

A Simple Truth About Being Single – February 9-10, 2019
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Matthew 19:1-12

- Set the scene of this story (1-2). Describe the Pharisees' motive and question (3). Summarize Jesus' response, rooted in Genesis 2 (4-6). What follow-up question did the Pharisees then ask (7)? Why do you think they were so determined to trip Jesus up?
- Why did Moses permit divorce (8)? What is Jesus' threshold for divorce (9)? How did the disciples initially respond to this declaration (10)? How does your own initial response compare?
- In verse 11, what did Jesus say? Does he agree with the disciples – that marriage isn't worth the risk? Why or why not? Jesus then speaks of something mysterious and perhaps not literal: eunuchs. How does he describe those who cannot or will not marry (12)?
- Re-read verse 11 and the end of verse 12. "Given" and "accept" are the words of gifts. What makes singleness a gift? How might it be "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven"? Pray for specific singles you know: may this may be the call they respond to.

Day Two: Matthew 25:31-46

- Describe this future moment (31-32). What will Jesus do with the people (32-33)? What will he say to those on his right (34-36)? How would you sum up the "sheep's" actions? What instruction might this offer for how marrieds and families are to treat singles? What will confuse the sheep (37-39)? How will Jesus clarify (40)?
- Next, Jesus will address the "goats." What will he say (41-43)? Similar to the "sheep," what confusion will they express (44)? How will he make things clear to them (45)? Describe how the "sheep" and the "goats" will experience eternity differently (46).
- Clearly, caring for the underdog deeply matters to Jesus. Ask the Lord to highlight your successes and failures to abide by this value. Perhaps this moment calls for repentance, or an expansion of "the least of these" to include the lonely and those who don't meet societal norms. As you reflect, ask God to keep speaking.

Day Three: Acts 2:42-47

- What four things was the early church devoted to (42)? Picture everyone there. Who do you see? Marrieds? Singles? Children? What filled everyone with awe (43)? What sort of wonders and signs do you think the apostles were performing?
- Describe these first believers' allocation of space and property (44-45). What expression of Psalm 68:6 – "God sets the lowly in families" – is found here? What sorts of needs do you think arose? Where did they usually meet (46)? Imagine these meetings, especially those in homes. Is your own home a place where people of different marital statuses and lifestyles feel welcome? Does this matter to Jesus? Ask him to respond.
- Describe the vibe of the home gatherings (46-47). How was the early church received by "all the people" (47)? How did this community grow (47)? Married or single, how can you help today's church to live as a growing and inclusive family?

Day Four: James 1:2-18

- What should we consider "pure joy" (2)? Why (3)? What does perseverance produce in us (4, 12)? How do we get wisdom (5-6)? What interferes with the pursuit of it (6-8)?
- What upside-down view does James have of status (9-11)? What "humble circumstances" exist in your own life? Ask God to help you take pride in these things.

How should we view temptation (13-15)? Which point here most challenges you? Why? Again, what guidance do these verses offer to singles?

- What admonition does James then give (16)? Where do “good and perfect” gifts come from (17)? How does James describe God (17)? What about his description of our new life in Christ (18)? How can we as a church treat singleness as “a good and perfect gift”? How can we help single people embrace their identity as “first fruits” of the new creation? Pray God would inspire and equip us to celebrate singleness. What part will you play?

Day Five: 1 Peter 2:4-10

- How does Peter describe Jesus, the one we come to (4)? What happens as we come to him (5)? Do think of yourself as part of a “spiritual house” or “holy priesthood”? Or do other identity-markers - marital status, family status, occupation, etc. - take precedent? Invite the Lord into this reflection. What is he speaking?
- What Old Testament scriptures whisper of Jesus being like a stone (6-8)? How has Jesus protected you from shame? Why is he precious to you? When in your life did you reject him? When has disobedience caused you to stumble? Which of Jesus’ stone-like qualities do you think particularly minister to single people?
- Peter then returns to the topic of identity. In verse 9, which heavenly identity-marker speaks the most to your heart? Why? Prior to following Jesus, what did we miss out on (10)? God doesn’t want singles to miss out on any component of identity in Christ. How can you partner with him to see this become a reality?