



Encouragers of Young Women

Lesson 10

Encouraging Single Young Women

by Eileen Berry

*For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing
does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.*

Psalm 84:11

Singleness is not:

1. Necessarily a bad thing or a problem to be solved
(1 Corinthians 7:1, 8-9)

Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. . . . But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.

2. An unhappy state (1 Corinthians 7:39-40)

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

3. An unfruitful state (Galatians 4:19; 1 Timothy 1:2)

My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—

To Timothy, my true child in the faith . . .

Singleness is:

1. A gift, in many cases a temporary one for a certain season (1 Corinthians 7:7, 9, 36; Matthew 19:11-12)

Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that . . .

But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs . . . who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."

2. In the realm of God's sovereignty and goodness (Psalm 84:11)

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

3. A unique means God chooses for some men and women to live out their calling to glorify Himself (1 Corinthians 7:32; 34)

The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

BUT it is also *not*:

–the state of choice for most of the women currently in it (younger or older)

AND it also *is*:

–a state that comes with its own unique challenges and struggles

SO, single women need our encouragement!

Specific Areas of Encouragement

1. Life purpose

“When God calls us to Himself it transforms the purposes for which we live. To respond to that call is to view relationships, responsibilities, gifts, and opportunities as His purposes for our lives. These purposes are our callings—the things we are equipped by God to do in our individual situations throughout all the seasons of our lives. This perspective on life as a set of callings from God helps a woman get her bearings when singleness gets confusing—anchoring her identity, giving her a sense of belonging, setting a direction for her life’s activities, and shaping her overall sense of purpose. . . . The plural *callings* is . . . intended to help us avoid the trap of elevating any one purpose here on earth—other than the pursuit of God—to the place where we confuse it for our whole life purpose. God’s multiple callings in each of our lives may include marriage, but that is not the full story of His grand design for any of us. Being too focused on marriage (or its absence) may lead to neglect of our other callings at hand or cause us to miss the fulfillment He intends for us in each of those callings.” (Jennifer Marshall, *Now and Not Yet*)

- Point out areas of giftedness and express appreciation for her ministry in those areas.
- Help her recognize opportunities God is giving her to serve Him right now.
- When she is struggling with decisions about further education or about a job change, listen to her thought processes. Encourage her to consider how she can be most useful to God, how she can best glorify Him.
- Pray with her about God’s will for her life.

**Allowing me to develop my gifts despite youth, despite lack of husband*

**Treating me like I am the same, like I am normal, like I am complete even without a husband*

**Showing concern about me and my doing God's will first of all. Her focus isn't on whether I would get married or not. She loves me and wants God's best for me – married or not.*

**Noticing something I did well (big or small), and mentioning it to me*

2. Balance and priorities

- Offer to be an accountability partner, a memory work partner, do a Bible study together, or share prayer requests.
- Be sensitive to the limitations of the younger woman's schedule.
- Ask what challenges she faces at work that you can pray for.
- Share time management ideas that have worked for you, housekeeping tips that have helped you, or recipes for cooking healthy and small.

**Hearing about how she studies the Bible and prays; what she has learned from her time with the Lord; how things have changed in her spiritual life (things I can expect and look forward to)*

**Willing to be an accountability partner, but knows I'm a busy adult*

**Sharing what she's learned from her devotional time with the Lord, or learned about how growth happens*

**Sharing books that have been a good read*

**Being willing to teach me what she knows (planting, baking etc.)*

3. Relational needs

“Life is comprised of relationships within and apart from family. Single people often get a lot of one or the other but not often a good balance of both. In my case, as with many single ladies (even with roommates) much time is spent alone. The time spent with others is often with other single people or secular co-workers. With family far away, my church family and the families that comprise that specific body of believers are my family. Any family time spent together (holidays, Saturday activities, devotional time) is lost to singles if families don't extend theirs to them. . . . Ultimately, being a friend can affect every aspect of a single person's life in a way that an isolated counseling session won't because it's dealing primarily with one issue at a time when, particularly for women, life is not so compartmentalized.” (single woman at our church)

- Approach her as an older *friend*. Show interest in her everyday life, not just in her spiritual life.
- Sacrifice to spend time with her. Try never to cancel on an appointment with her unless absolutely necessary. Let her know she is important to you.
- Invite her into your home or your everyday activities once in a while.
- Express trust in her by sharing some of your own burdens. Be transparent.



**Gathering in homes, one on one or group gatherings, not all-female groups but also including men who help balance my perspective as part of the body*
**Inviting me to join in her family worship when I'm in her home.*
**Inviting me to sit with her at church or at fellowships, or asking me over for a meal*
**Sharing with me burdens that are on her heart*
**Interacting with me like a peer who respects her age and experience. Coming alongside me, but also seeing I may be able to contribute something to her*
**Being a friend. Genuinely looking to help and listen, but also to receive friendship. Laugh – a lot.*

4. Emotions

Hope deferred makes the heart sick [chalah]. (Proverbs 13:12)

“The challenge is to live in the present purposefully and to live a contented life even while particular desires remain unfulfilled. That kind of contentment depends on a sense of purpose outside our own feelings. It rests in the conviction that there is a grand design to our lives, and that the design has an Author. Our knowledge of that design may be incomplete, but its Author has made Himself known to us . . . Attaining contentment doesn't require us to suppress the desire for marriage, but it does mean we have to keep it in proper perspective. When desire grows into preoccupation, it edges out contentment and causes us to doubt God's faithfulness and goodness. When desire becomes a sense of entitlement—that God owes us what we want—it deprives us of gratitude for what He is doing outside our expectations.” (Jennifer Marshall, *Now and Not Yet*)

- Listen. Weep with her. Express love with a physical touch (hug, hand squeeze, shoulder pat).
- Pray with her about finding peace and joy in the life God has given her right now.
- Be open about your own emotional struggles, and share God's goodness in them.
- Write a note sharing verses about God's attributes, His character or His names, or encouraging words to hymns or songs.
- Time your encouragement with particular seasons that may be more difficult for her.

*My soul, wait in silence for God only,
for my hope is from Him.
(Psalm 62:5)*

**Being willing to listen to what I say, but also to point me to Christ*

**Rejoicing with me when I rejoice. There are landmark events in my life that some of my older friends have really matched my enthusiasm for. Weddings and births get a lot of attention, and they should, but since I don't have those I've appreciated my dear friends who see the big-events-to-me and rejoice with me.*

**Recognizing that there will be grief in the process and walking with me in it*

**Understanding that at hard times I may just need to verbalize what I'm thinking*

**Sharing with me ways that the Lord helped her when she went through the same kind of trial or temptation as me*

**Sending an occasional card of encouragement or an email / text that she is praying for me*

**Hearing how an older single or widowed lady deals with loneliness*

What God Ordains

What God ordains is always good: His will is just and holy.
As He directs my life for me, I follow meek and lowly.
My God indeed in every need knows well how He will shield me;
To Him, then, I will yield me.

What God ordains is always good. He is my Friend and Father;
He suffers naught to do me harm, tho' many storms may gather.
Now I may know both joy and woe, some day I shall see clearly,
That He hath loved me dearly.

What God ordains is always good. Tho' I the cup am drinking
Which savors now of bitterness, I take it without shrinking.
For after grief God gives relief, my heart with comfort filling,
And all my sorrow stilling.

What God ordains is always good. This truth remains unshaken;
Tho' sorrow, need, or death be mine, I shall not be forsaken.
I fear no harm, for with His arm He shall embrace and shield me;
So to my God I yield me.

—Samuel Rodigast
CCLI: 1967036

For Further Reading on Singleness:

Danylak, Barry. *Redeeming Singleness*. Crossway, 2010.
Marshall, Jennifer. *Now and Not Yet*. Multnomah, 2007.

Other Helpful Books:

DeMoss, Nancy Leigh. *Choosing Gratitude*. Moody, 2009.
George, Elizabeth. *Loving God with All Your Mind*. Harvest House, 2005.

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