

**GHarmony: Sex, Singleness, and Marriage**  
**“Singleness and Dating” (1 Corinthians 7)**  
**August 2, 2009 by Kevin Haah**



**I. Introduction**

Welcome to New City Church!

We are in the middle of a series called “GHarmony: sex, singleness, and marriage.” G in GHarmony stands for God. This series is about relationship, not just any relationship but a relationship with a significant other. So, we’re going to be talking about what God says about sex, singleness, and marriage.

Each Sunday, we are going to have about 10 minutes of Q&A time right before we close in prayer. You can ask the question directly or you can write your question on the paper and put it in the offering basket.

Today’s topic is about being single. I think it is tough being single these days.

For guys, I remember how hard it was to get the nerve to ask a girl out. What if she’s not interested? How do I ask her out without making sure feel awkward or weirding her out? Have you been weirded out by a guy asking you out? I once gave Cindy Costello, my sixth grade crush, a valentine’s card we all made in our class for our moms. I didn’t know it was supposed to be for my mom. I think I weirded her out. Most guys I know are bumbling idiots. I don’t care if you’re 40, you often feel like a junior high schooler. I was wondering if you would like to have dinner with me. Thanks but no thanks. Let’s just be friends. I hated that line.

For women, you are constantly trying to figure out how to get the right guy to ask you out or fending off unwanted advances. Some of you are more direct. I think it’s awesome when a women asks a guy out for a change!

Finally, you go on a date. I took my first date to a lunch at Bob’s Big Boy and to see Rocky II. We took the bus together. Sometimes it clicks and sometimes it doesn’t. Neil Clark Warren, the founder of eHarmony.com says an average person goes out on about 100 dates before we marry. I don’t think I went out that much. I must be pulling the average down. Some of you might be pulling the average up. After the date, you wait for the call. You talk to your friends about the date. Guys, you heard that you weren’t supposed to call right afterwards.

There’s a book called: “He’s Just Not into You.” I haven’t read the book, but I can tell you the premise the book. Why doesn’t he call you back? Did you lose your number? You’re

trying to wreck your brain to figure out why. The answer is, he's just not into you. The idea is that guys know how to find the woman that they are interested in. Guys will call you back if they are interested in you. They'll call you if they are into you. Sounds clear enough. I read some Amazon reviews on the book: what if the guy is shy? This is wrong. Some guys don't go fast.

Somehow, you go through the ritual dance called dating. Then, comes THE talk to define the relationship. That's when some of you start running. You wanna go steady? Should we go exclusive?

Somewhere along the line, most relationships end up breaking up. There is that dreaded talk.

The last thing we want to say is I am just not into you. So, we say:

"It's not you; it's me."

"I need some space."

"I just don't want to be in a relationship right now; if I did, it would be with you."

"I don't know what I want" (means I know what I want but it's not you)

The worst is: "I feel like God ...". You never thought about God until you thought of a reason to break up. It's a spiritualized way of saying, I am just not that into you!

We are scared to death of rejection!

We all have this need to be accepted by someone who says, I love you for who you are. I love you no matter what. We are so hungry for that. We're so hungry that we are willing to continue to be in an abusive relationship or a relationship everyone tells you to get out of. You've been fighting for months. You've been on and off for years. You know what the right thing to do is, but you can't get out. You're afraid you'll end up with no one. So much of your life is surrounded by the issues of marriage and finding someone.

I want to talk about a few things that the Bible says about being single: (1) the goodness of singleness, (2) the idols of singleness, and (3) how the gospel helps us overcome the idols of singleness.

I was also going to talk about what the bible says about dating. I am not going to because the Bible doesn't say anything about dating. They didn't date. The parents decided when they were kids who they were going to marry. But, let me just say a couple of things before we go on: (1) all of the passages related to how a single man and women should relate to one another has to do with avoiding pornea (which is sex outside of marriage). That's the focus. We talked

about that last Sunday. (2) I think you should apply the Golden Rule in your dates. Someone else has your future spouse and you might have your someone else's future spouse. Don't do you someone else's future spouse what you don't want someone else to do to your future spouse. We'll talk about what to look for in a person in the last message of the series. (3) You should listen to your family and your community for wisdom and counsel. Don't be so immature to think that you know better. Being in love is the most blinding thing you can experience. So, listen to others.

## II. First, the Goodness of Singleness.

You have to remember that Jesus was single. And Jesus is the standard for humanity. How do you know what is to be human? Where do you get the standard? Who says you have to get married to live fully? The fact of Jesus' singleness means you can live fully and completely as a celibate single person. You have to remember that ONE is a whole number!

This is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:1ff:

**Verse 1: Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. ...**

**Verse 8: Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am....**

How can it be good to be single when God said it is not good for man to be alone? Remember, in Genesis, God said after each day of his creation that it is good, it is good. Then, when he saw Adam alone, he said it is NOT good that man should be alone. This was before sin entered the picture. Even before sin, it was not good for man to be alone. Then, God made woman and it is good. How can singleness be a good state?

Now, marriage is in disrepair because of sin. So, because of this, marriage is both good and bad together. What is better? A rabid horse or rabid mouse. It's rabid mouse. Marriage is a beautiful thing: but it has terrible power. Your spouse has the power to reprogram your self-image. Your self-image is a result of accumulated verdicts. If everyone says you're ugly but your spouse says you're beautiful, you feel beautiful. If everyone says you're beautiful, but your spouse says you're ugly, you feel ugly. This means marriage can heal you or inflict unbelievable damage. You can miss out on burden, dangers, and distractions of marriage. Paul says in verse 28, **"But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this."** Because of sin, singleness is less dangerous than marriage. When you are married and in a bad marriage, it is worse than being single. It is like dying of thirst on a raft.

Why else is singleness good?

You are free to serve the Lord without distractions. Paul says in verse 32ff:

<sup>32</sup>I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— <sup>34</sup>and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. <sup>35</sup>I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Being single and staying single keeps you from being distracted in your service to God. If you want to live in an undivided devotion to God, Paul says staying single is preferred. What Paul is saying is that there is something more important for singles than getting married. So many times, singleness is viewed as a transition stage in life. It's just a holding tank until you get married. However, Paul says we have to rearrange our priorities. Our top priority in life is not getting married and starting a family. It is serving the Lord. The reality is that when you are single, you have a lot more time to serve. When you get married, you get busier with family obligations. If you think you are busy now, wait until you get married. You get busier.

If you find yourself as a single, I want to encourage you to stop moping around. I want to encourage you to stop thinking of singleness like it is something of a disease to get rid of. Use it for the Lord. You see, our lives are not about us. It is about God and serving Him. Look to see what God is doing and join His work. Look to see how you can volunteer. Look to see how you can develop your love and passion for God. Don't make your relationship with God about getting married. Don't make your church life (or where you go for church) be determined by your desire to get married. I have a friend who is an older single woman who loves the Lord and she told me that she could never serve the Lord in a way that she has the opportunity to do so if she was married.

But, Paul says that singleness is a gift. In verse 2:

<sup>2</sup>But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. ... <sup>6</sup>I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that."

The bible says singleness is a gift. Bible says that evangelism is a gift. It comes more naturally to some people. But, every gift is also a duty. Everyone has the duty to do the gift. How do you know you have the gift of singleness? It is easier for you. It comes naturally to you.

But, if you don't have the gift of controlling your sexual urges, you should seek to get married, not because marriage is the ideal, but as a concession. That's what Paul says, right? In verse 9, he repeats this: **“Now to the unmarried and the widow I say, it is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”**

### **III. The Two Idols of Singleness: Independence and Dependence**

Many researches are showing that there are general differences between men and women. We are not the same. Men tend to be more independent and women tend to be more interdependent. That's why men tend to not ask for direction and women have no problems asking for directions. I think this might be the way God has created us. But, sin has entered the picture. The gift of independence has turned into Marlboro Man, cool, careless, without need, non-committal, playboy. You don't want anything to impinge upon your freedom. You don't want to be tied down. This does not mean you don't get into relationships. It means when the relationship get serious, when it requires your commitment and loss of some freedom, you are starting to pack your bags. You're afraid of commitment. It's not just in men, but also in women as well, particularly when we come from broken families or have been in a bad marriage. You are afraid of ending up in a marriage like your parents who were miserable or your last marriage which was miserable. How do I know that my husband is not going to cheat on me someday? It comes from your past fears. This independence is fed by your sexually free lifestyle. You get your sexual needs met without real intimacy.

When mixed with sin, the gift of interdependence became dependent. The beauty of sharing and complementing one another became a “princess syndrome” where you feel like you are nothing until the prince comes to rescue you. That's why I am glad that Kaetlyn and Eliana are done with their princess phase. If I don't get married, I'll be miserable. I should do whatever it takes to get married. If you want to be happy, you have to be skinny, sexy, and Barbie-like. You toss spirituality out the window. Your relationship with God only becomes relevant if it

helps you get what you want. Otherwise, you think: all is fair in love and war. You often use sex to keep someone you should not keep because you are so afraid that you will end up with no one.

When you are in a relationship, you pour effort, life, time, and money into it. And when it does not work, you feel like your life is ruined. You feel hopeless. Depressed. Sometimes, angry and you can't get yourself out of bed.

What happened was that your self-worth was completely wrapped up in someone else. When that someone rejected you, you have no self-worth left.

#### **IV. How Do We Overcome the Idols of Singleness?**

You need to acknowledge your idols of independence and realize that it is a sin to lead others on when you are not willing to commit. The first step is to acknowledge that you have a problem. It's not cool to be a player. You are causing pain and heart-ache and being a gerk. And then take it to God and ask your community to keep you accountable. You may also need some therapy to figure out why you do the things you do. At the bottom of everything, you may be insecure. You just don't want to get rejected; so, running away is a pre-emptive strike to protect yourself. Or you may be getting your worth by controlling or manipulating other people. You get a sense of power and control when that happens. The root of your idol of independence and the root of your idol of dependence is similar: it is caused by over-relying on your significant other for your worth and value.

You see, we all need someone to say we are okay. You are loved. I love you just the way you are. I love you unconditionally. I'll always be there for you. You are somebody. You are worth everything to me. But, we are not going to be able to get that from any human being. If you try to get ultimate self-worth from someone else, you are going to strangle that person. I need affirmation. I need unconditional love. I need to know that I am somebody. But, the reality is twofold: you are messed up and your significant other is messed up. You are one messed up person trying to get blood from another messed up person who doesn't bleed.

But, the Scripture tells us that we are accepted by God, unconditionally loved by God, embraced by God. It says that we are righteous (which means accepted by God) not because we kept all the rules, not because we are good, not because we deserve it, but because Jesus bore our sins on the cross, and gave us his acceptance. He traded places with us. So, we are accepted.

We are loved. We are a prince or princesses of God. If we hold on to the reality of who we are. Our identity. Our sonship. Our daughtership.

If we know our position, if we have our foundation right, we will not be destroyed if someone rejects us. We will be hurt and be distressed but we will not be destroyed. For our foundation is who God says I am, not what that guy said I am.

Some of you are thinking, yes, yes, I know God loves me; but what does it matter if no one will ask me out? In some ways, the gospel is seems so far away but the rejection from that guy seems so close and real. It's like you hear the gospel in audio but you see the rejection in motion-picture video. It's hard to compete. But, your job is to get the gospel to be louder in your life. Read the scripture. Pray. Meditate. Dwell on the beauty of the gospel. Hear God's voice in your life become 3-D video and put your faith in what he has done for you.

If our identity is based on the gospel, the work of Jesus Christ, then we will not be so insecure that we run before we are rejected. We will overcome commitment phobias. And we will not focus on getting love, getting affirmation, getting acceptance, getting, getting getting; but more on giving because we already have our security. We already have our self-worth validated. We don't need anyone to ultimately validate us. And when we are like that, we become more attractive, vibrant, and giving.