

Hope for the Family Singleness

When we think of the word “family” the image which often pops to mind is a husband, a wife, a couple of kids and a dog. But our church family includes lots of people who don’t fit in that picture.

43% of all Americans over the age of 18 are single.

Of those...

61% have never been married.

24% are divorced.

15% are widowed.

Is it wrong for me to want to be married?

We were created in the image of God as relational beings.

Marriage does not destroy loneliness.

To grieve your singleness is not grounds for guilt.

If I accept my singleness, will God stick me with it forever?

God does not ask you to accept the rest of your life now.

Affirmation: I will not wait until I get married for my life to start.

How do I accept this day as a single person in our society?

Jesus is our model.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:15

Declare a value: I will commit myself to sexual purity.

Accept a truth: If you have a past of sexual brokenness or deep regret...Jesus still forgives.

Jesus created a safe community for friendship and closeness.

Scripture: Luke 8:1-3

Is it wrong to get involved in something because I want to get married?

Of course not but don't let this be your only relational goal.

Will my desire for intimacy ever be fully satisfied?

Scripture: Luke 20:34-35

The missed intimacy we long for will be a distant memory in heaven.

Every human being will know what it is like to be chosen and wanted by God.

So What?

God has chosen you!

How have you responded?

The Teacher Today

The teaching today was recorded when John Ortberg was on teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago. He is the best selling author of books such as: *The Life You've Always Wanted; Everybody's Normal Until You Get to Know Them; If You Want To Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat & When the Game is Over It All Goes Back in the Box*. He is currently the pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California.

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Want to hear this again?

The sermon is posted on the church web site by Monday evening.

www.heritageqc.com Hit "**Watch sermon on-line**"

For Further Consideration: Resources for Reflection & Growth

You are either married or single (never married, divorced, widowed). How often do you consider what life is like for people in the category you are not? How often do you think of their struggles?

John Ortberg said, "We were created in the image of God as relational beings." Relationship is important but just being around other people doesn't guarantee a great relationship.

- Make a list of characteristics, actions, attitudes and approaches to life which are needed for great relationships to happen. (Group leaders: after you have gone around your circle and made the list, do it again. Dig a little deeper.)
- Make a list of personal characteristics, etc. which might get in the way of great relationship. (Again, spend enough time to dig deeper.)
- Look at those lists again. Pick one specific area of improvement for your life. What would you have to do differently to get better in that area? How hard would it be? Why do you think God would consider the effort worth it?

Ortberg challenged single people to say, "I will not wait until I get married for my life to start." What do you think he meant by that?

It's not uncommon for us to get caught in that approach to life. "I'm in college now; after I graduate I will..." "After I retire I will..." Why do you think we tend to delay accepting responsibility for the now of life? Is there any current reality of life which you are using as an excuse to delay obedience with God or engagement with life?

About half way through the message, Ortberg said, "Jesus created a safe community for friendship and closeness with both men and women which was unprecedented in his day."

In our world, married people tend to hang out with other married people and single people tend to hang out with other single people. Why do you think that happens? What might some of the advantages be if you figured out a way to be more inclusive in your relationships? What do you think your group could do to intentionally bridge the gap? What differences, challenges and dangers might you need to be aware of?

Consider these words from A. W. Tozer regarding intimacy with God. What do you need to change in your life in order to hunger like this?

O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need for further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, 'Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.' Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long."