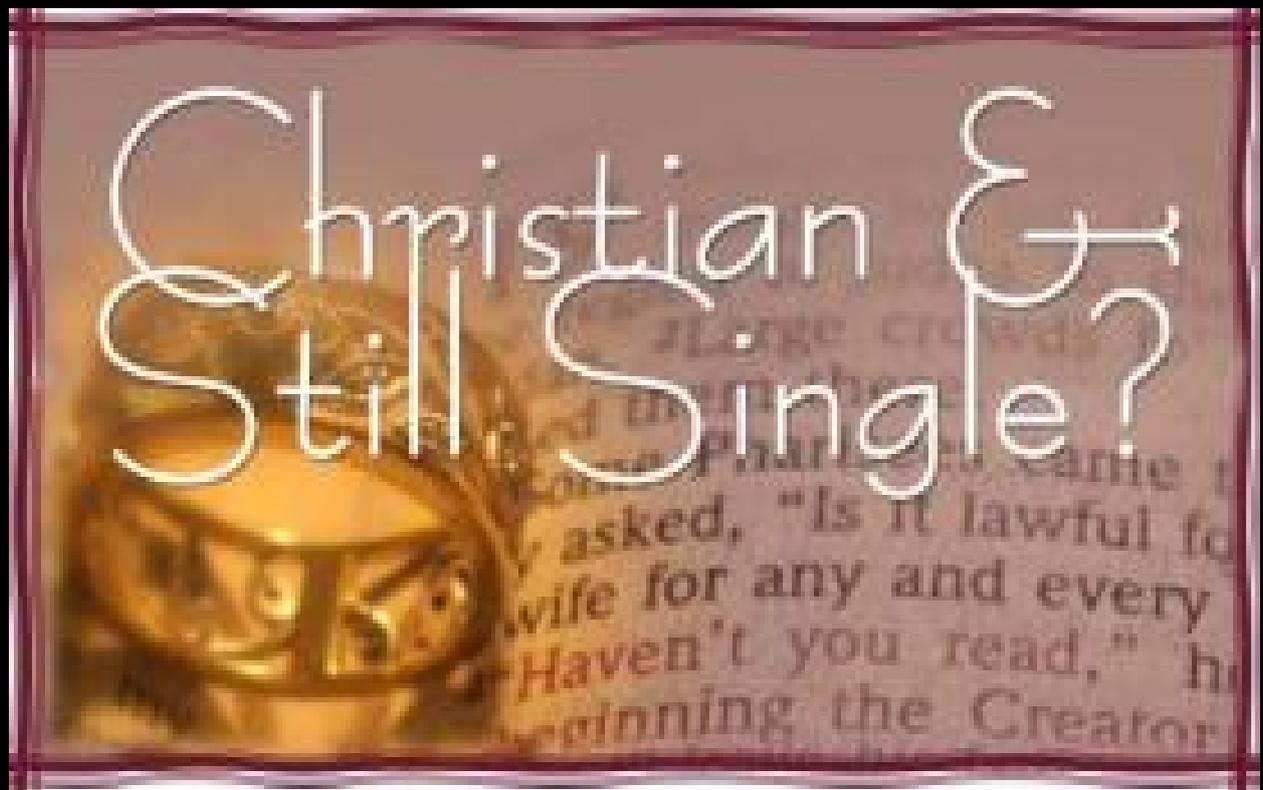


Practical Singleness



A Christ Centred Relationship



**‘Practical Singleness’
Food for Thought**

Having found myself being single again a few years back, but this time as a Christian I quickly discovered that there were far more challenges ahead of me than I realised, mostly within myself. With not much sound spiritual advice out there concerning how to cope with certain struggles as a Christian single or the struggles I would face when I eventually entered into a relationship, I felt the need to put this small Bible study together.

Before reading and going through this study please know that I don’t claim to have all the answers for every eventuality within a relationship and I’m not even claiming that you should follow the advice step by step. This study is designed to help you stop and think before situations arise which may cause temptation or cause you or your partner to sin against God.

As you go through these lessons you will also soon discover that the Bible is very silent on many of the topics we shall look at but what I have tried to do is use Bible principles. Please remember the main thrust of these lessons is to help you glorify God whether you are in a relationship or not. I pray this small effort will bless your Christ-centred relationship.

Introduction

Some people are under the impression that being single is some sort of curse, as well-meaning people are always asking, [when are you going to get into a relationship with someone?](#) as if there was something ‘wrong’ with you and then there are others who feel they are being pressurised into a relationship and, so they settle for relationship which comprises their faith and their relationship with God which within itself can be devastating.

The first three lessons challenge these ideas and are designed to help you see that being single is and can indeed be a rich blessing.

Please note that some of the lessons come from personal experiences and others from friends, both Christians and non-Christians.

It's Better Not to Marry

Whether we like it or not people need to know that there are plenty of good Biblical reasons not to marry, a few of which the apostle Paul reminds us of in [1 Corinthians 7:25-40](#). Please take a moment to read [1 Corinthians 7:25-40](#).

Although Paul gives us a few good reasons not to marry, it's Paul's last comment which I find interesting, **'and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.'** [1 Corinthians 7:40](#). Now you need to understand that Paul's final statement doesn't mean he wonders whether he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit because he already knew that; rather, he believes he has the illumination of the Spirit on this topic.

I like that because it shows Paul's humility and honesty and shows us that even though he was an apostle of Christ, he was never arrogant about God's truth. When he had a word directly from the Lord, as in [1 Corinthians 7:10](#), he made no qualms about sharing it and enforcing it. When he had opinions that were apostolic, as in [1 Corinthians 7:12+25](#), he gave them with conviction. But when he wasn't sure whether his ideas conformed to that which the Spirit of God taught, he was willing to say so.

Unfortunately, there are many in the ministry today who would never admit what Paul says here, and they aren't even close to being apostles. Yet they always claim to be right, always have a word from the Lord, and are usually dogmatic about it. They may be wrong, but they're never in doubt. Beware of teachers who claim to have a direct pipeline to God.

Anyway, you need to know that being single has numerous advantages: the potential ability to cope with troubles, maintain spiritual priorities, and remain un-distracted and utterly devoted to Christ. Single-minded singleness has its advantages.

Paul reminds us that it's better not to marry for the following reasons.

- a. Than to marry a non-believer.
- b. Than to marry someone who will hinder your relationship with Christ or your service for Him.
- c. Than to marry someone without the commitment to give completely of yourself to that person.
- d. Than to marry for the wrong motive.
- e. Than to marry at all, if you have the gift of celibacy.

In our longing to belong to someone, **do we forget to focus enough on the One to whom we must ultimately belong?** God must be our number one priority, and sometimes He gives us the gift of being single.

I don't know about you, when I was single, I had so much going on in my life and so little time. We need to remember that being in a relationship takes up a lot of time in our lives, time which is needed to develop, build and maintain that relationship. So, one blessing we have being single is simply the gift of time.

The Blessings of Being Single

Being single can also have its advantages, if you use the time God has allotted you for His glory. The apostle Paul has some counter-cultural words for us. He will suggest that single-minded singleness has its advantages. In [1 Corinthians 7:25-40](#), Paul shares several of these advantages. While many of these advantages can be universally true, we must be careful to understand what Paul is saying in the context of his letter to the Corinthians.

1. Singles are better able to cope with troubles.

'Now, concerning what you wrote about unmarried people: I do not have a command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is worthy of trust.' [1 Corinthians 7:25](#)

Paul suggests that being single isn't nearly as bad as some think. Rather, in the midst of a difficult period of time, Paul recommends that engaged couples consider remaining single.

Paul unpacks his topic in this sentence.

‘Now, concerning what you wrote about unmarried people: I do not have a command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is worthy of trust.’

The phrase ‘Now concerning...’ harkens back to **1 Corinthians 7:1** where Paul begins answering the Corinthians’ questions.

In this section, he’s focusing on those who are engaged to be married. Paul makes it clear that he’s giving an ‘opinion’ on the matter of singleness. He even brackets off his remarks by reminding his readers again in **1 Corinthians 7:40** that he’s expressing his opinion. This should caution us not to mandate what Paul has graciously and humbly suggested.

In **1 Corinthians 7:26-28**, Paul now launches into the first advantage of singleness.

‘Considering the present distress, I think it is better for a man to stay as he is. Do you have a wife? Then don't try to get rid of her. Are you unmarried? Then don't look for a wife. But if you do marry, you haven't committed a sin; and if an unmarried woman marries, she hasn't committed a sin. But I would rather spare you the everyday troubles that married people will have.’

It seems clear that Paul was not providing advice to be used in all situations, but one that was applicable during that particular period of time. In these **three verses**, Paul recommends singleness in light of challenging circumstances in Corinth. In **1 Corinthians 7:26** he speaks of ‘the present distress’ while in **1 Corinthians 7:28** he refers to ‘trouble in this life.’

Most likely, the phrase ‘the present distress’ is a reference to a famine in Corinth and much of the rest of the Roman world was suffering from famines. This is corroborated by secular history, and by the fact that in **1 Corinthians 16:1-4** Paul was taking up the famine relief collection for Jerusalem. These were challenging days, particularly for married couples.

But, you might ask, **how does this apply to me? I am not in the midst of a famine!** I can appreciate this. However, there are many other situations that might qualify as a ‘present distress.’ Temptation, stress, financial difficulty, busyness, materialism, even peer pressure to marry or not to marry, are all modern stresses that could render Paul’s opinions here every bit as practical today as when they were first offered.

Now please understand Paul isn’t against marriage, far from it! He is pro-marriage; however, he recognises that marriage isn’t for the faint of heart. Nevertheless, single-minded singleness has its advantages, one lot of temptations and stresses etc. are easier to manage than two.

The second crisis is described in **1 Corinthians 7:28** by the phrase ‘trouble in this life.’ These troubles aren’t specified but may refer to Paul’s conviction that Christians are called to suffer and will likely have more trials than others. The word ‘trouble’ or ‘tribulation’ means ‘pressed together under pressure,’ which is an interesting description of the marriage relationship.

You have two people who are pressed together in the closest possible way: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. They are two very distinct individuals with different personalities, different temperaments, different wills, different histories, different struggles and difficulties that they have brought as baggage into the relationship. And even believers in Jesus Christ are still subject to the limitations and weaknesses of the flesh. So, you have two angry, selfish, dishonest, proud, forgetful, thoughtless people and that’s true even in the best marriages.

It’s hard enough for a sinner to live alone with himself, let alone with another sinner. You put those two separate constellations of problems together when two people are bound together in marriage, and the problems of sinful human nature are multiplied.

Again, Paul makes it clear that marriage is a legitimate option for single people, but he wants to spare us unnecessary grief. Hence, it’s good to thoughtfully consider the option of singleness and think of it as a blessing as you don’t have deal with your partner’s troubles as well as your own.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What do YOU like about being single?
2. Why would it be beneficial to YOU to remain single?
3. Would it be beneficial to YOU to enter a relationship?
4. Would it be beneficial for your MATE for YOU to enter a relationship with them?

Next Lesson:

Single-Minded Singleness Has Its Advantages (Part 1)

We will discuss: Singles are better prepared to maintain their spiritual priorities and because they have no spouse and or children they have fewer things to distract them.

Next Lesson Preparation

Please read 1 Corinthians 7:29-40 / Hebrews 13:4.

Single-Minded Singleness Has Its Advantages (Part 1)

Whilst being single you need to remember that you are already in a relationship with the most important person we know, Jesus. So, with Him being your priority and pleasing Him your goal, what a blessing it is to give Him our full attention. Please read [1 Corinthians 7:29-35](#) where you will find discover Paul's second and third advantages to being single.

2. Singles are better able to maintain spiritual priorities.

'What I mean, my friends, is this: there is not much time left, and from now on married people should live as though they were not married; those who weep, as though they were not sad; those who laugh, as though they were not happy; those who buy, as though they did not own what they bought; those who deal in material goods, as though they were not fully occupied with them. For this world, as it is now, will not last much longer'. [1 Corinthians 7:29](#)

In light of the fleeting nature of the world, Paul challenges us to live with the end in mind. Looking at these three verses, notice the two key phrases that bracket [1 Corinthians 7:29-31](#).

1. 'The time has been shortened'. [1 Corinthians 7:29](#).

2. 'This world is passing away'. [1 Corinthians 7:31](#).

The **first** phrase '[the time has been shortened](#)' reminds us of the briefness of life. No one lives forever on planet earth. You may live 30 or 40 or 50 years. [Who knows?](#) You may live 80 or 90 years, but sooner or later you're going to die. And no matter how long you live, you're going to be dead a lot longer than you're going to be alive. If you doubt that, just check out the nearest cemetery. Every grave is proof that the time is short.

