



2664 Willis Foreman Rd.  
Hephzibah, GA 30815  
706.792.9972

Sunday Worship  
1030 am  
www.foclc.org

## **“Living a Purposeful Single Life”**

*Minister Isabella Piña*

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Last singles class we discussed two of these points:

**1. You have value:** Proverbs 31:10 (Amplified Bible) “A capable, intelligent, and virtuous woman--who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far above rubies or pearls.”

**2. Have a vision:** Proverbs 29:18 (Amplified Bible) “Where there is no vision [no redemptive revelation of God], the people perish; but he who keeps the law [of God, which includes that of man]--blessed (happy, fortunate, and enviable) is he.”

**3. Delivered from all your fears.** You might say what fears? I do not have any fears. Yes you do. I was there once.

Because we do not view being single as a gift from God, we have the fear of being alone. The fear of loneliness. Your fear of loneliness might come in different forms and ways

So many times singles complain that the church does not understand what it feels like to be single. Like we all came to the church as married individuals.

In reality, many singles are gripped with similar circumstances and with a similar fear. Their circumstances may be a bit different: perhaps they are divorced or widowed; they may be raising children alone, or feeling burdened with paying child support as a result of a divorce they'd never chosen. They may be older, or younger. They may be male instead of female. Their fears may be a little different, but they revolve around the fact that they are alone. Many different fears can grip those who face life without a partner:

- **fear of physical harm** and danger
- **fear of commitment** in any kind of relationship, or to a church, because of an underlying fear of being hurt, misunderstood, and rejected
- **fear of lack** of finances or job stability
- **fear of handling the responsibilities** for a home, job, children, aging parents, and so on without someone to help bear the burden
- **fear of making decisions** without input and support from someone else

Many, many singles learn to face these fears with the Lord's help, and to successfully handle life alone. On the other side of these fears they become strong, confident and vivacious people, having much to contribute to the lives of those around them. I know numerous such individuals who are a constant blessing and inspiration to everyone who knows them. But the process of getting there can be terrifying for many, and may cause many sleepless nights.



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Most of these fears stem from the fact that most people don't expect to face life alone. Sometimes it is a gradual realization (friends marry one by one), or a sudden one (a spouse dies or leaves, or a friendship changes or ends). As it becomes more and more evident that, for at least a period of unknown time, life will not be as had been anticipated, one needs to adjust his or her approach for living it. Each person will work this out a bit differently based on their personality, preferences and circumstances. Some will learn to live alone and enjoy it, others will be miserable. Some will settle into a group of friends who become like family, others will get more involved in their churches, or in their extended families.

But you may be asking, at the moment when I find myself gripped with fear, **what do I do?** Moving beyond fear is not easy, but it is possible; furthermore, it is necessary in order to live the purposeful, productive, and abundant lives God has intended for us. **There are several steps to take:**

**A. First, define the actual fear.** Is what you fear something which is still many years down the road, such as growing old alone? Is it something which is highly unlikely, such as being homeless or jobless or deathly ill and no one caring at all? Is it something seemingly insignificant but at the same time terrifying, like not having someone to be with on a weekend night, or finding a mouse in your house, or being alone in a thunderstorm in the middle of the night?

Some fears are over events that may not happen for many years or may not happen at all. Many people mistakenly think that getting married and having children will guarantee they'll never be alone in their old age, but that is not necessarily the case. The only guarantee and security anyone has for the future is the Lord, and when we have a relationship with Him, we can rest in His assurance that He will never leave us nor forsake us. The Bible reminds us to not covet the "security" someone else may have, but to rely solely on Him and His promises. God said, "**... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**" (**Heb. 13:5**).

**B. Secondly, look the fear straight in the face.** What is the worst thing that could happen if your fear came true? If it does happen, what is a course of action you could take? Who could you turn to if you were truly desperate? Is your relationship with the Lord strong enough that you can turn to Him in times of need?

Fears often help people to realize that their relationship with the Lord is lacking, and that they don't know how to turn to Him in a crisis. If you find that this is the case for yourself, start right now by picking up your Bible and learning how to talk with your Heavenly Father about anything and everything.



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**C. Third, recognize other factors which may be contributing to your fears.**

If you find that fear grips you most strongly at night, remember this God answers Knee-mail and voicemails. Just call him up.

**D. Finally, know what God's Word says about fear.** Knowing the Lord and His Word is the number one ammunition against fear. If we have a relationship with the God of the universe through His Son, Jesus Christ, we are truly never alone nor without aid. Reading, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture passages will give you an anchor to turn to when you find yourself in fear's grip. Start with such passages as (Psalm 23, 34, 91, and Romans 8). Eventually you will be able to say with the Psalmist, "I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Ps. 34:4).

**4. Get rid of some of the false assumptions the world and sometimes the church has created concerning singleness:**

**False Assumption #1: If we reach a state of contentment and acceptance of our singleness, God will give us marriage**

I often laugh every time I hear a married person say that just as they became content with singleness, God gave them a mate. I have no doubt that these individuals were in a season of contentment when they met the person they married. But I don't believe for a minute that it was their contentment that moved God to send a spouse their way.

*(Phil 4:11) Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. **God calls us to contentment in whatever state we find ourselves,** and it's not so He can remove us from the situation. If contentment and acceptance of singleness is a prerequisite for getting married, there would be many individuals married who are now single, and there would be many single who are now married.*

**False Assumption #2: Marriage is the reward of being the "right" person and doing the "right" thing**

The subliminal message of much teaching surrounding dating and courtship is if you do things God's way, He will give you the best: a wonderful marriage to a wonderful spouse. God will indeed bless us when we live life as He has instructed us.

Much of the pain we have over finding ourselves single when we thought we wouldn't be, comes from viewing our status as being evidence of our not having done something right, when just the opposite is often true! Many times the reason someone is single is because they made good choices to not marry someone whom they knew was not in the Lord's will for them to marry.



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**Marriage is not God's reward, nor is singleness God's punishment.**

Both are a means of accomplishing His purposes. We may have a strong preference of one over the other, but from God's perspective one is not better than the other, nor is our marital status an indication of His favor or lack of it.

**False Assumption #3: Since God promises to give us the desires of our heart, then anyone who desires to get married will eventually marry.**

Many have become disillusioned and disappointed that God hasn't fulfilled "promises" He never promised to fulfill. God does indeed give us the desires of our heart, but only if they are in line with His.

As we saturate ourselves with God's Word, we learn what His desires are for our lives. His ways are higher than our ways

It is never wrong to pray for a spouse if we are free to marry. But as in all things we ask the Lord for, our prayers should be with the realization that He knows what is best and will give us His best if we let Him.

*Our deepest desire should be for what God wants, whatever that is, not a specific something such as marriage. A better prayer would be to ask God to meet our needs and fulfill His purposes for us, in whatever way He chooses. God did indeed initiate marriage and it truly is a good plan. But it is not the only thing He initiated and not the only good plan He has for His children.*

**False Assumption #5: Since God wants me to be happy, He will provide a mate for me.**

God does indeed have good gifts for His children, and He wants us to be happy. But He wants us to derive our happiness from our relationship with Him, not from the gifts He gives us. Marriage is a good gift, but it is not always God's best for every individual.

The answer for those who are unhappy in their singleness is not marriage, just as the answer for those who are unhappy in their marriages is not singleness (nor marriage to someone else). God calls us to "endure" joyfully. He doesn't promise to rescue us out of our circumstances, but He does promise to rescue us from our misery if we let Him.

**False Assumption #6: Everyone who marries has been given that spouse from the Lord.**

While every good gift is from the Lord, God has also created us with a free will. **We choose** to marry or not marry, and those choices are not always what the Lord would have led us to choose.



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It is important that we consider carefully those who show an interest in us (or those we take an interest in), rather than just assuming that because they are available God has put them in our path for us to marry.

God may very well have put them in our lives for a reason, but not necessarily for marriage. God provides many relationships in our lives both for our benefit and theirs, and we need to learn to value each one for what they are, not look at each one as a potential life mate.

### **Why are you Single?**

- The reality of life is that the answer to why some marry and some remain single (even when they would prefer marriage)? There is no one answer that fits every situation.
- We need to make the most of living for Christ in the situation we are in, whether we are married or single, realizing that each one is equally important for serving the Lord
- So no matter the reason for our singleness, it is much more important that we grasp hold of the opportunities available to us in our singleness, than it is to try and figure out why we are single or why we can't find someone to marry. Often times the answers to our questions come as we live life, not as we sit and analyze ourselves to death.

### **Adjusting our False Assumptions with Truth**

- Our whole expectation for fullness of life should be placed directly in the Lord Himself. We should take as our example the Psalmist who said, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him" (Psalms 62:5).
- God wants us to acknowledge our desires to Him, and to ask Him to fulfill them if He sees well. But in the end our expectation should be in Him, **not** in the fulfillment of our request. When our expectations are in Him, we can then treasure what He gives us because it is from Him.
- Living life well in any case is learning a balance — and in the case of singles desiring to be married but with no opportunities in sight, the balance is often a difficult one. It means learning to hold blessing and pain in our hands at the same time, desire and unfulfillment, joy and sorrow, life and death, and so on—and being content in the process.

