

THE WAY THAT I TAKE
(A word to unmarried followers of Christ)

Whatever path I take in life, I seek to glorify God, who is my guide, sustainer and comforter.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Research shows that it is healthier – psychologically, emotionally and even physically – to live in a loving community, than to live a solitary, detached life.
- ❖ For some, having graduated from high school or a post-secondary institution and secured a decent job, the pressure was on (quite often from Mom) to “take the next step.” “Do the right thing.” Get married.
- ❖ Even now, your social circle may be exerting subtle (or overt) pressure if you are not married. Many have been asked: “What are you waiting for,” as if marriage was like going to the supermarket. “Do you need to get groceries?” “Yes.” “So, what are you waiting for?”
- ❖ There are those who are unmarried and would like to be married, and those who are unmarried and content with that way of life. Some may have made a deliberate decision to remain single to accomplish certain things they have set their hearts on to do. Others are content with living as a single person, but open to marriage should a suitable opportunity arise.
- ❖ Strangely though, people in any of the groups mentioned may look at their life and conclude: “Something must be wrong with me, because...
 “...no one has shown enough interest to marry me.”
 “...I couldn't see giving myself to any of those who asked me to marry them.”
 “...I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.” (as per 19th century philosopher Henry David Thoreau)
 “...I choose to devote myself to God, my career, studies, hobby – whatever – rather than to a spouse.”
- ❖ But no matter who you are or what path you walk as a single adult, everyone has to answer the same basic question: “How do I live a fulfilled, well balanced and productive life that benefits others as well as myself, and most importantly gives glory to God?”
- ❖ An oft-repeated statement says, “...enjoy the journey, not just the destination.” But how do we do this?
- ❖ First and foremost, recognize that being unmarried is not some sort of personal failing!
- ❖ To believe this is to believe a debilitating lie. Instead, remember this: “God don't make no junk!” Yes, we have improvements we need to make in our lives, but we are not utterly broken, deficient, or useless.
- ❖ Secondly, as much as one may desire marriage, realize that there is something much worse than not being married: being married unhappily.
- ❖ Creating a good marriage can be difficult and both parties need to be ready for the challenge!
- ❖ In spite of strong unmet desires, don't miss out on the joys, privileges, challenges and opportunities that abound whether or not we share life with a spouse.

KEY SCRIPTURES:

Job 23:2-14; 1 Corinthians 7: 7-9, 27-28, 32-35; Matthew 19:10-12

- ❖ Typically, unmarried people are freer to pursue their interests and inclinations. Take that trip. Enrol in that course. Adopt that child. Seek that promotion. Learn to play that instrument. Lead that ministry. Go on that missions trip. Do that in-depth study of the Word of God.
- ❖ Marriage is definitely a blessing from God (see Genesis 2:18-22). However, the lives of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul show that marriage is not the best way of life for every individual. Some are called to walk a path that is best walked alone. Walk your own path.
- ❖ In Job 23:2-14, Job cries out in the midst of his sickness, stress and abandonment by his wife and friends. He uncovers questions we are sometimes too afraid to acknowledge, much less ask, as we battle unmet expectations, unfulfilled dreams and bitter disappointments.
- ❖ Like Job, we must learn to understand and accept the sovereignty of God, even at the expense of our desires. Assurance and joy come from realizing that God knows the way we take (v.10) and trusts that we will glorify Him in whatever life He calls us to live.
- ❖ Jesus in Matthew 19:10-12 and Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:7-9, 27-28, 32-35 speak of and to those who have chosen to forego marriage to pursue God-honouring desires or callings.
- ❖ These readings make it clear that God has called some of us to a very high calling which demands we stay close to Him to receive the strength and grace He wants to give us to glorify Him with our lives.
- ❖ While married couples are called to glorify God by living in mutual submission to each other, the unmarried believer is called to be God-focused; to be set apart to Him.
- ❖ This is a position of great trust, honour and privilege in the kingdom of God. Are you up for the challenge?

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Single or married, reflect on your greatest unmet desire(s). If it's still possible to achieve it, write down what you will do to move toward that goal. Or, if it's "too late", how will you move forward and/or use your experience(s) of disappointment in a positive, God-honouring way?
2. Reflect/record/share how you can best use your current state to live a God-focused, productive and fulfilling life.

Prayer Time

Lord, You not only know my way, You planned and directed it to make me pure and precious as gold.

Start-up: Have you ever looked forward to something but were disappointed when it came, or did not come to pass? What other emotions did you feel?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2019

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

- ✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)
- 🗣️ (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↻ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
 Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline