

*D GROUP – Life on Life Discipleship for Women of FBC

OUTLINE

Titus 2 for women, Introduction part 4

THE ROLE OF WOMEN opening DISCUSSION: #1 Why is it so difficult for single Christian women to embrace their unique biblical role as a woman #2 What does it take for a single woman to be excited about the role of Godly woman? #3 What practical steps can both younger and older women take to encourage all women in their role?

The CONTEXT of Titus 2...The Curriculum for older women to train the younger 4 that they may encourage the young women to love their husband, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

Today is part FOUR of what the entire Bible says about the ROLE OF WOMEN, focusing now on the SINGLE WOMAN; part 1

The most crucial TRUTH: 1 Corinthians 11:3 I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. Functioning in our roles is the only way men & women can glorify the Trinity

THE DILEMMA OF THE SINGLE WOMAN The single Christian woman faces a dilemma if she fully embraces what the Bible teaches about gender roles. As long as she remains single, she cannot fully apply the biblical curriculum for a godly woman found in Titus 2:4-5. But should getting married be her singular focus? The single Christian women may find life difficult as she waits for God to bring a godly husband. Must she also feel she is outside of God's will in her single state? Education, a career, volunteerism—none of these things is inherently wrong for young, single women. Yet any one of these can direct a woman's life away from God's design for her life. For the single Christian woman who is waiting for marriage [she is not a celibate], these things can severely divert her focus from God's plan. This is no small issue in a world where the single population has multiplied dramatically with the breakdown of families. Marriage and family seem like the impossible dream to many singles. Yet the church dare not lay aside God's curriculum for training godly men and women. The book of Titus is God's clear instruction for the church—biblical gender roles have been clearly delineated by God.

From what we have already seen about the status of women in Scripture, the Word of God teaches that men and women are equal before God. Galatians 3:28 tells us men and women have equal access to the spiritual blessings God provides for every Christian. 1 Corinthians 10:31 teaches us every believer is responsible to glorify God as his or her highest priority. God's glory is not only our highest priority, it should be central to every other priority. Whether we eat or drink, whatever we do, Christians should do all for the glory of God. In every decision, in every direction—whether college, a career, ministry or marriage—a woman's highest responsibility and central priority should be to reflect God's character, honor His Word and give Him glory with her life. Unless she is a celibate, a woman's most fulfilling God-given role is that of a wife and mother—the passages we reviewed in the overview support this position. According to God's design, it is equally true the most fulfilling God-given role for a man is that of a husband and father. Biblically, his career is the vehicle God gives him to provide for his family and to witness Jesus Christ in his community. Yet many men elevate their jobs to compete against the glory of God as their central priority.

WHAT IS A CELIBATE? Today a growing number of Christian women think God's plan for them is to remain single, or celibate. It is God's plan for some to remain single? Scripture offers us reasons why one would remain a celibate. Matthew 19:12ff give us three reasons for celibacy. 1-Some are celibate for congenital reasons. These people were born celibate, unable to have sexual relations or procreate in a physical sense. 2-Others are celibate because of gestation. These were somehow made celibate, in a physical sense, and are therefore unable to have sexual relations or procreate. 3-Some are celibate because of a **commitment to God**. These have chosen not to marry, deciding to remain closed to any sexual relationship even though they are capable of such. The best example we can see of this third form of celibacy among Christians are those who choose not to marry because they believe God intends them to be missionaries. A true celibate is one in HEART and CIRCUMSTANCE; a want to and a mission.

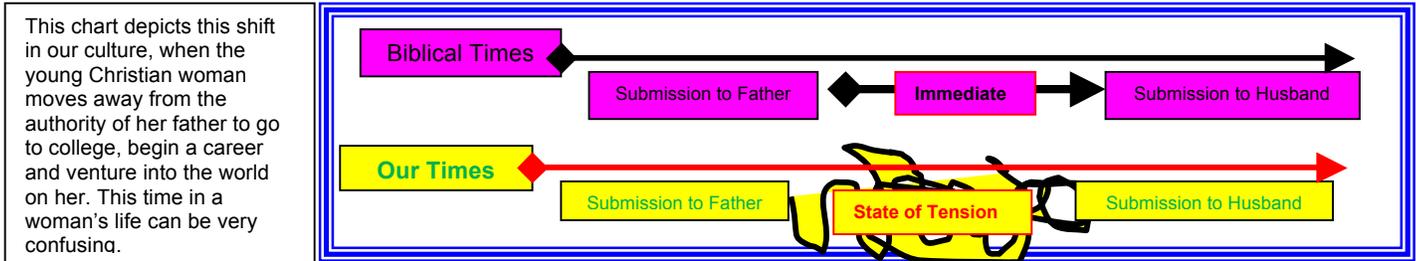
Yet there are many Christian singles whose singleness does not naturally flow from their commitment to God. Rather, most Christian singles are committed to waiting for God's timing to marry. In these ranks, there are young, never-married women as well as previously married women who do not consider themselves to be celibate. In fact, celibacy runs counter to the desire of their hearts and for now, they are waiting. God has not yet brought a godly husband into this woman's life. What is this woman to do until that time?

Commitment to celibacy is addressed in 1 Corinthians 7:1-7. This passage teaches us a number of things. First, in verse 1b, commitment to celibacy is good. Paul says, *...it is good for a man not to touch a woman*. It is good when a man has no sexual relations with a woman, because celibacy can be good. It has advantages for the kingdom because singleness allows people the freedom to minister wherever the Spirit of God might lead them within the church or to be sent out by the church. But verse 2 warns us celibacy opens up a person to great temptation because of sexual desire; *...because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband*. Why? The Bible says singleness is a gift God gives to some. Paul says this in verse 7, *Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am*. [meaning single] *However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that*. [some have the gift of singleness, others do not]

The general indication of this passage is that celibacy is, for a few, a sovereignly given gift. Celibacy does not make these people more spiritual. The purpose for the gift of celibacy is **greater physical sacrifice for the kingdom of God**.

The question we must ask, then, is how does a woman know whether she is a celibate. The general principles in 1 Corinthians 7 can help us answer that question. One, the person gifted with celibacy has no desire for marriage or children. Two, the true celibate is not troubled by sexual temptation (the Bible says "burning"). This woman would not be struggling with a burning desire for sexual intimacy. Rather, she would have a strong desire to give herself totally and selflessly to the ministry of Jesus Christ, to exalt Him with her life and make Him known. She would be committed to sharing the gospel and continuing the work Christ began on the planet. She would be committed to mentoring other women to know Christ and honor Christ with their lives. Three, sovereign circumstances will help a woman know celibacy is God's plan for her life. God never brings a husband to this woman. But I believe all these indications must be true in order for a woman to recognize she is a true, biblical celibate. Many women do not yet have a husband, and yet have a strong desire for marriage and children. At times they are troubled by sexual temptation. Although they desire the oneness of marriage, at the present time they are single.

THE STATE OF TENSION PRIOR TO MARRIAGE If a single Christian woman is not a biblical celibate—if God does not intend for her to remain single for her entire life—and she desires to follow the Word of God in all things, then that woman will find herself in an **unbelievable state of tension** for four reasons. The **first** reason is that there is **no physical authority over her**. During the first century, a young woman was under the authority of her father until she came under the authority of her husband, with no period of time in between. She lived under the roof of her father until the day she was married. In our culture, 2,000 years later, many women face a significant gap between subjection to parental authority and being subject to a husband.



In **1 Corinthians 7:36-38**, Paul is speaking to fathers, addressing whether or not they should give their daughters away in marriage. Paul's words establish that this is totally the father's responsibility. In verse 38 Paul says, *So then, he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better*. In context, Paul is recommending singleness because of the current distress in the Corinthian church. He says to the father, it is your decision. The daughter was either under the father's authority or under her husband's authority. In today's society, many young Christian women face this decision alone. Many are separated from their father's authority and consequently experience uncertainty about their future and themselves.

The **second** reason single women live in a state of tension is because there is **a lack of modeling**. The family is a crumbling institution, even in the church. Today's single Christians will openly admit their lack of exposure to biblical patterning of God's design for gender roles. Perhaps only 20% of singles had a mom and dad who lived out the biblical pattern for men and women in the family. Our culture is sending young people a loud message that contradicts the biblical model. Sadly, most young Christian women make no effort to be exposed to modeling which surrounds them in a healthy church.

A **third** reason single Christian women are unbelievably burdened by tension is because of **satanic and worldly pressure**. Our world is influenced by a wicked ruler who mocks God's design at every turn. You can even see this influence in the pulpit of some Christian churches. Satan makes attractive the qualities of independence, dominance, role reversal, material gain, career priority and finding security and significance through achievement. And all of these things create an unbelievably difficult world for a single woman to live in

A **fourth** reason the single woman lives in a state of tension is because there is **no specific time frame** in which God will bring marriage and a family. She may recognize a longing in her heart for marriage, but she cannot know when this might become a reality. What is she to do until then? Out from under headship, how does the single woman manage this time in her life and avoid choices that push marriage and family farther from sight?

WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY TO SINGLE CHRISTIAN WOMEN – who desires to honor Him and follow His Word?

He would tell her to **guard her heart** against jealousy toward young couples. I believe He'd tell her not to be critical of single men who are not yet dating or courting. Philippians 2:14 says to *do all things without grumbling or disputing*.

Jesus would also tell single women to **resist the pressure to pursue the world's standard** of success. Romans 12:2 *do not be conformed to this world...* I believe Jesus would warn single woman not to ignore the counsel of God's Word. He'd tell her the role of men and women is not the same. God clearly says in Ephesians 5 men and women have unique roles. Ephesians 5:23 *...the husband is the head of the wife ...25...husbands love your wives... 22... wives be subject to your own husband... 33...Let the wife see to it that she respect her husband*. The biblical role of men and women is dramatically different.

Jesus would also tell single women **not to choose to believe they're celibates** simply because they do not yet have a husband. He would warn them against pursuing any direction for their lives that is not of God. He would encourage them to yield their lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God. He would admonish them to be patient.

The Lord would warn single women about serving the Him outwardly but **resenting Him in their hearts**. He would teach them to honor, not resent, the biblical role of submission and the priority of home and family. Truly if Christ were physically next to us, our hearts would be crushed if we harbored resentment against Him because of the unique role has for each of us.

The Lord would exhort single women to **think biblically**, not fearfully. Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things*. Letting our minds dwell on the truth in God's Word will guard our hearts. Dwelling on our own opinions and what the world tells us, puts our hearts in peril.

Jesus Christ would warn us **not to mix His truth with modern-day heresy**. So many churches are compromising the Word by mixing it with worldly thinking and humanistic philosophies. Many churches ultimately encourage people to believe what they want and reject the rest of the Bible. Many churches have adopted "biblical" feminism because they've compromised biblical submission with the philosophy of the women's liberation movement. A classic illustration of this is the mixing of creation with the philosophy of evolution, giving Christians the incorrect view of theistic evolution. Stay focused on what God has clearly said to women?

QUESTIONS for Discipleship Groups

- #1 What does it mean to have undistracted devotion to the Lord as a single Christian woman? See 1 Corinthians 7:35
- #2 How can undistracted devotion be balanced with preparing for marriage and family in the future if you are not a celibate?
- #3 What kind of choices does a single woman have to make in order to live out undistracted devotion to Christ as a single woman, AND also carefully preparing for marriage/family in the future?
- #4 How can a Godly married woman help a single woman [in the church, not merely your own daughter] through this time of single tension in a very specific and practical way?
- #5 As a group, come up with an assignment for each day this next week in order to pursue becoming the women God desires you to be