.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Evangelical Christians typically idolize marriage relationships and the nuclear family. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)