

Thoughts

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"The hardest thing I've ever done is keep believin' there's someone in this crazy world for me." — The Carpenters, "I Need to be in Love"

This page is in memory of Ryan Weaver (photo at right), a godly man in his early 20s who passed away from [Cystic fibrosis](#) in late 2002. Ryan never had the chance to marry and experience physical intimacy, but his heart and life were a great example of what it meant to experience intimacy with God.



Ryan Weaver

This is also for the single person, who like Ryan, have known only too well how it feels to long for something that never comes; whose prayers have fallen by the wayside, and who struggle to hold onto hope, or have simply [given up trying](#). This is not intended as a pity-party or gripe session, but simply an honest "gut-level" glimpse of the heart. Those whose spouses literally walked out on them one day, or who are widowed, divorced, separated, or trapped in a marriage with a spouse refusing intimacy may also identify with some of the things expressed here.

Fighting the "loser" mentality

*"So here I am with pockets full of good intentions
 But none of them will comfort me tonight
 And wide awake at 4 a.m. without a friend in sight
 Hangin' on a hope but I'm alright."*

— The Carpenters, "I Need to be in Love"



Speaking for myself, being single into your 30s and 40s carries with it a haunting "loser" mentality—that perceived failure to meet and marry someone by now, and as a result, that you simply aren't worthy of marriage: i.e. "It's okay for everyone else to be married; but not you." After all, most (if not all) your peers have progressed to the next stage in life with spouses, homes, and children. We believe that God knows what's best for us, so if He's withholding marriage, there must be some remaining disobedience or maturity issue in our life, or perhaps punishment for sin in our past. It's not that you don't believe God *could* provide a spouse; rather it's a question of *will* He, and *why*? So you begin to question your own attractiveness, desirability, worth, and value as a person, and you become your own worst critic: "Could anyone *really* love me for who I am, enough to want to spend their life with me? Do I even deserve marriage and intimacy?" Even sincere and thoughtful compliments from others seem to have little effect in encouraging you, and deep-seated bitterness, frustration, and skepticism are a frequent problem. Well-intentioned encouragement such as: "Don't worry; you'll meet that special person" becomes increasingly hollow with every year that slips by. Time stops for no man, and we can't reclaim our youth. Tacky as they are, it doesn't help that [movies](#) are made about people [like us](#).

We want to honor God, but few are willing to admit the truth that being unable to fulfill and express the longings and desires for intimacy God created us with never go away, and is a very frustrating place to be. In a world full of twisted relationships, you keep hearing "Just give up; you will never experience physical, sexual, and emotional intimacy and companionship as God intended." So the longer you're single, the more you struggle with feelings of inadequacy, fear of rejection, anxiety, and frustration at not finding a spouse. You can only observe, wish, and hope, but never know the release and joy of finally meeting that one person that [God created and intended](#) to meet the deep loneliness you feel inside. Again, it isn't so much a pity-party (although that can be a problem) as much as it is facing the sheer reality of failed hopes, dreams, longings, and expectations from within, and from the world outside.

Jennifer Lynn of [The Virgin Verdict](#) points out in her [Pride, Prejudice and Divine Irony](#) post that:

*"Throughout my 20s, I have struggled with the lie that I am still single because I am somehow lacking something significant. The truth is, I will **always** be lacking something. This side of heaven, the mystical point where I am suddenly 100% the way I want to look, completely confident of myself and my abilities, totally emotionally healthy and entirely spiritually mature, simply does not exist. My perfectionistic self is wrestling with this crazy notion that the point of "arrival" I am seeking after will never arrive. I am imperfect...that's just how it is."*

Deep down, we're unsettled being single, yet so often we go out of our way to spiritualize, medicate, rationalize, and explain why being single is good—even biblical. The problem is, from the beginning—we were never created to be single (at least, not all of us; see [Matthew 19:12](#)). That stubborn little [Genesis 2:18](#) cast-in-reinforced-concrete fact. How easily we forget the simple truth that, even before Eve was created, Adam *already had* a perfect, unhindered relationship with God. Neither was it Adam himself who wanted, and subsequently asked God for a mate, or about some kind of 'qualification' for one. But despite that, God Himself literally said it is "not good." So we need to stop making excuses for, and pretending that being single is "okay." It's not. Or maybe we just don't want to believe God? Paul's musing about "I wish that all men were as I am" in [1 Corinthians 7:7](#) is just that—his own personal opinion. It has zero bearing on God's design and intent of blessing for men and women:

[Proverbs 18:22](#) (NASB) *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."*