The **second** phrase '[this world is passing away](#)' comes from a Greek expression that means something like '[this world is but a shadow of reality](#).' Everything we see is fleeting and insubstantial. The metaphor perhaps is drawn from the shifting scenes in a theatre. The idea is that this life is here one moment and gone the next. It's similar to our sitcoms and movies that must change scenes every couple of seconds.

This life isn't all there is, therefore, single-minded singleness has its advantages. So, the time is short, and the world is passing away. [What follows from this truth?](#) [Matthew Henry](#) says that we should live with '[holy indifference](#)' to the things of this world. [1 Corinthians 29-31](#) flesh this out point in [five different ways](#).

1. With regard to our intimate relationships:

'From now on those who have wives should be as though they had none.' [1 Corinthians 7:29](#)

Now there's a verse you don't hear quoted at many weddings. It simply means, enjoy your marriage but don't make your marriage the most important thing in your life.

2. With regard to afflictions:

'Those who weep, as though they did not weep.' [1 Corinthians 7:30a](#)

Again, this simply means do not be so overcome with grief that you act as if God doesn't have the final word.

3. With regard to pleasure:

'Those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice.' [1 Corinthians 7:30b](#)

Great times are great, but Paul reminds us not to get so caught up in joy that you forget that suffering is right around the corner. In everything you do, don't forget about eternal realities.

4. With regard to purchases:

'Those who buy, as though they did not possess.' [1 Corinthians 7:30c](#)

When you do make purchases, be a wise steward. Don't spend carelessly on the world's toys and trinkets. And what you do purchase, hold loosely. Be careful, lest the things you possess, end up possessing you. Acknowledge that you are a steward and the Master may call for what He has given you.

5. With regard to all earthly concerns:

‘Those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world.’
1 Corinthians 7:31a

Use the world, enjoy the world, live in the world, work in the world, buy and sell in the world, but do not let the world rule your life. The message is clear and unmistakable. You won't be here forever so enjoy life, live it to the fullest, take advantage of every moment but don't indulge yourself so much that you lose your focus on what really matters.

Singles have the potential to maintain spiritual priorities. One of the reasons that this is the case is because of Paul's **third advantage**.

3. Singles have fewer distractions.

‘I would like you to be free from worry. An unmarried man concerns himself with the Lord's work, because he is trying to please the Lord. But a married man concerns himself with worldly matters, because he wants to please his wife; and so, he is pulled in two directions. An unmarried woman or a virgin concerns herself with the Lord's work, because she wants to be dedicated both in body and spirit; but a married woman concerns herself with worldly matters, because she wants to please her husband. I am saying this because I want to help you. I am not trying to put restrictions on you. Instead, I want you to do what is right and proper, and to give yourselves completely to the Lord's service without any reservation.’ 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Paul expresses the reality that marriage requires being absorbed in the ‘**concerns**’ of one's spouse and encourages singles in their devotion to Christ. Paul acknowledges that married people are concerned about their spouse, and rightly so! If they are not, they will not find themselves in a happy marriage. Marriage requires immense sacrifice, time, and energy. Thus, Paul's point is that the marriage relationship can keep us from devoting ourselves more fully to Christ.

For example, we must balance our devotion to our spouse, children, and God. Yet, at the same time be so consumed with God that every area of our lives is well balanced. Remember, single-minded singleness has its advantages.

Dr. John Murray was once a professor at **Princeton Theological Seminary**, who because of creeping liberalism in that institution joined with a number of other fine scholars to found **Westminster Theological Seminary**. **John Murray** served on the faculty there for many decades as **Professor of Theology**, writing many excellent books that have served the church well for decades.

A life-long bachelor, he finally retired at age 75, moved back to his homeland of **Scotland**, and married a woman about half his age. Less than two years later they had a child. I think he felt that he had given God the best 75 years of his life; now it was time to have a little fun. Unfortunately, his heart couldn't take all that excitement, and a few years later he died.

Granted, this is a most unusual case, but it demonstrates that it's possible to honour God with singleness if you have the gift, and then marry at a later time. Single-minded singleness has its advantages and not having a spouse and or children to worry about means more times spent devoted to God.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What do YOU like about being single?
2. Why would it be beneficial to YOU to remain single?
3. Would it be beneficial to YOU to enter a relationship?
4. Would it be beneficial for your MATE for YOU to enter a relationship with them?
5. Do YOU believe that entering a relationship right now would change your priorities?
6. In what ways do you believe that entering a relation would cause YOU to be distracted?

Next Lesson: Single-Minded Singleness Has Its Advantages (Part 2)

We will discuss: Despite the misconception that some singles have, they really do have the option of marriage. We will see that being single means you can serve others more and focus on building a more solid foundation in our relationship with God who is actually helping us develop skills for that future relationship without us realising it. We will also look at how being single is a blessing in our everyday schedules.

Next lesson Preparation

Please read [1 Corinthians 7:36-40](#) / [Matthew 5:32](#) / [Matthew 19:9](#) / [1 Corinthians 7:12-16](#) / [Galatians 5:13](#)

Single-Minded Singleness Has Its Advantages (Part 2)

Jesus is for life not just for Christmas! If you single you need to know that getting married is a real option but a lifetime commitment but in the meantime and you may not be aware of this, God is actually preparing you for marriage if you so desire. Please read [1 Corinthians 7:36-40](#) where we will discover Paul's fourth advantage for being single.

4. Singles have the option of marriage.

'In the case of an engaged couple who have decided not to marry: if the man feels that he is not acting properly toward the young woman and if his passions are too strong and he feels that they ought to marry, then they should get married, as he wants to. There is no sin in this. But if a man, without being forced to do so, has firmly made up his mind not to marry, and if he has his will under complete control and has already decided in his own mind what to do---then he does well not to marry the young woman. So, the man who marries does well, but the one who doesn't marry does even better. A married woman is not free as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, then she is free to be married to any man she wishes, but only if he is a Christian. She will be happier, however, if she stays as she is. That is my opinion, and I think that I too have God's Spirit.' [1 Corinthians 7:36-40](#)

This is a particularly difficult paragraph because the Greek is ambiguous and it's impossible to know for sure whether he's talking about a marriage arranged by a parent or a voluntary one between a man and his fiancée. I believe the man in view is the fiancée of the virgin, who is considering the possibility of marriage with her.

These verses then summarise what Paul has already taught. In my estimation, the best English translations of these verses are found in the [ESV](#), [NRSV](#), and [NLT](#). I will provide the [NRSV](#) rendering of [1 Corinthians 7:36-38](#),

'If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his fiancée, if his passions are strong, and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry. But if someone stands firm in his resolve, being under no necessity but having his own desire under control and has determined in his own mind to keep her as his fiancée, he will do well. So then, he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better.'

Paul's point is that an engaged couple is free to decide whether to marry or to remain single. Everyone likes to have the freedom to choose, so here Paul leaves the choice up to the believers. Both options are viable and permissible.

In [1 Corinthians 7:39-40](#), Paul concludes this chapter and his section on marriage and singleness with these words:

'A married woman is not free as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, then she is free to be married to any man she wishes, but only if he is a Christian. She will be happier, however, if she stays as she is. That is my opinion, and I think that I too have God's Spirit.'

Paul wants to leave the topic of marriage, divorce, and remarriage with an emphasis on his two most important thoughts: marriage is for life and Christians should only marry Christians! Married people and singles both need to come to grips with these points. He is envisioning the ideal circumstances; death is the only condition that frees a person for remarriage. Even then the freedom is not total, for a believer is to marry only another believer, whether it's a first marriage or a second!

That doesn't mean simply that one must marry a person who believes in God; rather, it means the potential marriage partner must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I would also urge every widow, or widower, to only remarry a spouse that is at least a spiritual equal. The truth is, there are many excellent reasons to not marry.

'I would like you to be free from worry. An unmarried man concerns himself with the Lord's work, because he is trying to please the Lord. But a married man concerns himself with worldly matters, because he wants to please his wife; and so, he is pulled in two directions. An unmarried woman or a virgin concerns herself with the Lord's work, because she wants to be dedicated both in body and spirit; but a married woman concerns herself with worldly matters, because she wants to please her husband.' [1 Corinthians 7:32-34](#)

Being Single Allows Us To Do Many Things We May Otherwise Not Be Able To

1. Serve others more.

There are many ways in our lives in which we can serve God, people and society. While single we have more time to devote to service outside a relationship.

2. Focus on building a more solid foundation in our relationship with God.

This needs to be a key part of our lives.

‘Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you’. Matthew 6:33

God loves us and wants us to put Him first and He also wants the best for us, including for our love lives!

3. Develop skills for that future relationship.

We each have our own strengths and weaknesses, including those skills needed in a marital relationship. Whether they are physical skills like garden work, home DIY, cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc., or emotional and spiritual skills, we all have areas we can improve for when the right time comes.

While being in a relationship leading toward marriage or being married is a great blessing from God, being single can be an immense blessing as well. Keep this in mind as you travel through the next days and months wondering when you will meet that special someone and be thankful for the time you have been given to draw closer to God and prepare yourself for him or her.

Someone conducted an unscientific survey asking a number of Christian singles, ‘What is important to you or what do you like about being single?’

The majority of responses had to do with the aspect of independence, the ability to have a flexible schedule/life, to spend money as desired, and to have time alone. While their ‘independence’ played an important role on the positive side, the people surveyed were also quick to mention a small degree of sadness associated with being on their own.

So, how can we, as singles, use what we enjoy most about our lives to honour God, to live radically for Christ, and to embrace life to the fullest?

Seize the day, seize whatever you can. ‘Cause life slips away just like hourglass sand
Seize the day, pray for grace from God’s hand. Then nothing will stand in your way
Seize the day. Carolyn Arends

In Our Schedule

I love being able to determine my own schedule. I can do, or not do, whatever I want, when I want. This may sound selfish especially to those who have many more obligations to family, job, and church but with this independence also comes spiritual responsibility.

Paul tells us,

‘I would like you to be free from worry. An unmarried man concerns himself with the Lord's work, because he is trying to please the Lord. But a married man concerns himself with worldly matters, because he wants to please his wife; and so, he is pulled in two directions. An unmarried woman or a virgin concerns herself with the Lord's work, because she wants to be dedicated both in body and spirit; but a married woman concerns herself with worldly matters, because she wants to please her husband.’ 1 Corinthians 7:32-34

As a single, it’s easy to think solely about myself, but if I do I would not be abiding by God’s Word and not seeking ways to please the Lord. I could try to argue with God, as I have at times, that I desire a relationship and have waited a long time, I deserve to have things that I’ve worked for, and I need ‘my’ time.

However, these arguments are not convincing when talking to the Son of God. There are many ways to please the Lord with your time; it takes an open schedule, an open mind and an open heart but we always need to remember that as with all blessings from God comes great responsibility.

'You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love'. Galatians 5:13

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What do **YOU** like about being single?
2. Why would it be beneficial to **YOU** to remain single?
3. Would it be beneficial to **YOU** to enter a relationship?
4. Would it be beneficial for your **MATE** for **YOU** to enter a relationship with them?
5. Are you aware that **YOU** have the option of marriage?
6. How would entering a relationship affect **YOUR** ability to serve others?
7. How would **YOU** ensure that entering a relationship wouldn't affect **YOUR** relationship with God?
8. In what ways would be beneficial for **YOU** to remain single so that **YOU** can develop skills for that future relationship?
9. How much would entering a relationship impact **YOUR** daily schedule?

Next Class: Single-Minded Singleness Has Its Advantages (part 3)

We will discuss: The advantages of being single in our finances, our time alone but also in areas where we can get involved with our local congregation.

Next Class Preparation

Please read **Hebrews 13:5 / Matthew 6:19+20 / Mark 10:21 / Proverbs 3:9-10 / Ecclesiastes 4:6 / Psalm 90:12 / Matthew 14:23 / Luke 22:40 / Mark 4:10 / 1 Peter 2:16 / Ephesians 5:16.**

Single-Minded Singleness Has Its Advantages (part 3)

Remember being single is a blessing, so be sure to use your singleness wisely not only in time but also with your finances.

In Our Finances

‘Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’. Hebrews 13:5

Our world has programmed us to think if we don’t have it, we need it, and if we do have it, then we need the newer, faster, and cooler model. Not surprisingly, the responses I got from talking to singles regarding finances were bent toward spending money, rather than earning or saving it.

I appreciate the opportunities I have as a single regarding the ability to spend. It is easy to want what others have, spend on things that are the **‘latest’** and to justify my spending since, at this point in my life, I don’t have immediate financial responsibilities to a spouse but I still, need to be careful.

‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.’ Matthew 6:19-20

Jesus wants us to have financial independence, freedom from having money control our lives. He sent His disciples out to minister and told them,

‘Take nothing for the journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in your belts.’ Mark 6:8

To many of us, this is contrary to how we are living. Our focus has become obtaining earthly pleasures instead of ways to serve and please the Lord through our finances.