### **5. Abstaining from lust**

So, what are the excuses that are used to give into lust?

#### ***Excuse #1: It's biological, I'm made that way.***

**TRUTH:** God supplies you His grace and calls you to holiness. See Leviticus 11:44-45, Leviticus 19:2, Leviticus 20:7-8, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, and 1 Peter 1:13-16. God loves us too much to leave us just as we are. Leave what is behind and press on in Christ (see Philippians 3:13-14).



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***Excuse #2: (for those private sexual sins): I'm not hurting anybody. No one else is involved.***

**TRUTH:** You are hurting your relationship with God. You are involved. God is involved. Your mind and how you relate to others is also involved.

**Excuse #3: I can't help it.**

**TRUTH:** All things are possible with God (see Matthew 19:26 and Mark 10:27). And again, He supplies you His grace (see 2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

***Excuse #4: I don't have a wife (with whom I can exercise my passions).***

**TRUTH:** Is that all a wife is good for? Isn't there much more to marriage than sex? **Marriage does not remove sexual struggle.** 1 Corinthians 7:5 speaks of how the married couple can be tempted.

Seek to submit your sex drive to God before you are married and while you are married. Marriage is not a free reign to unlimited sex. Marriage is not about self-gratification, but about selfless love (i.e. a wife's submission and a husband's willingness to love the wife as himself even to the point of dying for her).

**Refer to Ephesians (5:21-33).**

- A husband and wife is a model of Christ and His Church. Did Christ just see what He could get out of the Church for His own selfish pleasure, or did He nurture her and love her selflessly?
- Even though she would cheat on Him by entertaining worldliness in centuries to come, He died for her! A wife is worth dying for, not to be lowered to be a piece of meat used for self-gratification.
- Sex is reserved for marriage and sex in marriage is an act of love for the other glorifying to God, not selfish love that glorifies self.

So there are some of the excuses a man might use in committing sexual sins (lust), but each one is exposed by the Truth. Consider again the consequences and **the potential painful consequences if one continues in lust and sexual sin?**

- To future marriage (God-willing): A development of unhealthy relating and expectations. Betrayal of one's spouse (Hebrews 13:4).
- To mental health: Psychologically, one might become divided and tormented in his or her mind.
- To one's self-image: Shame and guilt and decreasing conformity to Christ-likeness.
- To finances: For those who invest in pornography or prostitution, there is a loss of finances.
- To time due to time wasted on sexual sin.



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- *Not living out the purpose God intended for your life*

Now, what are **the benefits of purity**? That is, what are the consequences to abstaining from sexual sin?

- *To one's relationship with God*: More trust in God, more freedom to serve and live for God.
- *To one's spouse (God-willing)*: Healthier relating, better intimacy, considering the spouse's needs and seeing the spouse as a child of God.
- *To one's children (God-willing)*: Being a true model, not a deceiver who puts up a good front. See Proverbs 22:6.
- *To one's mental health*: Peace of mind.
- *To one's reputation*: Sustenance for one's witness by saving it pure for the marriage bed (Hebrews 13:4) and walking the walk, not just giving lip service.
- *To one's self-image*: Self (deception and sinful nature) can be denied and instead be conformed to be more like Christ. See Luke 9:23 and Galatians 2:20.
- *To time*: A more constructive use of it -- not losing time to hours of rituals and activities centered around and leading to sexual sin. To the future: Encouragement, hope, spiritual growth.

*Submit yourself to God and resist the devil and his temptations in lust (see **James 4:7**). Take every thought captive to Christ! This is only possible by walking in the Spirit (God's leading). You cannot do it on your own. This war is spiritual. Refer to **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** and **Ephesians 6:10-18**.*

Even Paul struggled with conflict in his mind over wanting to do one thing, but doing another. Read **Romans 7:14-25**. Paul feels wretched. Yet, in the very next chapter, he writes that there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ (8:1); that if God is for us, none can be against us; that all things work together for the good of those called according to God's purpose; and that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Read all of Romans 8). God loves you as you are.

**Serve God, not your lust.** He is the only One who can change you. He doesn't want you to squander your efforts, time, and emotion on other cheap imitations of so-called Gods.

"Sinful sexual behavior always leads to despair" writes Bill Perkins in *When Good Men Are Tempted* (p. 133). Call on God to help you stop the sin at the rituals that lead to it. What God offers is much better! Confess and repent now.