



Singleness Is Not a Curse

It's a gift — if you're willing to unwrap it



By Sister Michelle Watson

Singleness has a very bad rap. In the world, people think being single means you're undesirable, so people scramble for significant others in order to feel secure. Even in Christian circles, so many leaders are pumping up the "gift of singleness" some young people wonder if the purpose of the gimmicky euphemism is to cover up the fact that singleness is, in fact, *really bad*.

If you're in your mid-20s and single, are you doomed to long, lonely hours doing jigsaw puzzles and watching Hallmark movies eating canned tuna? I pray that your singleness is *much* more vibrant than that. It can be, and God wants it to be!

Unwrapping the Gift

For those of you who aren't familiar with the concept of the "gift

of singleness," let me bring you up to speed. For years, people thought that the period of time between high school and marriage was a kind of "waiting room" where people sat until they got hitched (and life truly started).

Not anymore!

These days, young people — especially Christians — are encouraged to view this period of singleness as a *gift* from God. It's a period in life when you've got a ton of time on your hands — and you don't want to waste it. It's time that should be spent cultivating a relationship with God, developing personal talents, and discovering your true self (who you are, what you want).

In essence, this is the time of life when you morph from a wooden puppet into a real boy. And once you

do, you're often more prepared to handle the demands of a marriage relationship.

Ephesians 5:15-17 basically says that we should walk wisely, not wasting our time. We should "redeem the time" because it's limited. To do that, we have to understand what the will of the Lord is for us. God's will isn't that we schlep around till we hear wedding bells. He wants us to use our single years to become the best people we can be.

So, singleness is a gift from God.

I know a lot of you are thinking, "Right. A gift. I get it ... I still want a girlfriend."

Hold your horses, ranger. Let me see if I can't convince you that the "gift" thing isn't just hype.

Fall for Your First Love

Before the moon hits your eye and amore drops on your doorstep, you have to fall in love with someone else first. Who?

Jesus, of course. He's described several times in the scripture as a person's first love (Revelation 2:4, 1 John 4:19). If you look forward to loving your spouse, let Jesus teach you how it's done.

When you develop a personal relationship with Christ (you read, pray, fast, worship, fellowship, and serve) he teaches you how to love in the no-strings-attached way that everyone craves in romantic relationships. Marital preparedness is a byproduct of a life devoted to Christ.

Now, I'm not saying that you use the Lord as a means to an end. "If I love God, he'll give me a husband." It doesn't work that way. But you have to realize that there's no better time than *now* to seek the Lord. Trust me, married life is busier than single life with *very few exceptions*. If you use this time to grow some spiritual roots, you'll be able to stand strong to support your spouse when the time comes.

So, let me ask you, Are you in love with the Lord? How in love? Is your relationship with Jesus a higher priority than your relationships with the opposite sex? Does the way you spend your time reflect Christ's importance to you?

Become Who You Want to Be

Some people don't fully know who they are. Their identity is wrapped up in other people or pursuits. They waffle, go along with the crowd, and look to others when making decisions. It's classic runaway bride syndrome. You don't want this for your life. Use your single years to

develop a strong sense of self — spiritual identity.

First, decide what *you* like, what interests *you*, what motivates *you*. Decide where you stand on important issues. Make sure you include God in the equation. Discover yourself based on his plans for you.

Second, use this time to grow your talents and skills. Take some of the time that you devote to personal entertainment and put it toward personal development. Choose to learn things that will make you an asset to the Church. Here are some ideas:

- Be a leader among the young people; mentor the younger ones
- Study scripture like it's going out of style; be a scholar of the restoration
- Get really good at visiting the elderly and sick
- Learn another language
- Learn a musical instrument
- Travel; experience other cultures

Other skills that you should try to learn now are basic life skills. If you don't know how to do laundry, cook, clean, or pay bills, now's the time to learn. You'll have to do all these things for yourself after marriage, so practice now. Your future spouse will thank you.

So, let me ask you, Do you know who you are? Can you describe yourself in under 30 seconds? Are you using your time to learn skills that will impact your future? What are those skills?

Make Your Single Years Strong

At the end of your single years, what do you want to leave in your wake? A lot of time spent pining over relationships that never materialized or time spent honing talents that will stay with you for a lifetime? Do you

want a path littered with a string of failed relationships or a ton of spiritual fruit?

I urge you — for your sake, for your future spouse, for the Lord — redeem your singleness! Don't be victimized by it. Grab hold with both hands and a prayer, and hit the accelerator.

God wants to use you *now*! Don't get so caught up in relationships that you miss opportunities for growth that are right in front of you. God wants to use this time to transform you. Let him. When you trust him enough to focus on him, he'll provide your every need.

But I've Done That!

Some of you will read this article and say, "I've been doing this for a long time and it hasn't worked for me." Maybe you've totally embraced your singleness and it's been a few years and you're still saying, "Table for one, please." It hurts. Truly.

You have it harder than the others who find spouses right away — nobody's arguing with you. But don't let the enemy trick you into wasting your time on a pity party when God wants to strengthen you and stretch your faith.

My advice to you? Just. Let. Go. What does that mean? Make God (not marriage) your top priority in your heart, and let your actions reflect it. Pray that God gives you the strength for this because it requires a paradigm shift. Give it a try and see if it brings you increased peace and understanding.

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