

The Single Life

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Preacher: Dave Warren

[0:00] My life is a symphony, praise the man of Galilee. kome for a stranger, he is the arranger of my symphony.

kome Once my life was all discordant, using in a minor key.

Then one day I met a master, and he changed a bad army.

I hear the symphony, tis the man of Galilee. I changed my discourse into song, when I speak the whole day long.

My life is a symphony, praise the man of Galilee. No more a stranger, he is the arranger of my symphony.

[1:26] If you find your life discordant, then you long for harmony.

At the cross you'll meet the master, then you'll sing along with me.

My life is a symphony, tis the man of Galilee. I change my discourse into song, when I speak the whole day long.

My life is a symphony, tis the man of Galilee. My life is a symphony, tis the man of Galilee.

My life is a symphony, tis the man of Galilee. Since the man of Galilee.

[2:46] Since the man of Galilee changed my discourse into song. My life is a twin, the holy love. Life is a symphony, praise the man of Galilee.

No more a stranger he is, he a major of my symphony. No more a stranger he is, he a major of my symphony.

Why have you chosen me out of millions your child to be?

You know all the wrong that I've done. And how can you pardon me, forgive my iniquity, to save me give Jesus your Son.

But Lord, help me be what you want me to be. Your will I will strive to obey.

[4:41] My life I now give, for you I will live. And walk by your side all the way.

I am amazed to know that a God so great could love me so, His willing and wanting to bless.

His grace is so wonderful, His mercy so bountiful.

I can't understand it, I confess. But Lord, help me be what you want me to be.

Your will I will strive to obey. My life I now give, for you I will live.

[6:06] And walk by your side all the way. And walk by your side all the way. God, Lord, help me be what you want me to be.

Your will I will strive to obey. My life I now give, for you I will live.

And walk by your side all the way. I'll walk by your side all the way.

I will ask you to do what Paul asked the Corinthian church to do with him on one occasion.

When he said, you'll have to excuse me for my foolishness. As I sat here tonight looking you over, I could not help but think of the various groups of people that the Lord has allowed me to be with on various occasions in the last six years.

[7:56] And to be reminded in a fresh way of the great work that the Lord is doing in the hearts of people.

It's great to know that there are people just like you who love the Lord and who meet regularly in their localities across the state of Ohio, across these United States, and really around the world.

Oh, the time zones may be a little bit different. But the vineyard of the Lord is very broad. And it's a great thrill to have just a little taste of what the Lord is doing in various places.

And so I couldn't help but mention that to you and to let you know my mind had wandered just a little bit there for a few moments. At the same time, as I looked you over, I was reminded also of how much of a blessing faithful people are.

I don't know if you have a concept of what a blessing you are just as by your attendance and by your faithful loyalty. That means so much in any day, really.

[9:11] People by their faithfulness, just the fact that they are here regularly, you can almost set your clock by them. It's a wonderful blessing to people who look out this way to see faithful people.

And I think you are to be commended for your faithfulness. And I just wanted to mention that to you as well. I guess the greatest privilege that I feel of being here tonight is not just being with you, although that's a wonderful privilege, and I understand that, I want you to understand that.

But the Lord Jesus did say, where two or more are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. The Lord Jesus Christ himself is here.

It's great to be with the people of God and it's great to be with him. That's what makes the church service different from the PTA and a few other social events.

The Lord Jesus himself is meeting with us tonight. And I trust that you are glad to be here and that you have a sensitivity to what is going on in the scriptures tonight.

[10:30] It may strike you as being somewhat odd to have a message on the single life in a family series.

But when you think about it a little further, you realize, begin to realize, that it's really not as odd as it may appear. There are many people in our churches who are not married, who are single.

There are many young people who are, as they grow, are thinking about marriage and married life and a mate and all of these kinds of things. I think there is a whole segment in our churches that is a forgotten segment, pretty much an ignored segment.

We gear our church life and activities to families, to people with husbands, wives, and children. And we tend to gear and to promote and advertise, etc.

Cultivate the family. We tend also then to ignore the single person. Sometimes, single people are even looked down upon as being somehow a little less than desirable, some type of a reject who couldn't quite make it in life.

