



Week One: Living Single – Study Guide

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The “normal” life—what is it exactly? What does it look and feel like? Would I even want it if I had it? It seems to be out there somewhere, or everyone is searching anyway. How does it play out if I am by myself? This week we are searching for answers and insight to questions that most people ask at some point in their lives. Fortunately, Jesus experienced it as well. This week it’s all about living single.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Living single is a part of life that we all experience at one point, and even if we later transition into married life, we can still remember distinctly. If you are single, how would you describe your day-to-day life? If you are not currently single, what do you remember about everyday life as a single?

- 2) A few years ago, I helped develop a unique meeting forum for singles called *One Life*. What I quickly realized in the planning stages was the difficulty of trying to categorize singles down to a particular stage of life or commonality. Male or female was the only easy part! How hard could it be? It’s just “single,” right? Nothing could have been further from the truth. Do you remember being just out of high school, or in your early college age years? My friends and I didn’t see each other as single, just as

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“normal” people. It wasn’t until my early to mid-twenties, when my career was starting, that this distinction of married verses single became part of how I viewed relationships. Actually, if someone would have asked me back then if I was single, I would have initially thought they were asking if I was dating anyone! Both of these stages of life were vastly different from each other. And I haven’t even begun to talk about how these two groups differ from being “single again” as a result of either divorce, or a spouse who has passed away. Not to mention the challenges of being single with children! Did you realize how much diversity there was to single life? When looking at your life as a single, how many different distinct stages would you say you have experienced?

- 3) Do you feel that living a single life is an advantage or a disadvantage? Why or why not? How much do you feel society’s standards and expectations weigh in on your answer?

Into the Bible

- 4) Arguments can be made for advantages and disadvantages of single life. One of our New Testament authors gave a very strong opinion about this to the church at Corinth. **Read 1 Corinthians 7:6-9; 25-35.**

What was Paul was trying to say in general about single life? Why do you feel he stated what he did in verses 6 and 25? Do you feel it would be easier to follow God unmarried?

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- 5) I discovered an ironic shift in my personal life when I went from single to married. While single, I wanted stuff to do, and when I wasn't doing stuff, I was trying to find other stuff to do. However, when married, I had the challenge of making more time to do less. The entire meaning behind this irony I'm not completely sure about, but it does make me think of how my priorities and contentment fluctuated. Taking a look at this passage in Luke has me even wondering to what degree any of it had to do with marital status, and that maybe it had more to do with personal choices. **Read Luke 10:38-42.**

Do you see priority differences in the single lives of Mary and Martha? Describe what you think about the "choice" Jesus states in verse 42. Elaborate more on the different paths single living can take us.

How Does This Apply?

- 6) Have you ever watched *Family Feud*? "With the top five answers on the board, survey says..." If the answers were 1-Purity, 2-Loneliness, 3-Contentment, 4-Security, and 5-Fulfillment, what do you suspect was the question asked?
- 7) The temptation of writing a study on single living is to make it all about the potential sins you can experience in single life. Pages and pages could be written on the challenges of sexual purity, being lonely on a daily basis, contentment with the things and situations in life, fear of providing a good and secure living, or feeling like fulfillment comes from children and a spouse. Before long we can begin to ask ourselves, "Is this only speaking to the challenges of single living, or life in general?" **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.** What does this verse speak of, regarding married or single life?

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- 8) Family, it's a necessity. The need for close family is something that is in all of us. We can learn to push it away, but God desires family. If I remain single, who will be my close family? **Read Mark 3:31-35.**

Who does Jesus say His family is? Do you feel as singles we can experience fulfillment relationally? **Read Galatians 3:26 and John 15:15.** What do you notice about relationship in these verses?

- 9) How many I's are there in single? One, you got it. The number of I's or me's that I remember verbalizing to describe my life as a single was countless. It's all about me! I'm not sure that I became any less selfish when I got married, but I did have to include another person in my daily decisions. Do you think selfishness is a natural byproduct of single living? Why or why not? How does being involved with serving at a local church, being connected with other Christ followers in ministry on a regular basis, and having close friendships help?

Current Prayer Focus

What we're praying for together as a church:

- Celebrate decisions for Christ, especially those names that were on the wall or board at your campus.
- Celebrate the two salvations and 164 in attendance in Neighborhood Campuses last week.
- Celebrate the funding God is providing for the Statesville Campus building.

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Increase Your Learning on Your Own

10) If you want to stay single, don't marry a spouse; and if you want to stay free, don't marry methods. A rule, a principle, and a method are vastly different concepts that need clarity as we try to live out the Bible. A rule can be good for a season, but outdated later on; a method can be a useful practical application for a time so as to help you keep to a standard, but it may not always be the best solution. However, God's principles are uniquely stable, never changing. So what do I mean by the statement "Don't marry methods"? Let's take a look at Ephesians, Galatians, and Acts for insight. **Read Ephesians 6:5-9.**

Does God love human slavery? Why does Paul not tell the slaves to rise up and start a revolt against slavery? Why does Paul not tell the masters to stop their cruelty to humanity and set the people free? What is the **method** of advice in this passage? What is the **principle**? Can you see how the actual obeying as a slave would not be experienced by all generations? What would apply to all generations?

Read Acts 16:1-5 and Galatians 2:1-5.

Why does Paul ask Timothy to get circumcised? Why does he not insist Titus do the same? Do you see how Paul does not marry this **method** of circumcision, which coincidentally enough was even a rule at one time? What was the **principle**? When thinking of Paul's opinions on not getting married, do you see it more as method or God's principle?