

*designed
to flourish*

GENDER IDENTITY IN LIGHT OF GOSPEL IDENTITY

STUDY
GUIDE

WEEK 7: SINGLENES

1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-9, 32-35

No one has ever lived a more fully human life than Jesus. And contrary to what the non-canonical Gospel of Jesus' Wife would have you believe, Jesus was single.

The Apostle Paul was the greatest missionary who ever lived and penned one third of the New Testament. He encouraged Christians to remain as he was — single — unless the urges of sexual passion were too great (1 Cor. 7:7-9).

While marriage and singleness can both portray the gospel in different ways, singleness presents its own unique set of challenges (including but not exhaustively):

- Singleness is a gift from God that some possess (1 Cor. 7:7) and yet others are single due to circumstance, not desire or giftedness.
- Singleness can be lonely for those who are surrounded by couples and families.
- Sexual purity (chastity) can be particularly challenging in the midst of our over-sexualized age without a marriage partner to experience healthy sexual intimacy with.

And yet, in light of the sufficiency of Jesus, singleness is included in God's design for human flourishing.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 7:32-34a

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. ³³But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, ³⁴and his interest are divided.

BIBLE READING PLAN

MONDAY

MATTHEW 22:23-33

TUESDAY

HEBREWS 4:14-16

WEDNESDAY

HEBREWS 10:19-25

THURSDAY

REVELATION 19:6-10

FRIDAY

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-11

SATURDAY

1 CORINTHIANS 7:25-35

POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

1. Ice Breaker: What are our culture's general perceptions of single adults?

2. Read Matthew 22:23-33. The way Jesus responds to the question implies that the present institution of marriage won't continue in heaven. If human marriage represents the grand story of the Bible (redeeming and gathering a people in union with Christ), how does singleness both anticipate and testify to the grand marriage that earthly marriages represent?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 7:6-9 and 32-35.

4. Ed Shaw, in his book on the plausibility of the celibate life, shows that abstaining from sex is possible because it's a shadow of what we'll be given in the age to come (Rev. 21:1-5). How have we failed to put sex in its proper place as a secondary joy to the deepest joy found in Jesus?

5. In *The Meaning of Marriage* Tim and Kathy Keller write, "The modern sexual revolution finds the idea of abstinence from sex till marriage to be so unrealistic as to be ludicrous... But the Bible does not counsel sexual abstinence before marriage because it

has such a low view of sex but because it has such a lofty one. The Biblical view implies that sex outside of marriage is not just morally wrong but also personally harmful. If sex is designed to be part of making a covenant and experiencing that covenant's renewal, then we should think of sex as an emotional "commitment apparatus (p.259).” In what ways has God's view of sex (He's the one who made it after all) proven to be healthy, satisfying, and the way in which to be enjoyed. In what ways has it actually been our modern sexual age that has had the ludicrous view of sex?

6. Why is the local church better for having the involvement of singles in all areas of ministry?

7. How can the church family be sensitive to and respond lovingly to the singles among us and the unique challenges they experience?