[11:54] And we really have some pretty poor attitudes towards a single person. Therefore, I think it appropriate and I think it necessary that in this brief series, we take a swat, a biblical swat, as it were, at this whole matter of the single life.

We're going to actually begin where we left off this morning. You will recall that in the book of Genesis, we discovered that it was not good for the man to be alone.

And if that were all of the scripture that we had, if that were the last word that we had on life and on marriage, then we would have to conclude logically that every individual person must marry.

However, I mentioned this morning that it's a general principle and that it implies that most everyone will or should marry. Because you see, we have further word from heaven.

Genesis 2.18 is not the last word that we have on the single life. There is what is called in scripture a progress of revelation.

[13:13] That is, the Lord will mention something early on and then he will bring it up again and then he will bring it up again. And each succeeding mention of something refines.

And gives additional information or insight with regard to that subject. We need to understand that. Something mentioned in Genesis and picked up in the gospels and then picked up again in the epistles.

It's the progress of revelation. And therefore, on the basis of that biblical principle, the progress of revelation, I'm going to suggest to you tonight, I'm going to say to you tonight, that the single life is a live option.

It is a viable option for people. We dare not force every believer into the marriage mold and think that somehow because they do not marry for whatever reason, they are out of the will of God.

The single life is a viable option. Now the message tonight is somewhat similar to this morning.

[14:33] But I want to give you my outline again so that you will know where I am. As you know, I don't always do that. And to be perfectly honest with you, I don't like to do that because I like the element of suspense in preaching.

I think people ought to wonder where you're going. That helps them to stay awake just a little bit.

But on certain occasions, I like to just lay it all out before you, before people, so that they can relax and listen to where I happen to be at the moment.

We're going to begin with what I simply am going to call some instructions. Just simply some biblical instructions. We're going to look at two crucial passages and just think our way through them as to

what the scriptures do actually say.

So instruction will be our beginning note. From that, we're going to move to what I'm going to call advice. Advice.

Not scripture, but my own personal advice or opinion. When we get there, I will let you know to make a clear distinction between what God has to say and what my advice is.

[15 : 46] I want you to know there is a difference. At least I know there is a difference. I'm sure you know. If I didn't, you'd tell me. So at any rate, there is a difference there.

Then when we get done with that, we're going to go to what I'm going to call resolves. Resolves. Resolves. It seems to me we need to come to a climactic point of some holy resolves in our life. Some deep-seated convictions with regard to life itself. So that's the flow tonight. That's where we're going. And I invite you to come with me on this little journey.

1 Corinthians 7 will be our beginning point. 1 Corinthians 7. We want to look at some instructions from the Word of God.

When you come to 1 Corinthians 7, you are coming right smack dab in the middle of this book of 1 Corinthians in terms of Paul's development of it.

[16 : 51] In the first half of the book, we have Paul rebuking. He is rebuking them for a number of different manifestations of carnality. But when you come to chapter 7 and following, Paul is no longer rebuking them.

Now he is replying to their questions. Apparently, the Corinthian assembly had come up with a number of questions.

And they had taken the time and the effort to write them all down and shoot them off to Paul. And in response, he writes back this letter. In chapter 7, he questions somewhat relating to marriage and to the single life.

Chapters 8 and 9, a question regarding the matter of the offering. Chapters 10 and 11, things with regard to worship. Chapters 12 to 14, various kinds of gifts and so on.

But he is answering their questions. I want to pick up just a few verses in chapter 7. Because in these verses, Paul gives to us his opinion with regard to singleness.

[18 : 09] I think you can pick it up for yourself as I read the verses. Please notice, 1 Corinthians 7, 1. Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me, It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Now when he says here, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. He is not referring to the matter of a man laying his hand upon a woman's hand, not to come in contact with her.

He is not talking about that. It is a different word in the original text. It is the word for sexual relationship. Paul is saying, it is good, that is, it is an inherently okay thing, for a man not to enter into sexual relationship with a woman.

Now frankly, we do not know what the question was that the Corinthian assembly had written to Paul. Nobody knows what that question is.

[19 : 31] It is up to a certain amount of guess work, frankly, depending on the reading of these verses. But it seems to me, if I understand this question, this reply correctly, the question must have been something like this.

