

**SEE THE
FAMILY I
HAVE
BUILT**

Elements of Family 3:

SEE THE FAMILY I HAVE BUILT!

Sept. 16, 2012

Sermon in a sentence: The fact that you are unmarried does not mean you cannot build and maintain a strong, loving, godly family.

Scriptures: Isaiah 54:1-6 (Gal. 4:27); Psalm 113:5-9; Psalm 68:6

In most societies, marriage, child bearing and family relationships are highly prized. Many of you have heard the question I was asked a number of times in my 20's: "Aren't you married yet?", as if this was the most important thing I should have been concerned about and living for.

Certainly I am a big fan of marriage, and am very glad God gave me a woman who has endured life with me for the past 27 years! (Did I just say 'endured'?? I'm sure I meant to say 'enjoyed'!)

However, marriage isn't always the outcome of relationships we may try to foster in our youth with eligible bachelors or bachelorettes. Sometimes, things just don't work out the way we planned, and all of a sudden, we realize our prospects have almost completely faded.

Women in the church, and in society at large are crying out: "Where are all the men?!", as increasing numbers nowadays go through life without a spouse. This has resulted in a host of bright, accomplished, well educated, loving, gracious, beautiful women, who feel incomplete

and unfulfilled, because they do not have a spouse and children.

(I am sure there are a few women who enjoy the autonomy and independence of the non-married life, glad they don't have to face the possibility of living with and being accountable to a smelly neanderthal who belches and snores and is socially inept and lazy!)

A few others choose to remain single to enhance their effectiveness in the work of Christ's kingdom, but the vast majority of people have a strong, totally natural desire for a spouse and children, rather than to be alone. You are the ones I will now address.

First of all, as the people of God, there is a reality we must always remember, (whether we are single or married): we belong to Jesus Christ and are a part of His earthly 'bride of Christ'.

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for **I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.** (2Cor. 11:2 NASB)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **26**so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27**that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. (Eph. 5:25-27 NASB)

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of **the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.**" (Rev. 19:7 NASB)

God Himself was seeking companionship, (just as He knew Adam needed companionship in the Garden of Eden). The Lord was seeking a love relationship that would be eternal

in nature, just as He is eternal. He met Adam's need with Eve, and fulfilled His own desire with the Church, His bride.

So, as His bride, we are in that exciting, stressful, expectant, impatient, 'can't end soon enough' stage between the engagement and the marriage supper of the Lamb. The day we see Jesus, and this is all over, will be the most incredible day one could possibly imagine! (Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus!) It will be 'over the top', beyond compare.

However, while we're still here on mother Earth, we have to deal with the realities of our present life – "until".

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There are a number of incredibly strong feelings and desires one can experience as a single adult, most of which are totally natural. Some however have been magnified in our minds by the enemy of our souls to the place where they take control of our thinking and debilitate us! In the end, many of the things we end up thinking about ourselves and saying to ourselves are quite simply false:

- **"Nobody wants me"**
- **"I am really ugly"**
- **"There must be something wrong with me"**
- **"I'm just no good"**
- **"I really deserve to be lonely"**
- **"Nobody wants me around. I'm just an oddball"**
- **"Everybody else is happy. Why can't I be happy too"**
- **"God must really hate me. Why won't He answer my prayers?"**
- **"I must be a real lousy Christian"**
- **"I'm going to die all alone"**
- **"I don't even know if I'm going to heaven"**

- “I am living such a sad, depressed life, why doesn’t God just take me now”

You may never have married, you may be a widow or widower, a single parent, separated or divorced. You may be fighting battles against loneliness, low self-esteem, feelings of rejection, strong physical/sexual desires and fears for your future. However, we must learn how to successfully *manage* our natural, God-given desires, while at the same time defeating all of the devil’s lies, misconceptions and fears.

I won’t take the time for a tour through the scriptures that speak against Satan’s lies and traps – this is one of the blessings you will receive by devoting the time to imbibe scripture for yourself. It is much more powerful when you come to these places of revelation and understanding yourself through giving time to your heavenly spouse. He delights to speak to us through His Word.

However, let’s read one representative passage, written as an allegorical poem that beautifully expresses God’s feelings toward His city and His bride – His special treasure:

Isaiah 54:1-6 NASB “**Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child;** Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; **For the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman,**” says the LORD. **2**“Enlarge the place of your tent; **Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings,** spare not; Lengthen your cords And strengthen your pegs. **3**“For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. And **your descendants will possess nations** And will resettle the desolate cities. **4**“Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; And **do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;** But you will **forget the shame of your youth,** And the reproach of your widowhood you will

remember no more. 5“For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth. 6“For the LORD has called you, Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, Even like a wife of one’s youth when she is rejected,” Says your God.

So, first and foremost, let us remember that we belong to God. We are His body, His church, His bride, His eternal pleasure!

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As the title of the message implies, we will now discuss how you can successfully build a family around yourself, though you may not have a spouse.

To refresh our memory from the first message in this series, “family” can be described in the following way:

Two or more people, related by birth, marriage, or adoption, who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another, and reside usually in the same dwelling place.

Here are four options for building your family and/or strong, supportive “community” relationships; (none of which preclude the possibility that you may marry one day and parent your own biological children).

They are simply options to deal with present reality, which may or may not become a permanent reality. These are pro-active steps you can take without putting your life on hold in hope of your dream of marriage coming true:

1. Maximize the benefits of your existing biological family (e.g. Mordecai and his cousin Esther: Esther 2:5-7,20b)

Now there was at the citadel in Susa a Jew whose name was **Mordecai**, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, **6**who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled. **7**He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, **Mordecai took her as his own daughter.**

Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther **did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care.** (Esther 2:5-7, 20b NASB)

- a. Consider living with your parents, siblings or other relatives as an antidote to loneliness
 - b. Rent or buy a residence that can accommodate all of you with appropriate areas for privacy when you desire it
 - c. Live as equals. Share expenses equitably and do not try to rule your family members
 - d. Love, help, advise when consulted, honour and respect each other
- 2. Build a family through formal adoption of children, foster parenting, or informal long-term commitments with chosen beneficiaries, young or old (e.g. Pharaoh's daughter and Moses: Ex. 2:5-10)**

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it *to her*. **6**When she opened *it*, she saw the child, and behold, *the* boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." **7**Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?" **8**Pharaoh's daughter said to

her, “Go *ahead*.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. **9**Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give *you* your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him. **10**The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, “Because I drew him out of the water.” (Ex. 2:5-10 NASB)

- a. Consider legally adopting a child. (This can be done for free through the Children’s Aid Society). This gives you a great opportunity to love, nurture, protect, teach and parent a child (or children) in need. They become your family in every sense of the word!
- b. Join with a parent(s) to help them raise their child(ren) as a “Big Brother”, Big Sister”, foster parent, honorary aunt or uncle – doing all in your power to give a child’s life the best possible outcome. You will become as much a part of that family as if you were related by “blood, marriage or adoption”.

Note to single adults: When people invite you to family functions, outings, dinner etc. they are not just patronizing you and feeling sorry for you. If you have loved your way into their family structure, they WANT you to be there. You belong! The “5th wheel syndrome” is just another one of the devil’s plots against you.

- c. Develop a loving, caring, supportive relationship with someone old enough to be your mother or father. Glean from their wisdom, help keep them young in spirit, share the gift of companionship and be someone they can trust to their dying day.

3. Enter into a situation of close community living with like-minded friends (e.g. David and the “family” imposed upon him: 1 Sam. 22:1-2; also consider Jesus and His disciples: Jn. 1:35 – 2:2 etc.)

So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father’s household heard *of it*, they went down there to him. ²Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him. (1 Sam. 22:1-2 NASB)

- a. If not with blood relatives, you can still consider renting / purchasing a residence with trustworthy people who share your lifestyle, aspirations and faith – (as is age and gender appropriate)
4. Live on your own if that is your preference, but maintain strong family connections with relatives, or a community of close friends you have determined to share life with.
 - a. Do not be selfish and deny others access to all you have to offer! Be a true friend, willing to share.
 - b. Be fully engaged in the work of God, both at home and abroad – use your freedom to advantage.
 - c. Be a mentor. Be a volunteer. Be an anchor in someone else’s life.

The key to all the options above is that they demand the establishment of long-term, committed, loving and wholesome relationships. This is how we build families and build community.

Family relationships are neither temporary nor transient, convenient nor cheap. The demands are great and the rewards are greater!

In no way does being single force you to deny yourself the joy and fulfillment of family life. Build a loving family around yourself to share life and love with, and remember: the best is yet to come when we see Jesus face to face!