Intimacy and companionship

"In my own time nobody knew the pain I was goin' through, and waitin' was all my heart could do."
— The Carpenters, "Only Yesterday"

Undoubtedly, the hardest part of being single is the lack of intimacy and expression—just being able to pour out your heart, thoughts, feelings, longings and frustrations to someone who understands, and who you know won't criticize or judge you. Someone who accepts and loves you for who you are—who wants, needs, and desires you...just holding someone tight in your arms, and being held by them. Watching other couples holding hands, laughing, hugging, and kissing are things you've been waiting on, dreaming of, and longing for. Is it wrong to long for the beauty and fulfillment of sexual intimacy in marriage? Is it a sin to want to be so fully loved, touched, and desired? Is that asking too much? All too often it feels like the answer is "yes" to those questions.

"Take my advice—I don't use it anyway." — Unknown

It never ceases to amaze me that those who frequently give singles advice on how to live as singles *are themselves married—and have zero first-hand knowledge* of what it's like surviving without intimacy and companionship for literally decades at a time. The Christian living in the 21st century quoting Song of Solomon 2:7 that says: *"Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires"* does so from his or her remote mountain cave. We live in a day and age when we cannot escape being surrounded by sex and relationships. **Our only defense is daily arming ourselves with biblical, factual truth about it.**

Marriage is certainly not all roses and has its own challenges, but it is the *only place* designed by God to meet the very specific needs you were created with as a man or woman. Being shut out from that—from ever knowing and experiencing something so potentially beautiful, fulfilling, and satisfying, something you were designed for—is a frightening place to live. The apostle Paul addresses this:

[1 Corinthians 7:9](#) (NASB) *"But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."*

There is a very real and evident peer pressure that remains after the teen years; this time not something generated by others around you, but rather from within yourself: the overwhelming longing and need for physical and emotional intimacy. If, in the spiritual sense, a married Christian's thought life is difficult, then it's even more challenging for someone who's single. I think I speak for most, if not all, singles when I say that not a day goes by when you don't wrestle with being single—asking yourself and God *"Why?"*. You are constantly surrounded by reminders in stores, restaurants, churches, your workplace—all of which feel like visual taunts when you see married couples together.

Without someone close enough in whom you can trust to engage in heart-to-heart sharing with, interaction with others remains at the "Hi, how are you?" or "Nice to see you today" [surface level](#), and conversation quickly becomes empty and wearisome. So what do single people need?

- Encouragement that purity is worth fighting for—before and after marriage, because sexual intimacy is designed to (and has the potential to) get better and more rewarding over time as God's plan is followed.
- Non-sexual touch.
- Interaction with peers—even if they are married (though finding people willing to associate with you as a single is very difficult).
- Warning about sexual sin from those who have been through it.
- Warning about unrealistic expectations in marriage (such as the wedding night probably isn't going to be amazing—that comes later in marriage).
- Warning that sexual intimacy isn't an option, and is worth fighting for in the marriage bed.

Why does this matter? Mainly because there are three key aspects of marriage that don't exist when you're single:

- Intimacy
- Companionship
- Additional peers in the same stage of life

Meeting and matchmaking

Perhaps the biggest hurdle is meeting other singles; after all, a relationship can never start without that initial connection. Simply seeing someone you're attracted to does not provide the chance to get to know them. Having adequate time and opportunity to interact with others is key to learning and understanding what personalities and attributes you value most. Simply put, the more interaction you have with your peers, the more likely you are to find and get to know someone.

In different ways, and among the myriad of different personalities and physical attributes, each of us are drawn to a specific combination that we find appealing or attractive, and because of this, the likelihood of meeting someone that we could see ourself with someday is small. In addition, most people marry in their twenties, so by the time you're in your 30s or 40s, the chances of meeting another single are very, very small indeed. Reducing those odds and increasing the chances are critical; but at the same time, marriage is a lifelong commitment, and rushing into it with someone you're not completely sure about can be a dangerous thing. As the saying goes:

"Don't marry the person you can live with; marry the person you can't live without."

The meshing of these two concerns is a challenging and often frustrating task.

The thoughtful intentions of matchmakers are valiant—they are some of the few people who sense deep down that you're struggling as a single person, and they genuinely want to help in any way they can. Unfortunately, putting two people together can be an awkward and often unsuccessful endeavor. Matchmakers are understandably eager to connect two single people together, but unfortunately some people are uncomfortable being 'match-made'; agreeing only to meet in an effort to placate the matchmaker. Relationships simply aren't something you can manufacture.

Finding a spouse

Good luck. Honestly—cutting through the Christianese—that's probably the most realistic advice I can give. If you didn't attend a Christian college or somehow have a constant stream of single people close to your age coming through your church or workplace, your chances of meeting someone are slim to non-existent—especially as you get older. That's not to say that you'll *never* meet someone; some people do eventually find a spouse and marry in their 40s and 50s. But there are no guarantees of finding a godly spouse, and the odds are rapidly declining; recent statistics say that only **one in three** Christian women actually wait to have sex until their wedding night. Needless to say, most Christian men are likely just as guilty of this.

Selective vs. picky

"I know I ask perfection of a quite imperfect world; and fool enough to think that's what I'll find."

— The Carpenters, "I Need to be in Love"

Is there a difference between being selective and picky? The only way I know to answer that is by

saying that when deciding on a spouse, selectiveness bears biblical truth and [principles](#) in mind, whereas pickiness refers solely to personal preference and opinion. As [noted](#):

*"You have to **become** the kind of person you want to marry."*

Actually trying?

As strange as it sounds, no Adult Bible Fellowship for singles that I've been in has ever *really ministered* to the fact that you're single; in other words, no attempt was ever made purporting discussion or expression of the frustrations and challenges of being single. Rather odd, considering classes for married couples minister to marital issues frequently. So instead of taking some time and actually *talking about* and addressing the issues and frustrations of singleness (or even just listening while singles share how or what they feel), leadership commonly operates as though everyone were settled and comfortable with it. What's needed are people who are willing to listen, and address them with honest, real-world answers grounded in Scripture; not reiterating theory or skirting the topic. Sadly, I have to say this: (like numerous plastic mask-infested areas) if you want to know what singles *are really facing* don't expect to find it in the church. The only place you will find that kind of honesty are blogs or direct e-mails from single Christians themselves.

Goodbye To Love ([A Song for You](#), The Carpenters)

I'll say goodbye to love
No one ever cared if I should live or die
Time and time again the chance for love
Has passed me by and all I know of love
Is how to live without it; I just can't seem to find it

So I've made my mind up I must live my life alone
And though it's not the easy way
I guess I've always known I'd say goodbye to love

There are no tomorrows for this heart of mine
Surely time will lose these bitter memories
And I'll find that there is someone to believe in
And to live for—something I could live for

All the years of useless search have finally reached an end
Loneliness and empty days will be my only friend
From this day love is forgotten I'll go on as best I can

What lies in the future is a mystery to us all
No one can predict the wheel of fortune as it falls
There may come a time when I will see that I've been wrong
But for now this is my song; and it's goodbye to love
I'll say goodbye to love

In addition, I dare say that the church/Christian community at large could do more to bring singles together; perhaps hosting local missions trips, ministry opportunities, or a dinner where singles can get to know others outside of their own church walls. A godly lady I knew made the comment that:

"I wish, in an ideal world, there would be a gathering for area singles that love the Lord and are so busy serving Him that they don't have time to meet each other."

I suspect many singles tend to be reclusive simply because they feel like they don't fit anywhere or have anything to contribute. They are also likely to be very sensitive and wary to judgment and criticism because of their singleness.

Survival and thankfulness

"There are worse things than being single." — Unknown

Since there is rarely (if ever) a safe place for expression of thoughts and feelings in regards to being single, it's easy to believe that most singles harbor a lot of hurt, depression, and frustration within them. You will probably never know just how much they are affected, as it's all too easy to fake a smile on Sunday morning. For most singles, I venture to say that deep down, surviving each week is what keeps them mentally and emotionally alive.

While the above quote is true, it applies to every facet of life—not just singleness. There will always be someone worse off than ourselves. This doesn't negate our loneliness and yearning for companionship and intimacy, but it should keep us aware of what others also face; even those who are married. As [noted](#) about husbands and wives:

"There is a unique kind of loneliness when you feel that the person who is supposed to love you and care for you doesn't."

I'm convinced that one of the best ways to survive is to—when things really discourage you—think of *what you do have* and be thankful. Like Ryan, there are so many people who have been through (and continue to go through) things that make even our biggest struggles insignificant—people who have never had even a fraction of what we've enjoyed and frequently taken for granted. The fact that we are alive, have a measure of health and strength, food to eat, and a comfortable place to sleep are more than what most will ever have. For many, add to that our families, jobs, and level of freedom. The song [Count Your Blessings](#) is just as true and practical today as the day it was written.

Related links: [The Virgin Verdict: Pride, Prejudice and Divine Irony](#) | [Virginity: One "Problem" that Doesn't Need Fixing](#) | [The Singleness Strain: An International Phenomenon](#) | [Socially Unacceptable](#)

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