Jesus tells a rich man who wanted to know what he must do in order to inherit eternal life,

‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven’. Mark 10:21

‘Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.’ Proverbs 3:9+10

King Solomon, one of the wealthiest people to have ever walked the earth says:

‘I say it is better to be content with what little you have. Otherwise, you will always be struggling for more, and that is like chasing the wind.’ Ecclesiastes 4:6

In Our Time Alone

‘Teach us to make the most of our time, so that we may grow in wisdom.’ Psalm 90:12

Like many singles, I am blessed with time that is not in demand from others, I have the opportunity for **‘alone’** time. I can accomplish tasks around the house, work on the internet, watch television, read, get together with friends, go shopping, and a multitude of other good and necessary activities. However, **what is the best use of my time alone?**

When Jesus was alone, he prayed, **Matthew 14:23, Luke 22:40**. When his disciples were alone with Jesus, they learned about the things of God, **Mark 4:10**. Throughout my years of travelling, I am embarrassed at how I have spent the idle time in airports, on planes, and on tour buses sleeping, watching movies, reading a newspaper or doing nothing.

I have wondered what difference it would make in my life if I used these hours more productively? I have since committed myself to spending time in prayer, reading the Word, sharing my experiences through writing, and studying. My appreciation of alone time has grown after hosting many of my married friends and spending time around families. I have learned that my responsibility is not to waste the opportunity I have, but rather to use that time to grow in wisdom.

I have concluded that the best cities for single Christians are ones that provide an opportunity for a person to grow spiritually, to have meaningful relationships, and provide opportunities to serve. Don't let others tell you what you should do or where you should live because it's cool, let God lead you in how to live.

Turn up the music
 Turn it up loud
 Take a few chances
 Let it all out
 'Cause you won't regret it
 Lookin' back from where you have been
 'Cause it's not who you knew
 And it's not what you did
 It's how you live
 Point of Grace (Lyrics by Cindy Morgan)

Being single allows us to live our lives with a great deal of independence and the ability to take a few chances, but this does not mean for us to live it selfishly. When all is said and done, our identity will not be found in whom we knew, or didn't know, or what we did, or didn't do, in life, but how we lived it.

'Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.' 1 Peter 2:16

Get Involved

The most important lesson for single people, especially those who really find it hard being single, is to get involved.

'Make good use of every opportunity you have, because these are evil days.' Ephesians 5:16

Get stuck into God's work at church; be involved in the community and helping other people. Use every opportunity to serve God, and to fall deeply in love with Him. Use your singleness to help others to grow in their faith. Don't let sadness and emotional pain prevent you from serving God. I refused to let my hurt get in the way of serving God. The time I had available has been used to bless many others as well as myself.

Time to learn to play the guitar and keyboard, time to learn to pray effectively without children to distract me. Time to devote to God so that I could truly fall in love with Him. Time to nurture new Christians and give undivided attention to them. Time to use my money for God and people in need. Time to do things I would never have done in marriage. Time to develop skills and gifts that only time alone could produce.

Don't spend your time hunting and searching for that illusive love of your life, spend it for God and in His time, He will direct your paths. Redeem the time, get to know God, fall in love with Him, serve others, give and it shall be given to you.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What do YOU like about being single?
2. Why would it be beneficial to YOU to remain single?
3. Would it be beneficial to YOU to enter a relationship?
4. Would it be beneficial for your MATE for YOU to enter a relationship with them?
5. Can YOU afford financially to enter a relationship?
6. How would YOU go about still had time alone if YOU entered a relationship?
7. Would entering a relationship affect YOUR involvement with the church?

Next Class: Difficulties with Being Single

We will discuss: It's not all plain sailing being single though; there are some things which can really be challenging. I will provide the Top 7 singles issues and we will look at the topics no one wants to talk about, Christian single men and lust as well as the Christian and masturbation.

Next Class Preparation

Please read 1 Peter 5:7 / Genesis 38:6-10 / Matthew 5:28 / 1 Corinthians 6:12 / 1 Corinthians 6:19+20 / 1 Thessalonians 4:4+5 / 2 Peter 2:19 / James 4:17 / 1 John 1:9.

Difficulties with Being Single

So, you've looked at some of the blessing which come from being single, now let's look at some of the difficulties which come from being single. Oh no were going to discuss the 'M' word! Well someone has to talk about it even though most people avoid the topic like the plague. But before we get there let me ask you, **what do you think the top 7 singles issues are among Christian singles in the world?**

Top 7 Singles Issues

What singles seem to think or worry about most.

1. Money Worries/Bills.
2. Dating Relationships.
3. Career.
4. Health.
5. Marriage.
6. Kids.
7. Sex Issues.

I was kind of shocked to see **sex** at **number 7** and **money** issues as the **number 1** singles issue but one interesting thing in another survey I found about these singles issues is that the percentage of single women who think or worry about money/bills (**20%**) is substantially higher than the number of single guys who do (**13%**). Perhaps not surprising is the fact that men think or worry about sex (**10%**) much more often than the single women respondents (**4%**). How interesting!

So, what are your issues today? What are you worrying about? The cool thing is that no matter what our '**singles issues**' are today, Jesus told us we don't have to carry all that stuff by ourselves. He wants us to lay our burdens on Him.

'Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you'. 1 Peter 5:7

Christian Single Men and Lust

Most Christian single men battle lust of the flesh from time to time. In fact, let's just suggest that **all** men, whether they be single men or married men, Christian or non-Christian have struggled or still are struggling with lust. Men struggle with lust, and any single man who says otherwise is usually lying out of fear, manipulative motives, embarrassment or a combination of the three.

One single man friend of mine said **'if his girlfriend ever knew his thoughts, she would never stop slapping him'** and that's usually the reason why most men don't admit they have this struggle, especially to their partners.

The reaction of most single women when they hear things like that about single men may vary:

- a. Some may feel disgusted or discouraged that all single men lust.
- b. Some may be thinking their single man is not like all the rest they've dating them, **'um...dream on.'**
- c. Some may feel so uncomfortable discussing the single men and lust topic that they prefer to ignore it by invoking the **Too Much Information (TMI)** rule when the subject comes up.

Unfortunately, none of the above reactions will help a single woman really understand and connect with any single men, let alone help him in any way.

The Christian and Masturbation

Now let's talk about the '**M**' word and Christian singles. Male masturbation. Female masturbation. Adolescent masturbation. Chronic masturbation. **Is it a sin to masturbate? Are you feeling uncomfortable yet?**

Most churches apparently are because they avoid the masturbation topic as well as **Osama bin Laden** tried to evade captivity. This is a little ironic, to say the least, when survey after survey reveals a majority of single Christians of all different ages, males and females, have masturbated.

As a Christian single, **just what are your feelings about masturbation? Are you a masturbator? Do you struggle with your Christian lifestyle because you feel it is morally wrong? Do you live in guilt and confusion over the whole issue?**

Personally, I can't stand it when Christian teachers are so dogmatic on the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of masturbatory activities because it's such a complex issue, with many different topics connected to the practice.

Masturbation Observations

1. The Bible is silent on the issue of masturbation even though the vast majority of humankind is preoccupied with it.

2. The Roman Catholic Church, some Protestant denominations and even **Webster's Dictionary** have attempted to equate 'the sin of Onan', **Genesis 38:6-10**, with masturbation, but a simple exegesis of these passages rule out this possibility.

'For his first son Er, Judah got a wife whose name was Tamar. Er's conduct was evil, and it displeased the Lord, so the Lord killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, 'Go and sleep with your brother's widow. Fulfil your obligation to her as her husband's brother, so that your brother may have descendants.' But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him, so when he had intercourse with his brother's widow, he let the semen spill on the ground, so that there would be no children for his brother. What he did displeased the Lord, and the Lord killed him also'. **Genesis 38:6-10**

You see, under Jewish law, a person was required to procreate with his brother's widow.

'If two brothers live on the same property and one of them dies, leaving no son, then his widow is not to be married to someone outside the family; it is the duty of the dead man's brother to marry her.' **Deuteronomy 25:5**

When **Onan** refused out of selfishness, the Lord killed him. God did not whack **Onan** for masturbating, but rather for 'spilling his seed' by ejaculating outside of his dead brother's wife during sexual intercourse.

3. Many Christian singles and not a few Christian preachers feel masturbation to orgasm is acceptable in order to: 1. relieve unabated sexual tension, and/or 2. to avoid sexual immorality. The catch is that there should be no lustful thoughts connected to the act, mmmm!

4. The vast majority of single Christians feel that compulsive masturbation, simply for the purpose of self-gratification, is always wrong. Most would also agree that habitual masturbation while single will make it harder for any future spouse to please them sexually.

Notwithstanding the above points, let the following paraphrased verses guide you as you pray and seek the Lord over whether masturbating should have any room in your life as a single person:

a. Looking lustily at a woman, or a man if you're a woman, means you are committing adultery in your heart. **Matthew 5:28**.

b. All things are lawful for you, but not all things are profitable. **1 Corinthians 6:12**.

c. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and so you should glorify God with it. **1 Corinthians 6:19+20**.

d. You should learn to control your body in a holy and honourable way, not in passionate lust like the heathens. **1 Thessalonians 4:4-5**.

e. You are a slave to whatever has mastered you. **2 Peter 2:19**.

f. If you know you should do something, but fail to do it, it's sin. **James 4:17**.

Now before you make your mind up and believe it's **always** wrong to masturbate, let me share with you some important thoughts. Below is an article from **Jim McGuiggan's** website on the subject which I believe is useful but very thought provoking. It's a little lengthy but worth the read.

A reader wonders how the Bible views masturbation. Some readers will move on as soon as they read the word. I can understand why and wish they can believe that I think this question **needs** addressed, or I wouldn't do it. Others more capable than I might take it up to help us. **It's one of those issues, isn't it?**

Big John Wayne wouldn't have done it and nice ladies don't discuss such things. There's an aura of sleaze and shame that hangs around the practice even among people who say they're completely 'liberated' in sexual matters. You can hear it in the derisive terms they call each other when they want to insult each other.

Many preachers don't like to be asked such questions because they don't really know what to think about it (maybe we should do some prayerful and serious homework and then call it as we see it, while remaining open for correction). Many preachers don't like to be asked such questions because we're afraid of other preachers. We're afraid of coming off as too 'liberal' and 'soft on sin' (maybe even justifying our own sexual weakness, horrors!) so mostly we take a robust line against the widespread practice.

And the people who have never been bothered with a desire to engage in it and those who have a happy and full sexual experience with their husbands or wives often have little or no understanding of the dynamics involved. This can move us to some impatience when we're confronted with the question.

Since it's difficult to find a biblical text that deals with the issue (it's more than difficult!) we usually talk in 'principles,' but even making a case against masturbation on 'principles' is a bit of a job. By a 'principle' we usually mean an underlying and basic law but basic 'principles' are notoriously difficult to apply. (Why do you think we have law-courts and lawyers?) And, besides, the question covers a lot of ground and a host of different circumstances.

Before saying any more, I need to say that all acts of masturbation are not the same. To engage in dishonourable mental projections is sinful. For example, a soldier away from home for long and stressful periods who sexually stimulates himself while imagining his wife or himself in some adulterous activity (not to mention a bestial activity) is NOT doing the same thing as when he is imagining himself making love to her.

By masturbation perhaps we should mean something uncomplicated like, 'sexually stimulating oneself in order to please oneself.' We're hungry for food so we cook something we can enjoy. Nutrition matters but we want pleasure as well. We want music so we put on a CD and enjoy it. We want to watch a movie, so we put on a DVD or video. No one bats an eye at any of this. We touch our tongue, our ears and eyes with food, music and visual stimuli but we mustn't touch anything sexual to satisfy our sexual hunger.

'Yes, but all sexual pleasure must be restricted to husbands and wives!' Oh really? Should kissing, hugging and holding hands be outlawed before marriage? Only the very strict believers would take such a view. The rest of us smile and think that bothering to debate the issue isn't worth our time or energy. But these very strict people can make a fair case on 'principle'.

If hugging is acceptable though it is sexually stimulating, then what's wrong with kissing? And if kissing is okay what's wrong with caressing? If lips can meet why can't other body parts? If people are permitted to sexually stimulate one another by kissing and hugging why not by fondling and other such things that fall short of a full sexual experience?

But haven't we left the more immediate subject? Yes, but only to return to it. Yes, but only to deal with the claim that all sexual pleasure must be restricted to married couples. It's clear that for whatever the reasons, the bulk of modern believers don't think all sexual pleasure must be confined to married people. The very strict among us can make reasonable arguments but the rest of us, whether or not we can adequately address those arguments, sense that their position goes way too far.

The idea that people can only hold hands, hug one another and kiss after they've become husband and wife simply makes no sense to us in the light of the nature of people as God has made us. But if we grant that all sexual pleasure and stimulation must be restricted to married couples then, as I see it, the very strict believers must surely be in the right. Of course, it means we'd end up debating issues like, 'what's hugging?' or 'what kind of kiss are we talking about?' or 'what kind of a look (glance) is acceptable?' for even warm and longing glances sexually stimulate people.

I don't think we should accept the premise that all sexual pleasure and stimulus should be restricted to married couples. It's clear that those that have covenanted to one another to be married or have already entered a covenant of marriage should keep their hands and eyes and minds for the loved one they've covenanted with.

Not all of us have done that and many of us find it a battle to unwaveringly do it but there's no doubt about the rightness of complete fidelity. Even if and when we fail we know we have failed and we should take measures to see it doesn't occur again. I think that's beyond debate; but it doesn't begin to deal with the specific issue before us.

If we judge, it acceptable for unmarried people to engage with each other in some degree of sexual stimulation and pleasure why would we think it unacceptable for an individual to engage with him/herself in some degree of sexual stimulation and pleasure?

'Because all sexual pleasure is meant to be expressed and enjoyed only by couples.' Hmmm. But is it? Other drives aren't seen that way. It's a fine thing for solitary people to enjoy food or a soak in a hot sudsy bath or a marvellous massage (from a professional and in an honourable way) and such things but people aren't permitted to privately engage in the release found in sexual pleasure?

'Yes, but if we have husbands and wives we can turn to each other.' True, but what if we're one of the many millions that don't have a husband or wife? What if we're unmarried but will not engage in non-marital sexual intercourse because we believe it displeases God, even though we are hungry for the pleasure of full sexual engagement?

Those of us that have a full and wonderful sexual experience with our spouses can have some difficulty getting the full power of Paul's 1 Corinthians 7:9, 'If they can't control themselves, it's better to marry than to burn with passion.' This section is Paul defending the right of a person to remain unmarried, which he thinks is a more advantageous situation provided that a person can live in honourable celibacy. But given the human situation he speaks of the possibility of people not being able to 'control themselves' as a perfectly normal condition. Let them marry to keep from burning. (Only a silly person thinks that this is Paul's whole philosophy about marriage.)

People that go around filled with hunger that isn't satisfied are pathetic and enslaved creatures (even if the hunger is a wicked one, maybe, especially if it is a wicked one) because they're always obsessed with the hunger. Paul would teach that we should "ease our pain" and live a full productive life. (Not many sermons can be as glib as one on the advantages of singleness preached by a married man that (thankfully) enjoys a full sexual experience with the wife he adores and who adores him.)

Here's a girl or a fellow who will not engage in a premarital full sexual experience. Furthermore, she/he won't marry a person that isn't in Christ or at least shows a real interest in him. She/he hungers greatly for sexual pleasure, in the way she/he hungers for food, drink, friendship or whatever. She/he is taught that all such hungers are God-given and that she mustn't be ashamed of them or apologize for them, but she's forbidden to satisfy one of them, the sexual appetite. She is told there is no way in which she is allowed to cater to that hunger unless she gets married. Other can caress their tongues with chocolates, their ears with music, their eyes with (honourable) books or movies, all to feed underlying hungers but she is forbidden to caress 'sexual' parts of her.

She knows perfectly well that the sexual experience is not an absolute that stands without guidelines for honourable engagement, there's too much in Scripture for her to believe that 'anything goes'. She simply doesn't understand why it's okay for unmarried men and women to kiss and hold one another (and in doing it they sexually stimulate one another as well as satisfy their own hunger) while she's forbidden to stimulate herself while alone. If she's hungry she eats, thirsty and she drinks, so that these hungers are fed and kept in control without guilt and, in addition, she doesn't go around a lot of the time longing for these things. But her sexual hunger is never to be satisfied; under any circumstances? Even Paul the honourable and cheerful celibate could easily see that 'burning' would be a good word to cover such an ongoing experience.

You understand that I've been speaking about sexual activity as it were a simple and an undifferentiated drive when it manifestly is not!

It's a complex reality that, for a healthy person, connects with other needs and desires. It's true that sexual activity has a solid contact with our 'animal' nature but we aren't brute beasts. We want to give as well as receive, we want love and devotion, we want to express deep feelings and experience intimacy. All this you know and don't need to be told. It doesn't matter that many have no other interest than to get the rush, the loss is theirs. And it doesn't matter that our Western society is so preoccupied with raw sex, there's still no shame in a sexual appetite (how did the Song of Solomon get into a Bible that thinks 'sex' is a dirty word?) but to worship it, or any other drive, is idolatry.

It's easy for happily married people whose sexual drive is real but modest and is satisfied by someone they adore and enjoy being with sexually, it's easy for them to dismiss masturbation as a simple lack of control. The truth is, some of these people may be controlling more than the happily married people have ever had to contend with.

“But it's, dirty and cheap.” Yes, many of us think that, **but is it though? I don't think we can establish that.** Like everything else, masturbation (**presuming it is viewed as a Christian liberty**) and married sexual behaviour and kissing etc. between the unmarried, food consumption and the rest, can become wrong. The matter of fantasies would come into the discussion. Eating can lead to gluttony and recreation can lead to work-laziness. Much of the wrong in what is wrong is **the unbridled** nature of what we're engaged in or the set of the mind when we engage in it. So, **presuming** that sexual self-satisfaction is a Christian liberty and presuming there is no fantasizing that is cherishing something wicked, I know no reason why we should speak against it and make people feel guilt-ridden about it.

I recognize that the full story about our sexual activity will be about living out our lives before God and that it will express itself most fully in a devoted husband and wife relationship. And there's absolutely no doubt that the theological richness of our sexual relationships comes to its fullness in marriage. **But none of that gives us grounds for forbidding what has not reached that fullness.** Husbands are called to love their wives even as Christ loved the church but we're not to deny the reality and acceptability of the love they have, though they haven't yet attained this ideal, which they affirm and strive for.

I suppose there's a strong feeling that our sexual gift is ‘wasted’ if it isn't experienced with another person. I would certainly insist that our sexual gift is most fully experienced within a marriage covenant, but I don't think that to take sexual pleasure alone is a waste or a sin.

Let me conclude this piece. I think we're in a sex-soaked, sex-drenched Western culture and the sexual experience has not only been cheapened and perverted, it has become an obsession. I don't think masturbation is **inevitable (any more than I believe non-marital sex is inevitable)** nor do I think it should be **promoted (any more than I think sexual experience should be promoted)**. But I don't think it should be condemned in principle. **I think the moral right or wrong of masturbation depends on how it functions within the life of any individual.** I believe what is obvious; there is more than one reason that people engage in sexual self-pleasing and I believe that in some cases there are underlying factors that need to be treated.

There are some avenues of sexual release that I think the Scriptures clearly forbid but I don't think masturbation is one of them. There are some lawful avenues of sexual release that I believe can be engaged in, in a dishonourable way, and I think masturbation is one of them. **Jim McGuigan.**

There you have it, another view on masturbation, but if you are a Christian who is really beating yourself up over the issue of masturbation, or are struggling with sexual impurity, remember that Jesus offers forgiveness, **1 John 1:9**, for you and He loves you where you are, if you feel it's a real issue in your life, then after speaking to God about it, speak to a mature Christian about it.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. Write down **ALL** of the things which worry **YOU** about entering a relationship with someone?

2. Write down the **DANGERS** of lust?

3. What are **YOUR** thoughts on masturbation?

4. If **YOU** struggle with masturbation, (in the wrong way) in what way can you get help?

5. Write down the name of someone **YOU** can talk to about sexual impurity?

Next Class: Can I Have Sex If I'm A Single Christian?

We will discuss: We will try to understand God's perspective on sex and we will see that to have sex before marriage is foolish. We will also look at sexual purity and abstinence where I will provide some sexual purity tips. We shall look at the dangers of Christian singles' sexual sins and the isolation it may cause and recognise that many men may need some help.

Next Class Preparation

Please read **1 Corinthians 3:16+17 / Proverbs 7:18 / Proverbs 5:22 / Proverbs 5:15-17 / Proverbs 5:20 / Proverbs 5:9-11 / 1 Corinthians 6:18 / Ephesians 5:3 / Hebrews 13:4 / 1 Corinthians 10:8 / 1 Thessalonians 4:3 / 1 Thessalonians 4 / 1 Corinthians 10:13 / Galatians 6:1+2 / 1 John 1:9.**

Can I Have Sex If I'm A Single Christian?

Can I have sex if I'm a Christian single? The easy and right answer to this is 'NO' however sometimes just hearing the word 'NO' is not enough we need to try and understand why we come to that conclusion but more importantly why God doesn't agree with society.

God is looking for holy people. Christian mates who will not destroy his temple by giving themselves to multiple partners.

'Surely you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you! God will destroy anyone who destroys God's temple. For God's temple is holy, and you yourselves are his temple.' 1 Corinthians 3:16+17

The Bible tells us to flee fornication. Keep your temple clean and look for others who are doing the same. The Lord understands that you are flesh and have weaknesses. Nevertheless, He does not want you to be used and abused by others who care only to take advantage of you.

God desires that you find a mate who will not just serve you with their body, but physically, mentally, socially, financially and spiritually. He wants you to have the 'total package'. This is why He ordained marriage. Therefore, that one person can get the whole package. It is better to receive the total package, than receive just ¼ of it!

Understand God's Perspective on Sex

Hey, I love sex, and I hope you do too. But the fact of the matter is God loves sex even more than we do. After all, He thought of it, **right?** Most of us have heard that God is not a kill-joy when it comes to sex, read **Song of Solomon**. Yet as its inventor, He wants us to enjoy the full purpose for which he created it. It's a wonderful and exciting expression of love within the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman. When we settle for anything less than this, we cheat ourselves and our partner.

To Have Sex is foolish Before Marriage

Picture the scene, you've been in a relationship with someone for a while now, you've resisted all temptations to have sexual relations and then it's your 'BIG DAY'. You're getting married and after the ceremony it's on to the reception party and after the party it's on to the hotel and as you both lay there in a huge bed the moment you've both been waiting for arrives. Wow!

You see, that 'Wow' will never exist if you have sexual relations before your intended time. The excitement, the nerves, the expectations would not be there and that would be tragic. Take a moment to read these Bible passages, they possess a huge amount of wisdom, in other words be careful, there is more than just your sexual relationship with someone at stake.

'Come on! Let's make love all night long. We'll be happy in each other's arms'. Proverbs 7:18

'The sins of the wicked are a trap. They get caught in the net of their own sin'. Proverbs 5:22

'Be faithful to your own wife and give your love to her alone. Children that you have by other women will do you no good. Your children should grow up to help you, not strangers'. Proverbs 5:15-17

'Son, why should you give your love to another woman? Why should you prefer the charms of another man's wife?' Proverbs 5:20

'If you do, others will gain the respect that you once had, and you will die young at the hands of merciless people. Yes, strangers will take all your wealth, and what you have worked for will belong to someone else. You will lie groaning on your deathbed; your flesh and muscles being eaten away.' Proverbs 5:9-11

A Christian friend of mine was dating a non-Christian and she compromised her faith to please him and because her desire to be intimate with him was so great, they had sexual relations. She told me that her guilt and shame afterwards was almost unbearable. Needless to say, the relationship didn't last, not because she didn't love him and want to be with him but because she was losing her identity as a Christian and was sinning against her God.

This should stand as a good warning for all Christians who are in a relationship, sometimes it's more than the physical which can be affected by premature sexual relations.

‘Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body’. 1 Corinthians 6:18

‘Since you are God's people, it is not right that any matters of sexual immorality or indecency or greed should even be mentioned among you’. Ephesians 5:3

‘Marriage is to be honoured by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery.’ Hebrews 13:4

Sexual Purity and Abstinence

Many people feel uncomfortable when the topic of sexual purity or abstinence comes up mainly due to their own temptations, or past sins. As Christians, we are commanded by God to live a sexually pure life. Now I'm sure that all of you have heard all this before: ‘Save sex for marriage, blah blah blah...’

But the problem is, not knowing what is right. The real struggle is doing what is right and saving sex for the right place and time, which is marriage. Today's society is screaming at us to engage in sexual activities in any way and as often as we would like with whomever we want. **So how are we as Christians supposed to stay pure and live up to God's standards?**

If you are a Christian single struggling with sexual impurity, you are probably doing so in one or more of these areas:

- a. Pornography addiction. Usually internet but sometimes DVD OR magazines.
- b. A Christian dating relationship that started off well but has now devolved into an out-of-control sexual one.
- c. Habitual masturbation.
- d. An adulterous relationship with someone else's mate.

Sexual Purity Tips

‘We should not commit sexual immorality.’ 1 Corinthians 10:8

One of the hardest things for Christian singles is remaining sexually pure. It doesn't matter if you are a single woman or man, or whether you believe in courtship or traditional dating.

Yes, remaining sexually pure as a single Christian is a real battle, a tug-o-war between our raging hormones and desires, and our Lord's plan for our lives in this area:

‘It is God's will that you should be sanctified, that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable.’ 1 Thessalonians 4:3

1. A good thing that we can do to avoid sexual sins is to make sure that we don't put ourselves in situations where there is temptation.

If you are in a dating relationship, and things are getting very serious, then it would be a bad idea to be together alone in a house because it may cause temptation which can lead to sexual sin. Instead go out somewhere where it would be difficult to take things too far.

2. Try not to engage in activities that may tempt you to sin sexually.

There are many fun and creative dating ideas that you can choose from that will help you get brainstorming.

Overall, staying pure is a day by day commitment. Remember that God already has that special someone for you, and if you have sex before marriage, then you will be cheating yourself and your future soul mate of untold great sex.

More than any other sin, sexual sins tend to be hidden, secret sins that few close to us will know we are committing. Also, due to the perceived embarrassing nature of sexual impurity, many Christian singles feel they have nowhere to turn for help with their sexual problems. Additionally, many churches lack mechanisms to deal with such issues.

Sex sin is a huge issue for Christian singles. **Why?** The simple answer is that most singles struggle with some form of sex sin or at least tempted in this particular area. **What exactly is sexual sin?** There are a number of words the Bible uses that would go under the umbrella of sexual sins:

a. Fornication. Any unlawful sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

b. Sexual Immorality. Any other sexual activity outside of a God ordained union of man and wife, other than sexual intercourse, that would be considered defrauding your single brother or sister. **1 Thessalonians 4.**

For example, oral sex outside of marriage would fall under this second category of sex sin. So, when a popular US president stated: **'I did not have sex with that woman'**, he was partially telling the truth in that he did not specifically commit fornication as biblically defined but did partake in sexual immorality.

Have no fear God is near.

'No temptation has seized you except what is common to man and God is faithful: He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out, so you can stand up under it.'
1 Corinthians 10:13

Single Men Need Help

What Christian single men really need is an environment of open communication and compassionate counsel that will help him nip lust in the bud. The following verse needs to be in practice for single men to have a chance at conquering lust in their lives.

'Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfil the law of Christ.' Galatians 6:1+2

Unfortunately, since many evangelical churches encourage a culture of denial and secrecy, many single men suffer silently, and receive no help at all or the other extreme is that men are afraid that they are going to be judged and then condemned.

If you are feeling lost and alone in sexual impurity and see no way out, let me make the following suggestions: **Remember how much God loves you and talk to someone you trust.** Although sexual impurity may take you out of fellowship with your Heavenly Father, His love for you remains unchanged. If you are now living in sexual sin, you are one prayer away from forgiveness and complete cleansing, **1 John 1:9.** His heart's desire for you is complete restoration, and the rebuilding of your intimate relationship with Him.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What are **YOUR** thoughts on sex before marriage?
2. What are **GOD'S** commands on sex before marriage?
3. If **YOU** have sex before marriage how will this affect **YOUR** relationship with **YOUR MATE** and **GOD**?
4. Do **YOU** have a plan to help **YOU** stay sexually pure before entering and during a relationship?
5. Would **YOU** have the confidence to speak to someone if **YOUR** struggling with sexual purity, if so who?

Next Class: Can We Be Sure God Will Provide?

We will discuss: Some people want to enter a relationship for all the wrong reasons, so we will at some of the motives people have especially the world's motives. We will take a peek into the life of Hannah and see her sorrow whilst also seeing her assurance from God. We will also see that it's ok to ask God to send us the right person as long as our hearts are right just like the Canaanite woman and Hezekiah.

Next Class Preparation

Please read **Ephesians 4:29 / 1 Corinthians 13:1 / Colossians 2:23 / Philippians 2:15 / 1 Samuel 1:7 / 1 Samuel 1:17 / Mark 7:26 / Isaiah 38:1.**

Can We Be Sure God Will Provide?

Ok you've been single for a while now and you really want to get into a relationship with someone and you're asking the question, **will God ever bring someone into my life?** That's a fair question but maybe you should answer this question first **why do I want to get into a relationship with someone?**

Motives for Entering a Relationship

Before we get into any relationship we need to ask ourselves **why we want to get into one? What are our motives? Am I ready? Am I emotionally and spiritually ready to handle a relationship?**

Whether we like it or not there are people, even Christians, who will enter a relationship for all the wrong reasons. Below are a few examples.

- a. Don't think that marriage will make you happy.
- b. Don't think that marriage will solve your problems.
- c. Don't think that marriage will bring you closer to God.
- d. Don't think that marriage will make you a better person.
- e. Don't think that marriage will fulfil your dreams. It won't because it can't.

Marriage is good and noble and holy and honourable, **Hebrews 13:4**, but it's not the be all and end all of life. If you are miserable being single, **how can you be sure you'll suddenly be happy being married?**

'Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you'. Ephesians 4:29

'I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell.' 1 Corinthians 13:1

The World's Motives for Entering a Relationship

Believe it or not there are times when we convinced ourselves we are doing the right thing and in the right relationship with the right person. Love can truly be blinding.

'Of course, such rules appear to be based on wisdom in their forced worship of angels, and false humility, and severe treatment of the body; but they have no real value in controlling physical passions'. Colossians 2:23

'So that you may be innocent and pure as God's perfect children, who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky.' Philipians 2:15

There are many hurting people in the world today who are saying in their hearts, **'will God give me a spouse or not?'** This **'wondering if'** is causing many single people sadness and pain. People without hope are like a coconut husk upon the sea being tossed here and there by any wind that blows, it never settles and is never established. The effect of **'doubt or lack of assurance'** is that it causes unnecessary sadness.

Hannah's Sorrow 1 Samuel 1:7-18

We read,

'She (Hannah) wept and would not eat as her enemy (the other wife) taunted her.' 1 Samuel 1:7

Our enemy, Satan, does that to people when they don't have any firm foundation of faith. Hannah's life up until then was one of doubts and distress; no real hope, no assurance, no peace. It is not God's will for you to be in that state of mind, He wants you to know for sure that He will provide your deepest heart's desire.

Receiving Assurance

In **1 Samuel 1:17-18**, we read,

‘Go in peace,’ Eli said, ‘and may the God of Israel give you what you have asked him for.’ ‘May you always think kindly of me,’ she replied. Then she went away, ate some food, and was no longer sad.’

Do see you see what’s happened? Hannah receives assurance from God via Eli the priest. Look again at the effect of it, she is now described as being ‘no longer sad’.

Do you want to be like that? She now had faith, faith is like that coconut finally being grounded and rooted and it cannot be moved by the waves of doubt. When our enemy says, ‘you’re destined and doomed to be single, like it or not pal!’ you can say, ‘NO, I know what God has promised and I will wait for His time however long that may be.’

If you dearly ache and long for something that’s not sinful, it is very likely that God has put that desire there in your heart, especially if you are living a righteous life. God is a God of compassion and mercy and grace, so **why would He only give us things that we do not dearly long for and hold back the things that we deeply long for?**

Canaanite Woman

‘A woman, whose daughter had an evil spirit in her, heard about Jesus and came to him at once and fell at his feet. The woman was a Gentile, born in the region of Phoenicia in Syria. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus answered, ‘Let us first feed the children. It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.’ ‘Sir,’ she answered, ‘even the dogs under the table eat the children's leftovers!’ Jesus said to her, ‘Because of that answer, go back home, where you will find that the demon has gone out of your daughter!’ She went home and found her child lying on the bed; the demon had indeed gone out of her.’ Mark 7:25-30

The Canaanite woman came to Jesus with a request. Jesus basically said, ‘NO!’ and the disciples told her to go away! **Did she give up? NO!** She would not give in because she knew how much she longed for this request. It was real deep-cutting stuff, and she got her request through her persistence and the faith she showed.

Jesus always encourages us to persist and not give up. Listen! God is God of mercy and He wants to give you great gifts. You don’t have to live your life in sadness and doubt. Your life will be weakened, and sad and powerless that way. It’s not spiritual to keep saying, ‘Oh Your will be done.’ God is saying, ‘Prove My will and pray something. Please, my child pray. I want to give but I want you to ask.’

Ask God until you have that deep assurance that God has heard and will answer. If you are not longing enough to persist and pray, then you cannot expect to obtain assurance and faith. Ask that your joy may be full.

Hezekiah

Let’s look at Hezekiah. In **Isaiah 38:1** we read,

‘About this time King Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and said to him, ‘The Lord tells you that you are to put everything in order because you will not recover. Get ready to die.’

Isaiah is basically saying to Hezekiah, ‘You’re going to die and that’s the end of the matter.’ Hezekiah could have said, ‘Oh well if God said that, that’s it I can’t ask Him to change His mind.’

What if you think that you will never have a spouse, yet you deeply ache and weep for such a one? Will you say, ‘Oh well I guess it’s not God’s will’? Or will you say, ‘I am so hurt and longing for this need, which is a need! I will not give in until I have assurance that God has heard me to the point of granting me my request?’

Hezekiah did **just that**, he didn’t sit back and pine away! He got on his knees and **wept** and **prayed** to God.

‘Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed: ‘Remember, Lord, that I have served you faithfully and loyally, and that I have always tried to do what you wanted me to.’ And he began to cry bitterly.’ Isaiah 38:2-3.

He basically said, ‘PLEASE LORD PLEASE, I know I’m not worthy, please grant me my request!’

God then replied through Isaiah that He’d heard Hezekiah’s request and would grant it to him, promising him fifteen extra years of life.

‘Then the Lord commanded Isaiah to go back to Hezekiah and say to him, ‘I, the Lord, the God of your ancestor David, have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will let you live fifteen years longer.’ Isaiah 38:4-5

If Hezekiah had not asked he would have died! God is waiting for **YOU** to ask and believe and receive. If you are not ready for her/him yet, He knows the best time, He will delay the time of giving. He will use that time to prepare you to be a better spouse for your other half, and also make you a better person for His service.

‘Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to those who knock. Would any of you who are fathers give your son a stone when he asks for bread? Or would you give him a snake when he asks for a fish? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!’ Matthew 7:7

Please note: The kind of person you ‘**want**’ in your life may not be the kind of person you ‘**need**’ in your life. But if you trust God and give that person whom God brings into your life a chance you might be surprised and slowly discover that not only are they the kind of person you really ‘**need**’ in your life but they are the kind of person you really ‘**want**’ in your life.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. Do YOU believe that God will provide a potential mate for YOU?
2. In what ways can YOU relate to Hannah?
3. In what ways can YOU relate to the Canaanite woman?
4. In what ways can YOU relate to Hezekiah?
5. Do YOU believe that God will open up an opportunity for YOU to ask someone to enter a relationship with YOU?

Next Class: How Important Is Spiritual Wisdom In My Choice For A Mate?

We will discuss: We will have a 'very short' Bible lesson for Christian singles and then we will look at Solomon's mistakes. We will look at the dangers of being unequally yoked as even two Christians may still not be right for each other and we will finish with a practical application.

Next Class Preparation

Please read Proverbs 18:22 / 2 Corinthians 6:14 / 1 Kings 11 / Proverbs 12:4 / Proverbs 20:4 / Proverbs 21:9 / Proverbs 21:19 / Proverbs 29:22.

How Important Is Spiritual Wisdom In My Choice For A Mate?

A very good friend of mine who isn't a Christian has been dating this guy for almost a year and yet every time I talk with her she isn't happy with the relationship and so after asking her why she is in the relationship in the first place she told me that she didn't want to be 'left behind' old without a man in her life. How sad!

If there's ever a time to pray for wisdom, it's definitely when you're choosing the right person to enter a relationship with. And remember even after you enter that relationship this doesn't necessarily mean you've found the right person for marriage.

Christian singles should carry Biblical wisdom in seeking a Christian match. The more we grasp all that earthly relationships are intended to be, the better we can understand what godly relationships are supposed to be. Christian spiritual insight says that 'man should gain understanding.'

How can a man relate to a woman if he cannot understand her? So, seeking understanding is very important. 'Keep sound wisdom and judgment.' Basically, are you a person with common sense. Do you have a solid sense of judgment when it comes to picking mates? These are excellent bits of knowledge when you are looking for a Christian mate.

'A generous man will be prosperous.' Proverbs 11:25

Being generous instead of self-serving is a virtue when you are dealing with others. A self-centred person will eventually turn others away. To find a mate, one must be generous in nature. Spiritual discernment is important in recognizing the inner man/woman instead of the outer man/woman. This will support you in your decision to find a Christian mate. You must use discernment as you correspond and relate to someone through email and telephone. So, the inner man/woman is important.