Paul, is it okay to be single? Or do we have to marry? Is the single wife a viable way to go?

And if that were the question, then Paul's reply fits right into that particular question. When he says, it is good, it is a morally excellent thing for a man not to marry.

Then he goes on to say in verse 2, nevertheless, to avoid fornication. Let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband.

Now this is a little bit of an aside here, frankly, in verse 2, from the particular topic that we are after tonight. But since I have read the verse, I want to make a comment on it.

[20 : 42] Some folks, when they read verse 2, react to it, back off in almost holy horror and say, Oh my goodness, what is Paul making of us?

It sounds as though Paul is making us to be but animals, lowering us from the plane of humanity to just mere animals moved by all kinds of passions.

And if we don't marry, we are going to fall into terrible sin and immorality. So you better marry in order to contain these uncontrollable passions. And some have responded or reacted to that verse in a very negative way.

And said, well, you know, it makes us sound very animal-ish. The real answer to that is that Paul is not making us animal-ish.

Paul is simply being very realistic. Paul knows, and you and I know, that God has created a man a man and a woman a woman. And that in that creative act was included our human sexuality.

[21 : 52] God is the one who puts that sexual drive in a man. God is the one who puts that sexual drive in a woman. God is the one who is responsible for the magnetism between the two and the attractiveness of the one to the other because he made us that way.

It is very normal. It is very normal to have strong sexual feelings toward the opposite sex. That is normality.

That is the way God created us. Now, Paul knows what normality is, what reality is. And so in dealing with that, he is saying, listen, God has not only given you the ability to perform sexually, but God has also given you the legitimate arena in which to express that sexuality.

And that is marriage. I look at it this way. I look at it this way. This helps me. I hope it will help you.

When God created man and woman, he gave to us the ability to consume food.

It is a built-in ability. We like it. Just remember last Thursday and you will realize how much we like it and how much we take advantage of that ability, that drive, that passion that the Lord has built right into us.

[23 : 34] Now, suppose God gave you the ability to eat and to drink, and he has. And then he says to you, now listen to me. I made you that way, but I never want you to eat, and I never want you to drink a thing.

What kind of a being would God be? Suppose he made a creature that had the ability to sleep. And then he said to that creature, now if you really want to be spiritual and you really want to be like me, I never want you to go to sleep.

Oh, I know you can go to sleep. I gave you the ability to go to sleep, but there's never a time in your life when you want to go to sleep. I'm against it. I think we would all cry out against such a God and say, why did you make me like this?

Why did you give me the ability to eat and to drink and to sleep, and you never gave me the opportunity to express that? That's unfair. Well, what is true of those physical passions is also true of our sexuality.

God is not unfair. God has built within us normal sexual drives and desires. And then he has not said, now don't you ever express it, ever.

[24 : 59] Rather, having given us those abilities, he has also given us the legitimate arena of expression, marriage.

marriage. And Paul knows that. And dealing with the realities of his day and the realities of the human person, he says, it's an okay thing to be single, but the vast majority of you ought to have your own partner. There's nothing inherently wrong, however. That's what verse 1 is saying. There is nothing inherently wrong with remaining or being single. Now, notice, please, verses 6 through 8.

Paul comes back to this theme in these verses, and I'm skipping verses, what are they, 3 through 5, simply because they do not pertain directly to our theme tonight. That's why I'm jumping over them. Verse 6, he says, But I speak this by permission and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself.

[26 : 15] But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that. I say, therefore, to the unmarried and to the widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I.

Now, Paul gives his opinion. He says, I speak this by permission. It's not a thus saith the Lord, even for Paul. And Paul is not laying it upon the church at Corinth or the one here in Columbus as being a thus saith the Lord. But Paul says this, if I had my druthers, if I could share with you my opinion, Paul says, I just assume you remain single.

Isn't that what he says? To the unmarried, to the widows, he says, I wish that you could abide even as I. Paul enjoyed being single.

Now, those who are married say, well, what was wrong with Paul? He was some kind of a kook.

Now you're putting marriage in the wrong light. Paul is simply recommending the single life.

Now, he gives us at least a little bit of rationale for that. If you allow me to take you down to verses 32 through 35.

