

A FIRM FOUNDATION IN SHIFTING SAND

Celebrating Celibacy

1 Corinthians 7



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Is celibacy part of God's design?

What is celibacy?

“The deliberate abstinence from sexual activity” -

The Concise Encyclopedia

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Celibacy is relevant to everyone

(CNN) -- There are 96 million people in the United States who have no spouse. That means 43 percent of all Americans over the age of 18 are single, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

If you are not currently single, it is very likely that you will someday be single again.

Celibacy (and marriage) prepares us for eternity (Mark 12:18-25)

“Marriage, as we know it now, is not our final destiny” - John Piper

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Marriage in Heaven

“...the Bible does not teach that there will be *no* marriage in Heaven. In fact, it makes clear there *will* be marriage in Heaven. What it says is that there will be *one* marriage, between Christ and his bride - and we'll all be part of it.” - Randy Alcorn

Singleness on earth is like long term engagement waiting for the bridegroom to arrive.

Have you considered that those who are single may have unique insight and intimacy with Jesus (just as those who experience adoption)?

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Redefining Celibacy

“It is good” 1 Corinthians 7:1,8

Requires “self-control” 1 Corinthians 7:5,9

It is a “gift” 1 Corinthians 7:7

Requires contentment 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 & Philipppians 4:12

Provides “free...undivided devotion” 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

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Celibacy can be fruitful

Isaiah 54:1-5 Widows can be fruitful

Isaiah 56:3-4 Eunuchs can be fruitful

Galatians 5:22-23

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, & self-control

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Love	“...the greatest of these...” 1 Cor. 13
Joy	“...pure joy...face trials...” James 1
Peace	“...he himself is our peace...” Eph. 2:14
Patience	
Kindness	
Goodness	
Faithfulness	
Self-Control	

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Celibacy is voluntary contentment

- 1 Timothy 4:1-3 Celibacy should not be forced (marriage & singleness)
- Matthew 19:12 Jesus encourages voluntary celibacy

Philippians 4:12 “I have learned the secret of being content...I can do all this through him who gives me strength”

Resist the “when...then...” syndrome - Pastor Randy Cordell

Do not allow sinful desire to rule over you, but just as God spoke to Cain “you must master it”. Honor God with your body (1 Cor. 6)

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Celibacy does not mean lonely

Bible

Jesus & Disciples

Paul & Silas

Elijah & Widow of Zarephath

David & Jonathan

Contemporary

Rich Mullins & Mitch McVicker

Bonhoeffer & Bethge

Anne & Diana Barry

Gale Shepherd & Howard Lake

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Celibacy does not mean lonely

Find a “bosom friend” or “kindred spirit”

-Anne of Green Gables

Consider rituals of commitment

- hair locket
- blood brothers
- written covenant

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Let us be a firm foundation

We can provide a loving community (1 Cor. 13)

We can affirm singleness & encourage celibacy

We can make ourselves uncomfortable

“carry each other’s burdens and fulfill the law of Christ”-the law of love (Galatians 6:2)

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Let us be a firm foundation

“Hospitality is the inroad to sharing the Gospel with the Gay and Lesbian community”

- Dr. Rosaria Butterfield (author of Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert)

“We don’t argue very well in public...better in private...hospitality evangelism.”

- Dr. Rosaria Butterfield (author of Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert)