

**“If you can accept it...”**

**Matt 19:11-15**

**Scripture Ref: 1 Cor 7:32-35; Matt 22:37-38; Eph 5:22-26; John 13:34-35;  
1 Tim 5:8; 1 Pet 4:10; 1 Tim 3:1; Titus 1:5; Matt 6:33**

**1. \*\* Youth Ministry**

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." 10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

- 2. It seems to me that God wants us to take the marriage covenant seriously, and that we can't decide to leave our spouse just because things get hard.**
  - a. My wife and I decided years ago that we were going to take the option of divorce off the table.**
  - b. What that does is it forces you to work on your marriage, which includes working on yourself – no matter what the cost**
  - c. Funny thing is, God will use the things that I don't like about my mate as 'sandpaper' in my life, and I end up growing in ways that I never would have, had I not been married.**
  - d. And honestly, the effort is worth it – we grow, we mature, we change, we learn to love, and God is glorified.**
  - e. But if we just split up – then we take our 'issues' with us, and they will always resurface in the next relationship.**
- 3. So the disciples' response to that concept – that you stay in your marriage and you work on it – was *“If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”***
  - a. In other words – “who needs it! Stay single man!”**
  - b. Well, that's one option – and we'll look at it today.**

11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: 12 For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

- 4. Jesus is saying “sure, you can stay single, but you better know what your getting into, because not everyone can deal with it!**

- a. He lays out three different scenarios: Those who are **born** into singleness, those who are **forced** into singleness, and those who **choose** singleness.

### **Born into Singleness**

*For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb*

5. Fact: There are some who are born into singleness –
  - a. Perhaps a physical, or a mental limitation, that could make it unlikely that they would marry.

### **Forced into Singleness**

*and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men...*

6. There are several instances where people are single or celibate “by man”
  - a. In ancient times, often a king would castrate the men of a kingdom that was militarily conquered – it would be a means by which that group of people would not be able to reproduce – effectively killing off that group.
  - b. A leader might also castrate the men, usually slaves, that looked after the king’s wives and concubines – to keep from any ‘impropriety’, if you will.
7. Or, a person could end up being single due to a position that they hold.
  - a. In other words they didn’t ‘choose’ to be single, per se, but because of the responsibility of the role or the responsibility that they have, they never have time to marry and start a family.
8. Some are forced into singleness because of the actions of their spouse – in other words – divorce.
  - a. Perhaps one wants to work on the marriage, the other tosses in the towel – or abandons the marriage.

### **Choosing Singleness**

*and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*

9. Jesus is talking about someone who would choose to forgo having a husband or wife for the purpose of devoting themselves completely to the work of the kingdom.
  - a. An example today is where certain denominations allow men and women to become nuns and priests – they voluntarily choose a life in which they will never marry – but will remain single and celibate.
  - b. They devote all of their focus to serving God. Certainly you don’t have to become a priest or nun, there are people that simply never pursue marriage, and serve the Lord.

**c. Paul talks about this in his letter to the Corinthians**

**1 Cor 7:32-35**

*32 But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord -- how he may please the Lord. 33 But he who is married cares about the things of the world -- how he may please his wife. 34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world -- how she may please her husband. 35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.*

**d. Paul is not saying it is better to be single, but he is simply pointing out a fact:**

**e. The single person can serve the Lord in a way that a married person cannot, because they must be concerned about their mate, and their family (and rightly so!)**

**10. As a person who is a) in the ministry, and b) married, I can attest to that. My ministry to my wife and family come before my ministry to the church.**

**a. If not, my marriage and my family would fall apart, and what kind of witness would that be?**

**b. From a biblical perspective, our priority should be**

**i. God / Family / Others (which would be ministry)**

**Matt 22:37-38**

*37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment.*

**Eph 5:22-26**

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

*25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*

**John 13:34-35**

*34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

**1 Tim 5:8** *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

**1 Peter 4:10** *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

- 11. The point is – when you have a family, as Paul noted, you have a responsibility to your mate, to your children,**
- a. It is your first ministry
  - b. Many people confuse their ‘relationship with God’ – which is first – with their ‘ministry to others’ – which is AFTER our ministry to our own families.
  - c. If your not careful, you can conquer the world with your ministry, but if your family goes unattended and falls apart.

### **Staying Single**

- 12. For those that make the decision to stay single and serve the Lord, a whole world of opportunity opens up**
- a. Without a wife or husband – you can go wherever God sends you, and there is no discussion of “I’m not living there!” (my wife loves the beach – enough said!)
  - b. Without children, there is no issue of “what are the schools like there – will they have friends – will they miss out on being in sports... etc”
  - c. There is a freedom and ability to minister and move unhindered
- 13. Now some of you might think “*yea but, stay single? I don’t know...*”**
- a. That is Jesus point exactly – not many are able to accept this lifestyle – Unless God calls you to it!
  - b. Here is the thing – if God calls you to it, you will not be unfulfilled, or lacking, or live a life of loneliness.
  - c. And... God does not put that requirement on those who serve in the ministry – just look at what Paul wrote;

**1 Tim 3:1** *This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife*

**Titus 1:5** *For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you -- 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife,*

**Serving While Single**

**14. There is also another way of looking at this – FACT: Everyone is single for a time, until you get married...**

- a. So while you are single – serve the Lord!**
- b. Take the time when you don't have a spouse to consider, when you don't have 2 kids tugging at you... and learn what your gifts are!**
- c. Learn to walk in those gifts, and allow God to set a direction for your life.**

**15. Some single people expend so much time and energy and focus on finding a mate, that they miss out on serving God during a time when they are able to serve without any hindrance.**

- a. And here is the thing: If you focus on serving God, walking in and developing the unique gifts that He has given you, I believe that God, in His perfect timing, will bring you that perfect mate!**

***Matt 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

**16. Think about this for a moment– If you are serving the Lord in the areas that He has gifted you, then who will you be hanging out with and fellowshiping with?**

- a. People that have a similar heart and direction that you have**
- b. Maybe you love evangelizing – then you'll be drawn to people that also have a heart for the lost.**
- c. Maybe you love travel and missions – then you will be drawn to others that love travel and missions**
- d. Maybe you are musically gifted – or you love small groups –**

**17. Just be where God calls you, and there is where you will find your life**

- a. And the mate God sends you – they will have the same heart and direction that you have**
- b. Instead of being in a relationship where you both are always tugging the other in a different direction (the husband wanting to go to the mission field, and the wife wanting to stay put)**
- c. You will have the same heart – the same direction – the same passion!**

**18. In other words – if you want to catch a fish, you need to be near water!**

- a. If you want to bag a deer, you need to be in the woods!**
- b. If you want to mate the loves God and is committed to spiritual growth – you're probably not going to meet them at a bar!**

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