Bible Lesson for Christian Singles

The Bible says,

'Find a wife and you find a good thing; it shows that the Lord is good to you.' Proverbs 18:22

God considers it as a very important thing for a man and woman to find one another and to marry. But many Christians do not realize the importance of finding a Christian spouse. A Christian spouse ordained by God can be the difference between living a long, fruitful, prosperous life overflowing with the blessings of God and living a life ending in sadness, heartbreak, and divorce.

We may know of marriages that work even when the two spouses do not believe the same way. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to know what is going on behind closed doors if they are not living in the fullness of God's blessings.

Solomon's Mistakes

'Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together?' 2 Corinthians 6:14

A big reason for this is that the person in darkness will tend to lead the believer astray, back into a life of sin. Paul goes on to say, 'What does Christ have in common with belial, light with darkness, righteousness with wickedness?' The answer is nothing!

King Solomon failed in this; He took 700 wives & 300 concubines and was led astray from his faith. The Bible said that,

'he followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians & Molech, the detestable god of the Ammorites, so he did evil in the sight of the Lord. He fell from God's favour, and it was all due to the wives who led him into idolatry.'

1 Kings 11

Unequally Yoked: Not Just For Marriage

Most seasoned Christians are familiar with the 2 Corinthians 6:14 mentioned above, concerning being unequally yoked. Most Christians may also agree that a believer should not marry a non-believer.

However, the problem is that being unequally yoked goes beyond just marriage. Any partnership that ‘yokes’ a believer with a non-believer should be avoided. One example of this issue is when a Christian and a non-Christian embark in a business together. Christian values and moneymaking are at odds many times.

Dating is a partnership too. If a believer knows for sure that the potential ‘date’ is a non-believer, the issue of dating should be a ‘no brainer’ for the Christian. He is unequally yoked. The believer shouldn’t rationalize the decision to date as an opportunity to witness and ‘create’ a Christian spouse, a lot of Christians fall into this trap. The Believer can witness and evangelise without dating, and the witness will be more powerful.

Is it a sin for a believer to date a non-believer? I don’t know, but I do know it is unwise. The Bible is filled with individuals who decided not to follow the Lord’s wisdom and found misery.

A Believer but Still No Match

We need to understand that there’s nothing wrong with dating someone who shares the same faith as you do but you can still not get along or be compatible in other areas. Two Christians together in a relationship doesn’t automatically mean that they’re right together. Listen to the wisdom of Solomon in the **Proverbs**.

‘A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones’. Proverbs 12:4

‘Sluggards do not plough in season; so, at harvest time they look but find nothing’. Proverbs 20:4

‘Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife’. Proverbs 21:9

‘Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife’ Proverbs 21:19

‘An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins’. Proverbs 29:22

Applying This to Today’s Christian Single

We can take this principal in God’s Word and apply it to our lives. For instance, when first meeting a potential spouse you may not be sure if that person is a Christian. **Go ahead and ask, there’s no harm in asking, right?**

If that person says ‘Yes’ then you know you will have your faith in common and making a future life together will be easier in the grace of God. If the person you meet says ‘No’ and they are not a Christian, you can make the choice to pursue the relationship and witness to them for Christ and His Gospel or find someone else.

If your mind is fully made up to only date Christian singles, then this will not be difficult! In fact, your companion will likely respect you for your beliefs and God will bless you. The happiest married people are generally those who were also happy while being single. Changing your marital status doesn’t guarantee a change in your happiness or your contentment or your satisfaction with life. Discontented singles aren’t usually the best candidates for an unhappy marriage.

Don’t go into a relationship for the fun of it, enter into a relationship with a purpose and that purpose should be to see if you are both compatible for marriage. Many people may disagree with me on this but here is my reason why. **You wouldn’t walk into a shop and open a packet of cheese and onion crisps to see if you like them. No! You already know if you like them, that’s why you didn’t choose salt and vinegar crisps.** In today’s society too, many people like to test the goods first, usually sexually or just living together for while, and if they decide they don’t like it they throw them away.

That person you are throwing away is created in the image of God, so you need to treat them with the respect God gave them. When you enter a relationship with both of you knowing why, for marriage, you will both quickly discover if you’re right for each other or not and God willing this will help you both make the right decisions for the future.

But please remember just because your relationship doesn’t work out and you don’t end up married, doesn’t mean disaster, after all you’ve both still glorified God whilst you were together which is the whole purpose and it’s better to find out sooner rather than later. Simply go back to enjoying being single again.

Yeah, I'm feeling good tonight, finally doing me and it feels so right, oh, Time to do the things I like, going to the club everything's alright, oh,

No one to answer to, no one that's gonna argue, no, And since I got the hold off me, I'm living life now that I'm free, yeah,

Telling me to get myself together now I got myself together, yeah, Now I made it through the weather better days are gonna get better

I'm so sorry that it didn't work out I'm moving on, I'm so sorry but it's over now, the pain is gooone,

I'm putting on my shades to cover up my eyes, I'm jumpin' in my ride, I'm heading out tonight, I'm solo, I'm riding solo, I'm riding solo, I'm riding solo, sooooo.

I'm feeling like a star, you can't stop my shine, I'm loving cloud nine, my head's in the sky.
I'm solo, I'm riding solo, I'm riding solo, I'm riding solo, sooooo.

Now I'm feeling how I should, never knew single could feel this good, oh, Stop playing miss understood, back in the game, who knew I would, oh, So flex how I spread my wings, loving myself makes me wanna sing, oh, Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah,

Ridin' Solo (Jason DeRulo)

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. How important does the role of wisdom play for YOU in choosing a mate?
2. Can YOU see and understand the many mistakes which Solomon did in choosing the wrong mate?
3. What dangers can YOU see in getting into a relationship with someone outside of the Lord's church?
4. Write down some ways in which a person may be a Christians, but they still not be right for YOU?
5. If one or BOTH OF YOU decide that the relationship isn't right for YOU BOTH, what good can come out of the experience?

Next Class: You Cannot Make Someone Love You

We will discuss: Trying to learn from other people's mistakes and as there are so many emotions and hormones involved within a relationship we shall ask and try and answer the following questions; what is an infatuation? What is lust? What is sexual attraction? What is real love? We will finish by looking at why real love really is precious.

Next Class Preparation

Please read 2 Samuel 13 / Genesis 29 / 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

You Cannot Make Someone Love You

This is tough, especially when you really like someone and are beginning to fall in love them but as time goes on they reveal that they don't feel the same about you. Ouch! That hurts but hang in there, God will have someone better or more compatible for you.

A friend of mine shared her thoughts on trying to make someone love you. She says, as I look back, I see where I made many mistakes. My first and foremost mistake was that I **'did not accept and maintain a steady relationship with God'**. If I had done this, I would not have found myself in the position I was in.

God's love is free, and this love is like no other love you could ever experience in your life because it is whole. There is nothing lacking in the love that God can give you. Do not ever believe that you can live without love because you cannot. You cannot count on the people around you to give you that love either, but you can count on God. He is always there, and He never changes.

'Another mistake was starting off in such a hurry'

This seems to be the popular thing to do these days. You think **'Well I like him, and he likes me. Maybe we are in love. Why don't we just go ahead and see if this sex business will work out for us if we really like it.'**

You end up skipping over the part where you are really good friends. This was what was missing in my relationship with this man. There was no respect and friendship. He really did not respect me, and I did not really respect him. There was no friendship there.

'Another mistake was getting involved sexually when I had no business doing it'

I was not married. I was not old enough or mature enough to face the consequences of a sexual relationship. Just because you have all the necessary parts to have a sexual relationship with someone does not mean that you are ready to get into it. It's not just a physical act it involves your emotions. You can truly mess up your emotions by getting involved when you are not ready. It is something that should be held sacred for marriage.

If you go back to the basics in what a relationship is all about you will see that you have **friendship first, secondly you are both Christians**, and out of that **grows a love**. And God helps maintain that love. From there you go to dating and being serious and then later getting married.

Learned Too Late

A good friend of mine was seeking love and we should understand that it's only natural to want someone to love you and someone you can love no matter how old you are. If you are in high school or university, the chances are that you are in love with someone right now, or think you might be, but be warned there are many wrong concepts about love.

Many people confuse infatuation with real love. Others think that **'love at first sight'** is the real thing. Still others do not know the difference between lust and love. **What is infatuation and how does it affect you? What is the difference between lust and love? What is sexual attraction? What is real love?** Let us consider these important questions.

What Is An Infatuation?

An infatuation is the state of being completely carried away by an attraction to someone. The dictionary calls it **'being blindly in love.'** In other words, you are so carried away by this, that you don't know what you are doing.

The one involved in a romantic infatuation usually cannot think of anything or anyone else other than the person he or she is **'in love with.'** An infatuation is an exciting experience, an emotional high but it never lasts long because it is **not** true love.

One of the signs of an infatuation is that you tend to idolize the person you think you are in love with. Everything they say or do seems just perfect to you. You don't see any flaws. Other people can see plenty of **'danger signals,'** but you can't see them because you are **'blindly in love.'**

Our romantic feelings have taken over and you are not using ordinary good sense. When you are involved in a romantic infatuation you tend to be disorganized. You are not yourself, you are irresponsible, and you tend to neglect your duties.

Sometimes young people will daydream and ‘laze’ around, not doing their duties. Someone will ask, ‘What is the matter with you? You are not yourself.’ They smile sweetly and say, ‘Oh, I’m in love.’ No, they aren’t, they are infatuated.

If he was in love and his love was the real thing, he would be concerned about his duties, preparing and planning for his future. Most infatuations don’t last long. What does last, is the bitter fruit of wrongdoing committed during the infatuation. Remember, when you are infatuated, you don’t use common sense. Your romantic feelings are in control and when this happens, you can do some things that you will regret the rest of your life.

What Is Lust?

Lust is an intense desire to satisfy one’s sexual appetite. Lust often goes under the name of ‘love,’ but lust and love are two entirely different things.

Lust is selfish

The emphasis is on **getting** something. Lust demands immediate satisfaction and says, ‘I want it for my own pleasure, I want it regardless of the consequences, and I want it now.’

Love is unselfish

The emphasis is on **giving**. Love wants what is best for the other person and is willing to wait. Real love will wait for the right time and the right circumstances.

The Bible gives examples of both lust and love, **2 Samuel 13. Amnon**, one of David’s sons, thought that he was madly in love with **Tamar**, his half-sister, he desired her so much that he was literally sick. One of his evil friends suggested a plan whereby he could get **Tamar** alone and so **Amnon** carried out this plan and forced **Tamar** to have sex with him. **What happened next?** He no longer cares for her, in fact, he hated her. **Amnon’s** love was not love at all. It was just lust.

On the other hand, the Bible tells of the love **Jacob** had for **Rachel**, **Genesis 29. Jacob** had to work for Rachel’s father seven long years in order to obtain **Rachel** as his wife. **Jacob** was willing to work and wait for **Rachel** because his love was the real thing. The Bible says that seven years ‘seemed to him but a few days’ because of the love he had for her.

What Is Sexual Attraction?

Sexual attraction is physical attraction between a guy and a girl. We are built with a sex drive which causes us to be interested in the opposite sex. There is nothing wrong or sinful about this. God made us this way. Sin comes when we attempt to satisfy our sexual drive in a wrong way. To be sexually attracted to someone does **not** mean that you are in love with that person.

A guy sees a girl with a beautiful figure and he says, ‘Wow!’ A girl sees handsome football player and her heart skips a beat or two. **Is that love?** No, it’s simply physical attraction between a fellow and a girl.

Movies, television, magazines, and books constantly bombard us with this idea: ‘Find someone who turns you on, if you have a good sex life, that’s all that matters.’ The former school beauty queen marries the former captain of the football team and everybody sighs and says. ‘What a handsome couple!’ But in a short while, their marriage is broken. **Why?** Because there was no real love between them. They were just sexually attracted to each other and had little in common besides this and soon became bored with each other. Remember, sexual attraction not love.

I have a non-Christian friend who has been in many relationships after her divorce and she is always asking why none of them ever go anywhere. Well after talking some more with her she revealed to me that she has sex with them on the first night of a date and if the sex doesn’t match up to her standard, she doesn’t see them anymore. It’s not surprising that she doesn’t see them anymore, or more to the point they don’t want to see her anymore, because from the outset, the standard and the relationship is built in and around sex and sex only. How sad!

There is a vital place in marriage for sexual attraction, but a marriage cannot be built on sexual attraction alone. There are couples by the thousands who could not or did not resist sexual involvement before they were married, but now they cannot stand to touch each other.

What Is Real Love?

‘Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail. Love is eternal.’ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Notice that the love described here **is not** a ‘fluffy, warm feeling’ kind of love. Real love has many qualities. It does contain the magical element of physical attraction, but it is a lot more than this. Love has roots in friendship, in true love, you love the total person. You enjoy being with that person and sharing things with them. Real love is unselfish, it sacrifices for the one it loves, and it carries with it the vital quality of commitment.

It doesn’t give up or quit when problems come along. Real love will bring out the best in you and you want the one you love to be proud of you. If you are just infatuated with someone, you may ‘laze’ around and daydream, but if your love is real, you apply yourself to your work, you make plans, and you prepare for the future.

Real love is not just a wonderful feeling that strikes you suddenly. It takes time to grow and develop. Some of the most popular songs in the world of music give the wrong impression that falling in love with someone at first sight is real love. You don’t ‘fall’ into real love, you grow into it. You have to know a person before you can love that person with real love.

It is impossible to truly know someone at first sight and it is likewise impossible to have real love for someone at first sight. You may be attracted to someone at first sight, you may even be ‘turned on’ by someone at first sight, but you cannot genuinely love a person whom you do not really know.

Precious love

Satan does not want you to know and experience true love, which is why he promotes all kinds of false love. He wants you to get involved in sex outside of marriage and he wants to generally mess up your life, so that you think life is not worth living.

God, on the other hand, loves you supremely and desires only what is best for you. He wants you to have precious love, not cheap sex. If it is His will for you to be married, He has just the right person for you. He wants you to have a mate who loves you unselfishly and is committed to you for life. And He likewise wants you to be committed to that person for life and He wants your home to be a little bit of Heaven on earth.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What lessons have YOU learned from YOUR past mistakes?
2. In YOUR own words give an example and describe an infatuation?
3. In YOUR own words give an example and describe what lust is?
4. In YOUR own words give an example and describe how YOU would feel if YOU were sexually attracted to someone?
5. If YOU were in love, how would YOU know?
6. How would YOU show YOUR mate how precious YOUR love for them was?

Next Class: Dating and Non-Sexual Flirting Among Christian Singles

We will discuss: Dating and flirting among Christian singles can be fun, but what does God say? We will look at what is and isn't acceptable especially concerning flirting especially if it's done out of selfishness.

Next Class Preparation

Please read [Luke 6:31](#) / [Philippians 2:3-4](#) / [1 Timothy 5:2](#).

Dating and Non-Sexual Flirting Among Christian Singles

OK this is another area where it can be debatable, but Bible principles should help guard against wrong actions and words. [Dating and flirting among Christian singles can be fun, but what does God say?](#)

[What place should flirting have in the interaction between single Christian men and women? Is it 'ok' with God if Christian singles flirt with each other either in a group setting or in a Christian dating relationship?](#)

It depends on 'Why?' Christians are flirting, and 'How?' Christians are flirting. God says, 'Do not deceive one another', so if you are flirting just to play with someone's emotions, you need to know that, that is wrong, that is sin.

If you are flirting because you have a genuine interest in honestly getting to know a person, maybe that is a good way to begin prior to a Christian dating relationship because let's be honest everyone likes to have others show an interest in them.

Selfishness

[How would you feel if you found out that someone you really liked was just playing with your emotions?](#) Hurt would be the understatement of the year. Believe it or there are people out there who do this kind of thing because they seem to get some kind of excitement from it. Well for those who practice this emotional form of abuse the Bible says,

'Do for others just what you want them to do for you'. Luke 6:31

But 'How?' are Christians flirting? There are two kinds of flirting, sexual and non-sexual flirting.

Sexual flirting should have no place in the interaction between Christian singles. Even if two Christian singles are engaged to be married, in the interest of purity before marriage, sexual flirting should be reserved for when they are actually married. Non-sexual flirting or teasing or saying funny or charming things can be 'ok' as long as it does not get 'out of hand'.

For the more serious types, flirting could be limited to just showing a kind gesture like a woman pulling a piece of fluff off the lapel of a guy's jacket during a normal conversation. A smile, eye contact, getting into a person's personal space, usually talking face to face anywhere within eighteen and six inches away depending upon cultures and the individual.

'Don't do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves. And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own.'
Philippians 2:3-4

Non-sexual flirting should be for the other person's benefit not just your own. It should fit the level of commitment in the relationship. Ok, ok, some people are just more, touchy, feely than others but I'm not talking about a pat on the hand, leaning one's head in toward some other single Christian, looking into their eyes and smiling.

Sexual flirting or being a sexual tease is anything related to or meant to entice or arouse sexual interest or emotions. Non-sexual flirting can be as simple as teasing another single Christian just for the fun of it, as long as it is fun for the both of you, and you actually want to get to know them better.

Christian men and women should never toy with others to be mean or spiteful or overtly sexual. Women, watch how you dress and act, do not lead a brother in Christ into having impure thoughts. All sexual sins begin with thoughts. Men, do not be overly charming, flattering and touching.

'Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.'
1 Timothy 5:2

I have never met brothers and sisters in Christ who didn't enjoy teasing and joking with one another but save the sexual flirting for when you are married, it can keep the relationship alive and interesting way into your old age.

Let me give you some good examples of non-sexual flirting between two Christian singles that fostered an honest friendship between them prior to their official Christian dating relationship and later engagement.

A woman in a singles group at a church, a very sweet, good natured woman named Ruth, once told someone about one of the sweetest, funniest single Christian men she had ever met at church.

The first Sunday morning he came up to her after the singles Sunday school lesson and asked her, 'Hi, I am Dave, what is your name again, I am sorry I forgot?' 'Ruth,' she said returning his toothy smile with her equally toothy smile. 'My name is Ruth. Nice to meet you, Dave.'

'Same here,' said Dave, looking around from side to side as if he had a great big secret to tell her, then he leaned his head in close to Ruth's face. 'Can I tell you something, Ruth?' 'I suppose so,' said Ruth. 'Well, Ruth, there's a book in the Bible named Ruth, but it isn't about you, is it?' Ruth smiled and shrugged her shoulders. She was hooked. She was entertained. She wanted to get to know this Dave character a bit more. 'I mean, I am sure that you are just as godly as the Ruth in the Bible, but she lived an awfully long time ago and you look so young, and healthy and cheerful; and that book just couldn't be written about you.'

The next Sunday there was a 'singles social' at the preacher's house after the Sunday evening service. And yep, there was Dave, marching up to Ruth with a very, very serious look on his face. 'Excuse me, Ruth, could I tell you something a little personal?' said Dave, squinting at Ruth's face. 'Sure,' said Ruth, 'I guess so.' 'Well, Ruth, you see I don't really know how to tell you this, but well... umm, you see, umm, you have something on your face.'

Ruth quickly rubbed her cheeks and chin, and looking at her hand and then at the tip of her pen she said, 'Oh no. Is it ink?' 'No' said Dave. 'No, it is not ink.' Ruth frowned. 'What is it then?' 'Well, Ruth it is, no I better not tell you,' Dave paused, turned to walk away, and then he faced Ruth again when he felt her gentle tug on his arm. 'Well, you see Ruth, what you have on your face is not ink. What you have on your face is actually some of the most beautiful skin that God has ever created.'

Ruth smiled, turning red. Dave leaned toward her and cocked his head to one side. 'And now it is a gorgeous shade of red. And you know what?' 'What?' asked Ruth, now laughing. Ruth was hooked. What was this guy going to say next to make her laugh?

'I've heard your comments during Bible study, Ruth, and I can honestly say that I am certain that your beautiful skin is only a tiny reflection of the beautiful heart God gave you Ruth when you opened the door and let Jesus in. And I really mean it, too. It is so obvious that the Word of God is written on your heart!'

Let's just say that after that light and funny exchange of non-sexual flirting, from that time on, whenever Dave asked Ruth if the seat next to her was taken, she quickly moved her purse and let Dave sit next to her.

And this all took place over two years before starting any kind of an official Christian dating relationship. You see, Dave was not in a hurry. Dave slowly and carefully won Ruth's heart by being himself and making her feel relaxed enough to be herself.

So, what exactly is it about light hearted, non-sexual flirting that seems to break the ice so nice? From a woman's point of view, it is non-threatening/non-serious. Yet women do enjoy attention. They would much rather engage in a bit of flirty bantering and teasing with some Christian guy that they just met or didn't know all that well than have him come up to them all serious and say, 'we need to have a private talk.'

You know the 'talk' that is often way too soon in the relationship, the 'talk' where they tell you that they have loved you since the first moment they saw you at church, or wherever, that they just know that you are 'the one' that God has preordained to be their lifelong partner in Christian marriage and the one to bear all their children, etc.

C'mon Christian men, don't let things get too serious too soon. Christian women tend to need more time. And light hearted non-sexual flirting, in moderation, can make the getting acquainted process all that more fun and interesting and long as you keep it pure and do not overdo it. Keep in mind that God created each of us men and women as unique individuals.

A friend of mine is like a big sister in Christ to many singles at a church, she says that she often has dozens of Christian men, and a few Christian women, come up to her in the Christian singles group asking for advice. She says, over half the men start out by asking, 'do women like to do this or that?' or 'do women like men who do this or that?'

She tells them that they can trust her that she's not a gossip and that she would never do or say anything to embarrass them. Then she asks them which woman they have in mind and she tells them that she is an individual. If you are interested in getting to know her better go, ask her what she likes. Watch and listen to her as she interacts with you and others in the Christian singles group. And only if you are certain that she would like it, start joking or flirting with her in a non-sexual way. It is a great way to break the ice in a non-threatening way.

Face it, though some people just can't take a joke or some light-hearted flirting. There are some Christian men and Christian women who are extremely serious about everything. And that's ok. God makes all kinds of individuals. Sometimes though, opposites do actually attract, and a funny, flirty, outgoing person can really brighten up the life of someone more serious or shy. And vice versa, a serious person can help to tone down a person who is sometimes overly funny, flirty and outgoing.

God judges the heart, so if you flirt before or during a Christian dating relationship, do it with pure motives, show a genuine interest in getting to know the person, and save the sexual-flirting for marriage.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What are **YOUR** thoughts concerning flirting amongst Christians?

2. What dangers can **YOU** see concerning flirting?

3. What are the good things **YOU** can see concerning flirting?

4. How can selfishness damage **YOUR** relationship with **YOUR MATE** and **GOD**?

Next Class: The Perfect Match

We will discuss: When you find the right person, you enter into a different ball game with new dangers and temptations, we will look at those dangers and provide practical ideas so that you can avoid situations which bring added temptation. We shall look at the importance of keeping Christ in the centre of your relationship and remind you that you may be more than friends, but you still need to be less than lovers. I will provide practical ideas to help yourselves stay less than lovers. We will ask the questions; **is it okay for Christians who are dating to kiss?** Along with providing two arguments, one for those in favour and not in favour if kissing and if your still not sure then ask someone within your congregation for help and advice.

Next Class Preparation

Please read **Genesis 2:22-24 / Song of Songs 8:4 / Mark 12:29-23 / 1 Corinthians 10:31 / Proverbs 31:10 / Genesis 45:15 / Acts 20:37 / Romans 16:16 / 1 Corinthians 16:20 / 2 Corinthians 13:12 / 1 Thessalonians 5:26 / 1 Peter 5:14 / Proverbs 6:25 / Ephesians 5:3 / Proverbs 15:22 / Proverbs 12:15 / 1 Peter 2:9 / Ephesians 2:19 / Ephesians 2:22 / Hebrews 10:24 / Jeremiah 17:9 / 1 John 1:8.**

The Perfect Match

In many ways finding the right person is easier than the relationship itself, **why?** Well simply because you both want to glorify God in and through your relationship but with emotions and hormones running at an all-time high you really need to be extra careful not to mess the relationship up because of those feelings and emotions.

‘He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. Then the man said, ‘At last, here is one of my own kind-- Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. ‘Woman’ is her name because she was taken out of man.’ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.’ Genesis 2:22-24

What do you think Adam’s first words were to God when he saw Eve? Wow she is very good! I’m pretty sure that Adam not only said **‘wow’** because Eve was the perfect match but because of her inner and outer beauty.

Danger, Danger! Avoid Situations Which Bring Added Temptation

‘Avoid the passions of youth, and strive for righteousness, faith, love, and peace, together with those who with a pure heart call out to the Lord for help’. 2 Timothy 2:22

Paul told Timothy to flee youthful lusts. Only you know the situations that cause you temptation. We know that good intentions can only go so far, but with Jesus’ help you can have victory over sexual impurity in your life.

‘Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires’. Song of Songs 8:4

Keeping Christ in the Centre

Remembering that Jesus is at the centre of your relationship goes a long way to keeping your relationship pure. After all, even with married couple Jesus is there, when they kiss, Jesus is there, when they make love, Jesus is there. The most important thing we can do when we’re in a relationship is glorify God in and through it.

‘The most important one is this: ‘Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second most important commandment is this: ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself.’ There is no other commandment more important than these two.’ The teacher of the Law said to Jesus, ‘Well done, Teacher! It is true, as you say, that only the Lord is God and that there is no other god but he. And you must love God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength; and you must love your neighbour as you love yourself. It is more important to obey these two commandments than to offer on the altar animals and other sacrifices to God.’ Mark 12:29-33

‘Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for God’s glory’. 1 Corinthians 10:31

‘How hard it is to find a capable wife! She is worth far more than jewels’! Proverbs 31:10

More than Friends but Less than Lovers

When you enter a relationship with the intention of marriage, it’s easy to convince yourself that you’re eventually going to get married anyway, so what you do before marriage is irrelevant, this is not the case. Your brother and sister in Christ and you need to treat them like your brother or sister in Christ, yes you are more than friends but until you get married you need to stay less than lovers.

Whether couples eventually get married or not both couples should always be able to say Paul’s words in **2 Corinthians 1:12**

‘We are proud that our conscience assures us that our lives in this world, and especially our relations with you, have been ruled by God-given frankness and sincerity, by the power of God’s grace and not by human wisdom’.

Rules and Boundaries

To help each other glorify God in your relationship talk to each other about rules and boundaries but also make sure you put them in place and stick to them. This way you both know what to stay clear of. Holding hands maybe ok for some but it may lead your mate on to wanting more. Have boundaries set in place to help each other.

Are there any areas of weakness? Is holding hands ok? Is hugging Ok? Is laying on the settee together ok? Is kissing ok? Talk to each other about what is ok with each other but more importantly listen to each other, try not to compromise your own rules and boundaries.

Sometimes we love the other person so much that we want to demonstrate how much we love them, so we compromise with our rules and boundaries. This can have devastating effects on you both, so be careful not to allow our feelings and emotions to overtake our faith and beliefs in God.

You also need to know in the event of rules and boundaries being broken it's not necessarily the end of the world or your relationship; you can talk about it, pray about it, if appropriate ask God for forgiveness, and try not to let it happen again.

I know of one couple who were talking about rules and boundaries but never got around to putting them in place. The guy says well I'm happy doing anything except having sexual relations. The woman said well I'm happy with hugging, holding hands but I don't want to kiss as she knew this could lead on to other things. The guy didn't listen to what she said and after a few weeks she broke her boundaries and they both got into all sorts of emotional problems. Guilt, shame etc.

Remember saying 'NO' to something doesn't mean you don't love them, in fact I would argue that if a person says 'NO' to something it's because they love you so much that they don't want to hurt you or the relationship in any way.

In today's society if a woman offers herself to man for sexual relations and the man says 'NO,' most of society would come to the conclusion that he doesn't 'love' her or he has something wrong with him. I would say he is demonstrating just how much he really does not only love her but respects her as a person and wants to save that special moment for his marriage.

Is It Okay For Christians Who Are Dating To Kiss?

What is a kiss? This is a touch with the lips to show affection or as a greeting. There is nothing bad in this provided the devil will not take advantage of it against the people dating. There is a psychology that comes between two people of the opposite sex, when they are too intimate especially when they kiss each other.

In the Western world, kissing may possibly be done in good faith according to the above definition. However, even in that setting the devil has been taking advantage of it there. Give the devil a foot; he will go a mile to destroy you and your testimony. **Ephesians 4:27**. Below are the arguments for and against kissing in a relationship but if you read closely you will find that they both argue the same point.

In Favour Of Kissing

The Bible does not really tell if it is okay for Christians who are dating to kiss. Some people don't have any problems with kissing when you are dating someone you would like to marry but others do. However, kissing could lead to some situations that could be embarrassing to Christians.

Now not all forms of kissing, even before marriage are wrong. There are plenty of examples in the Bible of kissing, **Genesis 45:15** and **Acts 20:37**, that's kissing people other than their own spouse. Additionally, the Bible commands Christians to 'Greet each other with a holy kiss of love.' **Romans 16:16 / 1 Corinthians 16:20 / 2 Corinthians 13:12 / 1 Thessalonians 5:26 / 1 Peter 5:14**.

Should Christians kiss while dating? Well I read another survey conducted by Christians and here are the results. Out of 271 poll respondents, 134 said kissing is acceptable while dating, while 71 said it was not acceptable and 66 were unsure. Many of those who said kissing is acceptable added that it should be disciplined, and the couple should discuss guidelines early on in the relationship and make a commitment to not cross those boundaries. Those are wise words.

Not In Favour Of Kissing

When one is dating, there is the likelihood that there will be too much closeness. If we are really Christians that 'have been translated into the Kingdom of His Dear Son', **Colossians 1:13**, we should leave kissing with the people in the world. The people in the world that are dating may do so. The devil may graduate from lusting into sinning which can ruin/destroy our life. It can also ruin our testimony.

It is not OK for those dating to kiss because you are not yet in holy matrimony. When you kiss yourselves while dating, the devil can take advantage of it.

Even if you are not dating and you kiss yourselves with an ulterior motive, you have sinned. Check your motive. **Is it of God?** If it is not of God, refrain. The devil is cleverer than you are. He may get you into his kingdom if you are not careful.

‘But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God's holy people.’ Ephesians 5:3

Anything that even **‘hints’** of sexual immorality is inappropriate for a Christian. The Bible does not give us a list of what qualifies as a **‘hint’** or tell us what physical activities are approved for a couple to engage in before marriage.

However, just because the Bible does not specifically address the issue does not mean God approves of **‘pre-sexual’** activity before marriage. By essence, foreplay is designed to get one ready for sex. Logically then, foreplay should be restricted to married couples. Anything that can be considered foreplay should be avoided until marriage.

So, there you go, two different arguments, one in favour of kissing but with warnings attached and the other with saying not to kiss because it may lead to something else. There are some things we need to make our own minds up about and this could be one of them. please bear in mind there’s a huge difference between a kiss on the cheek and a full-on snog! You may be able to handle that snog, but your partner may not. There is something to be said about **‘prevention is better than cure’**. I believe that everything is a matter of the heart.

‘Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captive you with her eyes’. Proverbs 6:25

Find Someone You Can Trust To Talk To

Sometimes when you’re or both of you are not sure about something it’s good to talk to a mature member of your congregation not only for advice but also to ask if you should continue doing something you’re not sure about. The Scriptures tell us we should confess our faults to one another.

‘So then, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you will be healed’. James 5:16

Sharing our sins, if what you are doing is sinful, and struggles in a safe group setting helps the healing process and causes spiritual growth.

‘Stupid people always think they are right. Wise people listen to advice’. Proverbs 12:15

‘Get all the advice you can, and you will succeed; without it you will fail’. Proverbs 15:22

Church Involvement

We need to remember that we are blessed with a spiritual family to help us with everything we may face within our Christian lives. Being in a relationship is no exception, if you or your relationship needs help, then ask someone you trust. Below are some Scriptures to remind you that your part of a holy family who love you and want the best for you and want to spare you the misery of dealing with guilt and shame.

1. Church family reminds us of reality.
2. Church family provides protection.
3. Church family provides accountability.

‘But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people to be his very own and to proclaim the wonderful deeds of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light’. 1 Peter 2:9

‘So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now citizens together with God's people and members of the family of God’. Ephesians 2:19

‘In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit’. Ephesians 2:22

‘Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer’. Hebrews 10:24

‘Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed’. Jeremiah 17:9

‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us’. 1 John 1:8

Communicate

‘A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion’. Proverbs 18:2

It’s so important to listen to each other instead of just what you think is happening within the relationship. Good, clear and honest communication is vital in any relationship.

‘An honest answer is a sign of true friendship’. Proverbs 24:26

‘Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your desires for pleasure, which are constantly fighting within you. You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill; you strongly desire things, but you cannot get them, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it.’ James 4:1+2

Talk to each other about how you’re feeling about the relationship. **Are you happy within the relationship?** Tell each other why you’re happy. **Is the relationship making you sad?** If so, in what way, again talk to each other about how you feel the relationship is making you sad.

If you need to end the relationship, then end it, don’t prolong it if your heart isn’t really in it. I know you will break the other person’s heart but surely the short-term pain is worth the long-term happiness. **Would you like it if you were in a relationship with someone whose heart wasn’t in it fully for the long term?**

Top Ten Communication Tips

1. Learn to express your feelings and frustrations honestly but without accusing or attacking the other person.

‘You can be ruined by the talk of godless people, but the wisdom of the righteous can save you’. Proverbs 11:9

2. Choose words, expressions and a tone of voice that are kind and gentle. Don’t use speech that could easily offend or spark an argument.

‘A gentle answer quiets anger, but a harsh one stirs it up’. Proverbs 15:1

3. Don’t exaggerate, distort or stretch the truth. Avoid extreme words like ‘never’ and ‘always’.

‘No more lying, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ’. Ephesians 4:25

4. Give actual and specific examples. If necessary, make notes before you communicate. Stay away from generalities.

5. Commit yourself to seeking solutions instead of airing your grievances. Getting even isn’t the goal; you want to get things resolved.

‘If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God’s anger do it. For the scripture says, ‘I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord.’ Instead, as the scripture says: ‘If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame.’ Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.’ Romans 12:17-21

6. Listen to what the other person is saying, feeling and needing. Try to detect his or her underlying concerns.

‘Remember this, my dear friends! Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry’. James 1:19

7. Refuse to indulge bitterness, anger, withdrawal or arguments. Though these emotions are normal, indulging them is sin.

‘If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day.’ Ephesians 4:26

8. Don't hesitate to acknowledge your own failure and be quick to forgive the other person. Make sure you don't hold a grudge.

'So, watch what you do!' If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in one day, and each time he comes to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him.' Luke 17:3-4

9. Keep talking and asking questions until you are sure that both understand clearly what the other is saying and feeling. Encourage each other as you press toward a solution.

'So then, we must always aim at those things that bring peace and that help strengthen one another'. Romans 14:19

10. Train your mouth and heart until you can say the right thing, at the right time, in the right way and for the right reasons.

Allow Each Other To Fulfil Your Godly Roles

Sometimes when we enter into a relationship, we end up being so obsessed with each other we forget about our duties as Christians and in some cases, we lose our identities. Yes, couples need to work together in glorifying God but remember that all relationships need breathing space to do the things God called us to do as individuals.

'So, God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female.' Genesis 1:27

'Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.'
Genesis 2:18

Men

1. Assume the responsibility of leading and initiating in your relationships with women.
2. Be a spiritual leader in your relationship with women.
3. Do little things in your relationship with women that communicate your care, respect and desire to protect.
4. Encourage women to embrace godly femininity.

Women

1. In your relationships with godly men, encourage and make room for them to practice servant leadership.
2. Be a sister to the men in your life.
3. Cultivate the attitude that motherhood is a noble and fulfilling calling.

'In the same way instruct the older women to behave as women should who live a holy life. They must not be slanderers or slaves to wine.' Titus 2:3

4. Cultivate godliness and inward beauty in your life.

'They will keep you away from other men's wives, from women with seductive words.' Proverbs 7:5

'You should not use outward aids to make yourselves beautiful, such as the way you fix your hair, or the jewellery you put on, or the dresses you wear. Instead, your beauty should consist of your true inner self, the ageless beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of the greatest value in God's sight.' 1 Peter 3:3-4

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. What areas or topics would YOU struggle to communicate to your partner in a relationship?
2. Do YOU understand the role differences between a man and woman?
3. Do YOU understand the role of a woman in a relationship?
4. Do YOU understand the role as a man in a relationship?
5. What dangers can YOU see if both roles were not encouraged by each other?
6. What benefits can YOU see if both roles were encouraged by each other?

Conclusion

I hope and pray that this small series on 'Practical Singleness' has been of some benefit to you. Maybe you got answers to some questions, maybe you've changed your thinking on some of the topics we've looked at or maybe you've had your own beliefs enforced through this study.

I hope and pray if you decide you stay single, you will use your singleness wisely, if you decide to enter a relationship, I hope and pray that you choose wisely and allow God to bring someone to you. But most of all have fun and enjoy your relationship whether you stay single or enter into a relationship with someone, I hope and pray that you always keep Jesus at the centre of your life.

I realise that some Christians may have already sinned in their relationship with someone else and feel lost and helpless because they haven't spoken to anyone about it. Well, remember you may have sinned but you don't need to lose your salvation over it. Remember the words of John and speak to God about it first,

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'
1 John 1:9

God bless you as you strive to live a life which pleases Him.

Your First Thoughts

Please write down your own thoughts on this part of the lesson whilst they are fresh in your mind.

Evaluation Questions

These questions are designed to help you think through the topic discussed so that you may have a true view of yourself.

1. Why is communication so important in a relationship?
2. Why is it important that YOU fulfil role as a man/woman?
3. Why is it important for YOU to allow YOUR mate to fulfil their role as a man/woman?
4. Do YOU feel YOU'RE ready to enter a relationship?