[27:48] Paul gives us something of his reasoning why he recommended singleness. He says, 1 Corinthians 7 and let's see, verse 32.

He says, But I would have you without carefulness or without anxiety, a life filled with fretting and worry.

He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife.

Now, we're going to read a couple of more verses, but please, please notice that Paul is not faulting married people. He does not say, you nasty, dirty, lousy, rotten Christian if you're married and you're concerned about your wife.

I mean, that really is a terrible thing to do. He doesn't say that. He is simply stating a fact. If you are married to a wife, you are going to care about pleasing her and vice versa.

[29:07] Whereas the one who is single can give his or her full attention without distraction to the Lord.

That's all he said. Well, a couple of more verses. Verse 34, There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit.

But she that is married cares for the things of the world, herself to the Lord. In an undistracted way, without having your concentration and your attention siphoned off here and shunted off there, you can give yourself with a concentrated effort to the things of the Lord.

And Paul says, I would just really like to save you some trouble. Now, in case that bothers you, I think we need to, again, come back to the matter of being very realistic here.

Beloved friends, when we get married, we do take on real responsibility.

[30:26] Don't we? When you say to that young lady or to that young man at that altar, I will love, honor, cherish, and the young lady says, submit to or obey that man.

When we agree to meet one another's sexual needs for life, when we agree to cherish and to provide for the needs of one another for life, is that not a real responsibility?

And when the Lord blesses that home with children, is there not a time-consuming responsibility there that the single person does not have?

I think if we're honest and objective about it, we have to say, well, yes, there really is. There really is a difference. Have I told you about Sundays?

Did I mention that to you? the difference between Sunday morning and Sunday morning? Did I mention that? I've forgotten. Sunday morning is the time when kids sleep in.

[31:46] Sunday morning can be terrifically difficult. Now, when you just have yourself, you get up Sunday morning and you can have your leisurely cup of coffee and comb your hair two or three times read the paper and look over the Sunday school deal, you know, and you drive in leisurely into the parking lot at 9.15 and shoot the breeze with your friends and get all ready for Sunday school to start.

You say, man, this is great. And then you decide to get married. And then a little while later you have a little one or maybe two or maybe three or four or more.

Then comes Sunday morning. And what used to be a leisurely, nice Sunday morning time going to church becomes really quite a little hassle because the time you get yourself up and yourself dressed, then you get them up and get them dressed and give them breakfast and get some of them redressed.

And then you try to get the coat on and all these other things on and you say, where is that boot and where is that glove? I saw it last Tuesday.

And you grab this and you grab that and you head for the car and you race to Maranatha parking lot and you pull in here at 9.40 or whatever and you look at yourself and you look at each other and you say, holy mackerel.

[33:12] Oh, for the good old days. Now listen, who's supposed to raise those children? Who's supposed to love that wife? Who's supposed to obey that husband?

The Lord? No, you are. You took that responsibility with its time and with its effort and all of the energy that it takes to take care of those things.

And that's all Paul is saying. When you get married, you take on real responsibility and you cannot shirk it. You cannot.

Therefore, Paul says, it's okay to be single. It's really not such a bad way to go. And it can save you a lot of care, a lot of fretting, a lot of frustration.

That's what he's saying. Now again, that's Paul's opinion. He does not give that to us as a, thus saith the Lord, therefore don't marry. What he's really saying is, think.

[34 : 20] Realize what you're getting into before you marry. That's what he's saying. You say, where in the world did he get that? Paul didn't like women or some other such thing.

Where did he get it? Matthew 19. Will you turn there for just another moment? Matthew 19.

I did fail to point out to you back in 1 Corinthians 7 that Paul used the word gift. Paul says, each man has his own gift.

One after this sort and another after that. He speaks of, I think, a gift of singleness. But here's where he got it.

Matthew 19. Look at verse 10. Look at verse 10. His disciples say unto him, and by the way, this is right after a divorce debate.

[35 : 28] That's a totally different issue. But he says, his disciples say unto him, if the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, all men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

Notice that word, given. Same, the verb form of the word gift. Then he goes on to explain it. For there are some eunuchs, who were so born from their mother's womb.

And there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men. And there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. A eunuch is a man who has been castrated, who has had his sexual organ removed.

And the Savior is saying there are three kinds of eunuchs. One who is born that way, who was born in a deformed manner. There is a eunuch who has been made that way by other men, apparently by defeat in some military campaign.

[36 : 44] And men made them eunuchs, made away by others. And there is a third kind of eunuch, those who have made themselves eunuchs. That is, those who have voluntarily decided not to marry.

And their motivation is for the kingdom of heaven's sake. They have decided not to enter into marriage. marriage. He says, it is for those to whom it is given.

And Paul picks up on that and he says, not everybody can receive this. One man has a gift this way and another man has a gift another. But Paul says, I recommend the single life.

Now you're thinking well with me. You're probably thinking a little too seriously at this moment. But I guess that's alright. Does a person have to be married to be a success in life?

Can a single believer be a successful Christian? I'm going to let you answer that question.

[37 : 55] Can you think of anybody in the Bible who was single and successful as a believer? Now we're going to take away Paul because we've already been talking about Paul.

You talk to me. Can you name any? The Lord Jesus Christ himself. Who else? Elijah and his successor.

Elisha. Can you name any others? John the Baptist. Can you name any others? Don't be afraid now.

You've heard of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Three single adults. Ever heard of a guy named Daniel?

Ever hear of a person named the Apostle John? They weren't exactly slouches in the Bible. Were they?

[39 : 06] No. These were some of the most intimate. These were some of the most godly people that we know. And they were single. One single life is a viable option.

Each one must determine for themselves what is the will of God on the matter. We've done this, there's one third here.

And we're going to move now to my advice, my opinion. And I do this with a little bit of timidity, to be honest with you, and rightly so.

Who am I to give you advice? But I want to make it very clear to you that as far as I am personally concerned, my advice carries no more weight than yours. We are believers in the Lord.

And I'm not a biggie and you're a littleie. That's not the way it is. And you have a right to disagree with my opinions. And I will still love you and you will have to love me because we preached on it

last Sunday night.

[40:25] There is a certain amount of love that's supposed to flow even when you don't agree necessarily. But I have some advice to share with those of you who are single. Before I give you that though, I've got to say this too.

The advice that I give you is not worthless. Take it. You've got to consider the source of the advice you get. I speak to you as one who does love you.

And I speak to you as one who has no personal axe to grind with you. I have nothing to gain from you, frankly.

Oh, you may not want me back next Sunday, but you know that we'll all get over that. I have nothing to gain as far as I'm personally concerned. Also, take it from one who has been through this single stage of life and is now on the other side of marriage by 18 years.

A true old fogie. But here is my advice to you. I direct this to the young people among us, particularly those who are really in this matter of thinking about marriage and so on.

[41:39] Two little bits of advice. Bit number one. Date wisely. Date wisely.

Date wisely. Now, that's a broad generalization. I've got to put some meat on that. Date wisely.

Now, some of your parents are about to say, Amen, amen, give it to them.

And you may say, I'll never darken the door of Cedarville College again. Et cetera. I don't care. Yes, I do. Forgive me for teasing with you.

But do date wisely. Use your head when you date. Just some disconnected thoughts. Young people, a dating relationship should begin with friendship and then move to courtship and then move to mateship.

Don't get in a big hurry. Don't rush into anything. Somebody says, Oh, man, we fell in love so quickly. We're going to fall out of it. We better do something.

[42:49] That's ridiculous. You say, Well, I'm not going to see her for the whole summer. Woo! Three months? I don't know.

She may find somebody else. Et cetera. Listen, the acid test of the real thing is time. And if it won't last three months, it'll never last a lifetime.

And if it doesn't last three months, thank God that he showed you when he did. There is no rush, believe it or not.

There is no rush. Take your time. Be wise. Use your head. Don't get in a big hurry. By the way, this is not, Thus saith the Lord now.

This is, Thus saith Warren. Please remember that. Although I think there's some valid Christian experience along the line here. Another little bit of advice on what I'm going to call dating wisely.

[43:51] When you do date people, you ought to date those whom you would be proud to marry. After all, is not the dating game really about the whole thing of mate selection?

Aren't we really testing one another's personalities? Seeing how we fit together with the thought of finding a mate? Isn't that the ultimate goal?

I say to you that if that is the ultimate goal in dating, then why fiddle around with people whom you would not think of marrying? We ought to be dating those people and associating ourselves with those people and checking out our personality match with those people whom we would be proud to marry.

Another bit of homespun wisdom, I think. is that we ought not to be going to places where our old sinful nature is going to be stirred up.

Now, I'm going to base that one on Scripture. That is not an opinion, frankly. Would you look at me at 1 Peter 2? I'm talking to you now as if I had been your pastor for 10 years.

[45:18] 10-year pastors can get away with a lot more than a one-year pastor. So I say 10 years, and you can throw me out the door this, you know, tomorrow. I understand that.

But you're not going to do that. 1 Peter 2.11. You know, I might as well say it. Young people say, well, why can't we go to the movies?

Or why can't we go to this disco place? Or why can't we do this and so on? You plug in whatever the option is. And then, oh, those funny-duddy parents and those miserable Christians at Maranatha.

Brr, brr, brr, brr. Or Christianity, negative, bye-bye. I was young once. And you say, where is the verse in the Bible that says you can't do this and you can't do that?

Who said there's supposed to be one that nails every particular sin? Is there? Well, of course not. We'll talk about that down the road. That's another subject. But look at this verse.

[46:20] Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

My opinion, that is the finest verse in the New Testament telling me to stay away from the dance hall and stay away from the movies and stay away from all kinds of worldly pleasures.

Do you know why? Because there is within my own heart a fleshly nature and there are places of entertainment and there are styles of music and movies, etc.

that just war against my soul. And you may say, I don't see anything wrong with them. That's not the question. Is there anything right with them?

What do they do for me? They don't do anything for me. They war against my soul. And what does Peter say about those things? Abstain. Say no.

[47:24] Steer clear of them so that in your dating, yes, you're going to have to be creative. Yes, you're going to have to think, now where can we go that will be wholesome and healthy and we're going to have to work hard at this kind of thing.

But, beloved friends, there are places and there are activities and there are things to do if you want to find them. They're there. So, in dating wisely, do not think you have to get as close as you can to the worldly activities.

You don't. And the major reason is not because the church says so or here's this rule book I've got to keep. No, that's not the reason. The reason is because in my own heart there's a propensity for every wicked thing if I just turn it loose.

And you know what? You've got a heart just like mine. So be wise with whom you go and be wise where you go.

I'll go one step further. Be wise when you go. Be yourself. You know, you get all nervous those early days.

[48:45] Oh, what do we talk about? What do we do? Ooh. By the way, if you feel that way, you're normal. Thank God you're normal.

But be yourself. Learn to talk. Learn to be a good conversationalist. This is where double dating helps so much.

Group dating helps kids to get started so they can learn to talk instead of touch. Now there's a time and a place for touching. It happens to be in marriage.

Not before. And I'll not back down on that. Touching is for marriage. We ought not to be fondling one another's bodies outside of marriage. Absolutely.

But there is a time for talk and we need to learn to talk. To carry on a good, intelligent conversation with one another. And keep our hands off of each other.

[49:49] And I'll go one step further. I'm getting that limb out further and further and they're just going that's okay. That's my opinion. There it is. You're going to get it though. I say this with all seriousness.

Save your kisses for the one you marry. Oh, you're crazy. You're nuts. Oh, whoever does that. You're really in another generation. I'll say it again.

Save your kisses for the one you're going to marry. You know why? It'll be worth it. It'll be worth it. Sometimes we have the notion that a goodnight kiss is the way the girl pays the young man back for a goodnight.

You don't owe him a goodnight kiss. You owe him a thank you. But you don't owe him your body. Beloved young people, be wise in your dating.

That was thought number one. Thought number two. Not only date wisely, but secondly, date widely.

[51:05] Widely. Warren, that is your opinion? Dad told you that. It's all this. But I'll bet you there's some parents who've told you that too.

Date widely. Now we've got a problem along this line. We really do have a problem, and I'm very serious when I say this. When I was a kid in school, and that was in the dark ages, you already know that, going steady was the big thing in high school.

And she had his sweater and this great big ring that didn't fit her. she had to put tape and all kinds of things around it, you know, and sometimes they walked around their neck and they walked around like this. That was the big thing in high school.

Now it's the big thing in the fourth grade. You think I'm teasing. How about the second grade? That's right.

You say, oh, that's only in a public school. No, it isn't. You see, our young people are getting pushed more and more, younger and younger, into this business.

[52:17] You've got to pair up, team up, separate out. Johnny's got a girlfriend, Johnny's got a girlfriend, you know. What's wrong with having a friend who happens to be a girl?

Whatever happened to the concept of friendship across the lines here? There is an exclusiveness that comes in to relationships all too early.

Why? I don't want to be too hard on young people. I want them to understand that. But young people, I'd like you to analyze something with me.

Why do you have to go steady? Why? I honestly do not think it's because of love. Oh, I just love him, I just love her, et cetera.

And even if you say it's puppy love that leads to a dog's life, it's still not that strong. Why do young people go steady? Why do they want to go steady?

[53:26] As I have observed it, here are some reasons. Fear. There's a little bit of security. You know, I'm not alone and I don't have to worry about whether I'm going to have a date or not for this or that function.

There's a bit of insecurity there. And so we think if we can nail somebody down, and they've got our ring or something, maybe just not even in the open relationship, just, you know, we got it.

He's mine, she's hers, et cetera. Security. Fear. I think sometimes kids get sucked into this just because it's the thing to do.

Conformity to the group, everybody else. And Johnny's going with Susie and Mike's going with Sally. I've got to go with somebody else. I'm on the outside looking in around here. Just a little bit of security, a little bit of conformity.

I'm saying to you, think. don't allow yourself to get locked in too quickly. You need to have a random dating experience where you learn what various kinds of personalities are like.

[54:43] You also need to do that so you will learn what you are like. Because believe it or not, you don't know you. And if you lock yourself in to one person, you're probably asking for some real heartache and some real jolts.

Now I have counseled a lot of young people in college. And almost to a man they say, oh we prefer to date one person for two or three or four months and if the thing drops out we bomb it, we'll pick up somebody else and go two or three months and I'm going to tell you something, that's a hard road to go.

And I realize there's something else going on too. That's this whole concept of when all the kids at school see him and her on a date and they say, ah, they're on the marriage trail already.

One date. Maybe two. They're engaged after three. You know, there's this whole rating system of the kids, they've got everybody hooked together whether they're hooked or not.

I'd like to just go boom, forget the whole thing. and date widely. You'd be glad you did. That's Warren's opinion.

[55:57] I told you that's all it was. But it does fit about single living. And there is some good biblical principle, not scripture, but principle and thinking and Christian experience behind it.

Okay, we move away from that to one final third on the single life. You've forgotten it by now so I've got to remind you. Resolves.

Resolves. I would like you to go out of this place tonight with some godly determinations in your heart.

Whether you are young or old, single or married, although it won't fit to everybody in those categories. Resolve number one, growing out of all that we've said.

By the way, this is not opinion now. This is based on scripture. Resolve number one, I will marry only if it is the will of God for me.

[57:13] You see, the question really should not be who will I marry? At least that's not the first question. The first question is to back up one step and say, is it God's will for me to marry?

If the single life is a viable option, if I have interpreted those passages correctly, and I think I have, honestly, then it behooves every believer to ask him or herself the question at some time in his Christian experience, is it the will of God for me to marry or isn't it?

And I'm not suggesting months of introspection, but I am saying we've got to face that question. Is it the will of God for me to marry?

Or should I remain single? You mean, Mr. Warren, that even a question of that magnitude, who I'm going to marry, I have to submit even that to the will of God?

I have to do the will of the Lord with regard to marriage? If you really want to be happy as a Christian, you do. We have some misconceptions about the will of God.

[58 : 26] the best thing I can say to you about the will of God is that it is the best thing in the world. It's wonderful to be in the will of God.

Being in the will of God is better than being married to the wrong person. It really is.

Being in the will of God is better than being married, if that's the choice. So come at it with that resolve. I will marry if it is the will of God for me.

Here's a second resolve I'd like you to take home with you in your heart. If I do marry, I will marry only a believer.