

SINGLENES

HOW TO BE SINGLE & SATISFIED



June Hunt



HOPE
for the Heart

SINGLENESS

How to Be Single & Satisfied

JUNE HUNT



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Singleness: How to Be Single & Satisfied

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Dear Single Friend,

I can't begin to count the times I've been asked, "Why are you *still* single?"

Over the years, one of my stock answers has been, "I don't think of myself as 'being single'—I'm just an unclaimed blessing!" (My light-hearted response always brings a smile!)

Actually, I've recognized that some married folks have felt uncomfortable with my unmarried status. They've made comments like, "Bless your heart. I'm so sorry you don't have a husband. One day, Mr. Right will come along and complete you."

The problem with this mind-set is its implication: I'm not a *whole* person. I'm merely a fraction. I'm half a person. I have to have a mate to make me "whole."


Well, I waited for Mr. Right to appear at my doorstep ... but he never showed up! Now let's get real: I am "one" person and *one is a whole number!* I don't need anyone to complete me, because the Bible says I am "*complete in Him [Christ]*" (Colossians 2:10 NKJV).

So many singles obsess over what they think they are missing. However, I remember reading about a "spinster" named Harriet Hartbyrne who died at age 87. In her last will and testament, she said, "I don't want anybody to put 'Miss' on my tombstone. I haven't missed as much as some people think!"

The fact is, Jesus was single—and He didn't need someone to complete Him. The apostle Paul was single—and he didn't need someone to complete him. Regardless of your marital status—you don't need someone to complete you.

When you realize this truth, then for whatever time you are single, your sovereign God plans to use you as a single person in a positive way according to His plan. Englishman Charles Haddon Spurgeon—the most renowned theologian of the 19th century—once said, “Had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you find yourself, divine love would have placed you there.” By embracing this truth, you too can be *single and satisfied*.

Yours in the Lord's hope,



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SINGLENES

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He goes to weddings—always as a guest, never as the groom. He takes gifts to the bride and groom, but has not been gifted with a bride of his own. Some of his friends have established careers and nice homes. He, on the other hand, owns no home and is just beginning a new career with meager finances. When visiting his married friends, he holds their children and spends time with them. They are drawn to him, though he has no children of his own.

He is a virile man with natural sexual desires, a man who experiences true temptation. He is a man of spiritual commitment that keeps him from sexual involvement outside of marriage.

He is regarded by some in his community as different—a misfit, not conforming to society's norm. However, he is intelligent, verbally gifted, and more than able to hold his own in community debates. He is not afraid to express his thoughts and feelings publicly, not ashamed to shed a tear among friends.

He is a content, confident man who knows who he is and what he wants, yet he does experience times of intense loneliness and longing. Typically, he is not thought of in this way, but this single man's name is Jesus—Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God.



DEFINITIONS

Although certain sects within Judaism encouraged remaining unmarried in order to foster devotion to God, it was certainly not typical behavior in the culture into which Jesus was born more than 2,000 years ago. Yet He was not the only one who, for whatever reason, was unmarried and yet lived a fulfilled and productive life. The single life is a *special life* that offers *special opportunities* and has *special meaning* for those who choose it—or for those who choose to accept their unmarried state with contentment. As the apostle Paul said about his singleness ...

**“I wish that all men were as I am.
But each man has his own gift from God;
one has this gift, another has that.”
(1 Corinthians 7:7)**

WHAT DOES It Mean to Be Single?

Single, successful, and satisfied. Lydia is a prominent businesswoman—her customers value her fabrics, specifically the ones with rich purple hues. And because she is totally devoted to God, she regularly goes to a place of prayer on a riverbank outside the city. One day at that special place, her life is changed forever.

On this day her routine is interrupted by the appearance of two men. As they share the story of Jesus—presenting Him as the long-awaited Messiah—Lydia’s heart responds to their message, and she receives Jesus as her Lord and Savior. That very day she is baptized, along with other members of her family.

Lydia then invites these two guests to stay in her home, and they do. This is the first of many visits.

In fact, on one occasion these two influential men—Paul and Silas—are imprisoned for their faith. Upon their release, they meet with other believers at Lydia’s house, the location of the first church in Philippi. Lydia epitomizes the heart and focus of the single woman that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 7:34. She is *“concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit.”*

- ▶ **Single** means “a separate, unique whole”—an unbroken, undivided individual.¹
- ▶ **Single** suggests being exclusively attentive:
 - “single-minded” as having one aim or purpose
 - “single-hearted” as having sincerity of heart and purpose or being honest and straightforward
 - “single handed” as having performed a task alone or unassisted²
- ▶ **Single** comes from the Latin word *singulus*, which means “one only.”

**“The entire law is summed up
in a single command: ‘Love your
neighbor as yourself.’”
(Galatians 5:14)**

WHAT IS Singleness?

Anna had been graced by the Spirit of God to be a prophetess for Israel. After only seven years of marriage, Anna’s husband died. She then devoted the rest of her years to serving the Lord and lived to be at least 84 years old. What an excellent use of her singleness! The crowning moment of her life occurred as she witnessed the presentation of the infant Jesus at the temple. At that moment, she praised God and proclaimed to all that He was, indeed, the long-awaited Messiah.

**“Coming up to them at that very moment,
she gave thanks to God and spoke about
the child to all who were looking forward
to the redemption of Jerusalem.”
(Luke 2:38)**

► **Singleness** is the state of any man or woman of marriageable age who is not married. The Bible speaks of Philip the evangelist with “*four unmarried daughters*” who had the gift of prophecy.

“He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.” (Acts 21:9)

- ▶ **Single**, which refers to the state of being “unmarried or unwed,”³ is a translation of the Greek word *agamos*. This word is used four times in 1 Corinthians 7, primarily to encourage the unmarried to remain unmarried.
- ▶ **Singleness** is a term that includes three categories of single adults, each with unique areas of concern, but all with similar challenges:
 1. **Single for All Seasons**—Adults who never marry
 2. **Single for a Season**—Adults who will marry sometime in the future
 3. **Single Again**
 - ▶ The widowed whose mates have died
 - ▶ The divorced whose marriage contracts are terminated
 - ▶ The separated who are technically married, but not living with their mates because one is ...
 - away serving in the military
 - away because of serving time in prison
 - away because of out-of-town employment
 - away because of desertion, abuse, or unresolved conflicts

**“May the LORD keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other.”
(Genesis 31:49)**

Although single people are unmarried for various reasons, how they respond to their single state is all important. Some singles, like Anna, who was widowed at a young age, choose to remain single and give their lives to serving the Lord, while other singles choose to remarry—with God’s blessing. The apostle Paul makes this statement,

**“To the unmarried and the widows
I say: It is good for them
to stay unmarried, as I am.”
(1 Corinthians 7:8)**

WHAT ARE Myths about Singleness?

Myths about singleness abound, and the assumption is often that those who are single are “second class.” But look at the extraordinary life of John the Baptist. The Bible never mentions the marital status of John the Baptist. However, his ascetic lifestyle indicates a life of singleness. His calling from God requires him to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. As a result, he calls a nation to repentance, stands against evil kings, and dies a martyr’s death. Jesus Himself proclaimed,

**“I tell you, among those born of women
there is no one greater than John.”
(Luke 7:28)**

Myth of the Never Married

- ▶ **Myth:** “God’s *best* is marriage. Singleness is *second best*.”

Truth: According to Scripture, marriage is best for those God calls to be married, and singleness is best for those God calls to be single. Singleness is referred to as the best state for having undivided devotion to the Lord.

“Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. ... I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:27, 35)

Myth of the Separated

- ▶ **Myth:** “Living in limbo is terrible. *Any* decision is better than *no* decision.”

Truth: God wants us to learn to be content in any state and to patiently wait on His timing.

“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.” (Philippians 4:11)

Myth of the Divorced

- ▶ **Myth:** “All you need is another mate. Then you will find fulfillment again.”

Truth: Contentment and fulfillment are found in relationship with the Lord, who is always with you.

“Be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” (Hebrews 13:5)

Myth of the Widowed

▶ **Myth:** “After your mate dies, you are left incomplete and unfulfilled.”

Truth: You will grieve the loss of your spouse deeply, but as a Christian, you are given complete fullness in Christ, whether married or single.

“You are complete in Him [Christ].”
(Colossians 2:10 NKJV)

Myth of the State of Singleness

▶ **Myth:** “Since God uses the family to build character, you will never become mature if you remain unmarried.”²⁴

Truth: Your marital state does not determine the degree of your maturity. When you become a believer, God takes the responsibility to bring you to maturity.

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.” (Philippians 1:6)



CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO ARE SINGLE

Elijah is one of the most powerful prophets of the Old Testament, but at one point he finds himself on the run from a powerful queen. Elijah is single and has single-handedly won a showdown with 450 false prophets on Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal wait for hours for their god to send fire from on high, but to no avail. Then Elijah voices a short, two-sentence prayer to the only true God, who responds by raining down fire from heaven.

Elijah then rids the land of every false prophet. For that, the evil Queen Jezebel vows to take vengeance upon him before another day passes. With a death contract over his head, Elijah runs for his life. Exhausted, he arrives in the Negev Desert and desires to die. *“I have had enough, LORD. ... Take my life”* (1 Kings 19:4).

Imagine: here is victorious Elijah—despondent, discouraged, depressed—and in absolute despair. But God Himself ministers to Elijah, providing food and drink through the angel of the Lord. Still continuing to run away, Elijah then travels 40 days and 40 nights until he reaches Mount Horeb. There, Elijah has another encounter with the living God and laments that he is totally alone: *“The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken*