



## Being Content and Single

### Bible Study

### Leader's Guide

[Please provide: a copy of this study for each participant, Bibles,]

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).*

**Opening Prayer:** Heavenly Father, You promise that wherever two or three are gathered in Your name, there You will be with us. Come among us and lead us to You and to Your purpose through the study of Your Word. Thank You for redeeming us through the death of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Keep us ever mindful of those who are single within our group, as well as those who are single in the world, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we may share with them the salvation found in Jesus Christ alone. Bless each of us as we seek what You would have us learn about being content in singleness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### Introduction

In this Bible study, we will explore what it means to be content in Christ with our singleness. Although you may not be single, there are certainly those around you who are. Some are struggling and others are perfectly content. This study is not designed to be the final word on all types of singleness. However, if you or someone you know is some sort of single, God's Word will provide you with His strength and comfort.

### What Does It Mean To Be Single?

How many types of singleness can you identify? Types of singleness include widowed, divorced, never married-older, never married-younger, divorced single parent, never married single parent, in a dating relationship, not in a dating relationship.

Can you be more than one type of single? Explain. Yes. For example you can be widowed and in a dating relationship, divorced and in a dating relationship, never married-younger or older not in a dating relationship. Other combinations are also possible.

### What Does It Mean To Be Content?

How does the world define contentment? By the world's standards, to be content means to be satisfied with who one is, what one does, and what one has. Those who are content may be patient, happy, at ease, blissful, positive, free, without fear, flexible, non-envious, and peaceful.

For Christians, from where does contentment come? “For Christians, contentment comes from knowing Jesus is our Savior from sin, death, and the devil. Our contentment comes not from what we have, but rather from what God has given us—new life through faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Our status has been changed from sinful to forgiven, from dead in our sins to alive in Christ! God promises to

care for us and give us all that we need. That is contentment!” (“Contentment,” *Mustard Seed: Faith-Filled Parenting*, Rev. Larry and Shari Miller, 19/32 ©2009 Lutheran Women’s Missionary League.)

Can you have more than one type of contentment? Explain. Yes, again there can be many different kinds of contentment. What qualifies as being content can vary from person to person. It is important to remember that true and lasting contentment comes not from what we own, who we are, or what we do. True and lasting contentment comes from knowing and trusting in Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Many people who are single, at least in the United States, are not content with that status. Other people, the media, and society often tell us that in order to be fulfilled, we should strive to be in a relationship. Often, media’s message is that you need to have a spouse, children, a dog and a house to be content.

Singles may or may not have children, a dog or a house. However, what all singles lack is a spouse. They do not have an intimate, loving relationship with a lifelong partner. Often when a woman doesn’t have a husband, it can lead to feelings of unworthiness and/or discontent. Many individuals who have always been single may feel unlovable, unworthy, ugly, unskilled, unable, and a host of other negative feelings.

### **Why Don’t I Get What I Want?**

God loves us and choose us to be His children. He also thinks we are beautiful. So why don’t I get what I want in the form of love? Wouldn’t that be best for me? Women, including myself, like to ask this question. We want to give God an assist in determining what’s best for us. But, our desires often do not line up with what God has in mind for us. It is sometimes hard to put our desires aside, and instead, to seek and wait for God to reveal His plans for us.

The theme verse for this Bible study, Jeremiah 29:11, tells us that God’s plans for us are only for our good. God’s plans give us *a future and a hope*. In the following verses, what else is revealed concerning God’s plans for us?

Psalm 10:17: God hears and knows our desires. As we listen to Him through His Word, He strengthens us.

Psalm 37:4: As the Holy Spirit leads us to direct our desires to what God desires for us, we can be confident that God will give us what is best.

Matthew 6:33: God richly blesses those who seek Him and His righteousness.

### **We Are Not Alone**

If God is not giving singles the love, intimacy, and companionship of marriage, then what does one do with the feelings of loneliness? You can feel very alone, especially when you are in a group where everyone has a spouse, or if you are by yourself and wanting to go out for dinner.

What does God say in these verses about being alone?

Psalm 68:6: God gives a home to those who are alone.

2 Timothy 4:17: God stands by those who are alone (and all people) and strengthens them.

What wonderful news: God is with us and we are not alone. There is so much more in God's Word that gives us this assurance. If you have a favorite verse of God's presence with you, share it here and with the members of your group. Encourage participants to share other Scripture verses that tell God is with us and that He is living and active in our lives. Other verses include Jeremiah 23:23–24, Philippians 4:19, and 1 Peter 5:7.

## **True Beauty**

As women, society and the media tell us all the time that we are to be beautiful. They present us with all sorts of examples of what beauty is supposed to look like. Many women, single or not, spend a lot of time comparing themselves to these worldly standards. Those who are single and who are not in a dating relationship can be especially brutal on themselves about how they stack up to the beauty standards of this world.

Read Proverbs 31:30 and 1 Peter 3:3–4. Based on these verses, how does God define beauty? Respect and trust in God is what makes a woman beautiful (Proverbs 31:30). God defines beauty as what is inside of us. A gentle and quiet spirit is precious to God (1 Peter 3:3–4).

According to God, beauty is to seek Him! As we grow closer to God through His Word and the Sacraments, we are daily reminded that on the cross, Jesus paid the price we owe God for our sins. He removes our sins from us *as far as the east is from the west* (Psalm 103:12). This includes not just our past sins, or our present ones, but our future sins as well. This includes the sins of everyone. Through faith in Christ Jesus, God declares us righteous. From the time we are baptized, the Holy Spirit grows this faith in us through the Word and through the forgiveness of sins and the strength to live for God that we receive in the Lord's Supper.

## **God's Love For Us**

As an "always" single person, I've felt that I don't really know what true love looks like. In His Word, our heavenly Father assures us that we do know what true love looks like. True love is the love God unconditionally shows us every day.

Read each Scripture passage below. How does God tell us he loves us in each one?

Psalm 36:7: God's love for us is constant and unchanging (*steadfast*). He is our refuge.

2 Corinthians 5:14: God's love *controls us*.

1 Peter 2:9–10: God has chosen us. He makes us His through Holy Baptism. He calls us out of darkness (sin and eternal death) to eternal life through faith in Him.

1 John 3:1: We are God's children.

1 John 3:16: Because of His great love for us, Jesus gave His life for us and rose from the dead to save us from our sins and to give us new life through faith in Him.

Whether you are married or single, how does knowing God's love for you bring contentment? No matter how unloved by others we may feel, we can be certain that God always loves us.

Read Philippians 4:12b–13. How do these verses help us find an answer for gaining contentment in our daily living? Participants will see that God provides for all our needs in every situation. God gives us the strength we need.

## **God's Grace For Us**

God doesn't require us to do anything to receive his love. He freely gives it to us, through faith in Christ Jesus. What comfort it is to know that, because of God's grace for us in Christ Jesus, we have God's marvelous riches of His forgiveness, His eternal love, eternal life, and a home in heaven. Read the following verses and list what each one says about God's grace.

Ephesians 1:6–7: Because of God's grace for us, we have been redeemed and are forgiven through Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf.

Ephesians 2:5–8a: Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God rescued us from the eternal death we deserve because of our sins. *By grace you have been saved through faith* (v. 8a).

Hebrews 4:15–16: Having lived as true Man, yet without sin, Jesus understands what it means to be tempted. He understands everything that we feel. At any time, we can come to Him with confidence, knowing that He will show us mercy and grace.

Hebrews 4:15–16 tells us that Jesus understands what it means to be tempted. It tells us that He understands every emotion and feeling that we experience whether we are single or married. How is Hebrews 4:15–16 an especially powerful help for a single who is lonely or who feels unloved? Jesus understands. His love, grace, and mercy are always there for us, especially in times of loneliness.

## **An Ongoing Struggle**

So far, we have been reminded that God is with us. God sees us as His beautiful daughters. God loves us, and has provided for our life and our eternal salvation with His gift of His grace through faith in Jesus. We can have great joy and contentment for, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we know that this is the truth, no matter what the world may say or what the devil may try to deceive us to believe about ourselves.

But it can still be a struggle to become "comfortable" with being single. It took God's love and grace to lead me to be content in my singleness. Many times I still need to be reminded of the peace and joy God gives, especially when I am lonely, and when I feel unloved, unworthy, and a host of other negative emotions that can come with being single. At these times, God comforts me through His Word and Sacraments. He reminds me in His Word that others struggle with these feelings too.

At times, you might ask God, "How long will I be lonely, how long will I feel unworthy and unloved?" Read Psalm 13:1–6. What does God lead David to realize after he asks Him, "How long, O Lord?" David realized that God had not forgotten him. David put his trust in God's steadfast love and rejoiced because God saved him.

How are these verses a comfort to us when we feel alone? God never leaves us alone in our troubles and struggles. He always loves us. We can be certain of His forgiveness and of eternal life because Jesus has rescued us from sin, death, and the devil.

## A Certain Hope

God doesn't promise that our lives here on earth will be easy or that we will always be content. No matter what we may face here on earth, Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that God has plans for us: plans for now and plans for our future. How do each of these verses describe our future with God?

John 14:23: Jesus is making a home for us in heaven and will take us to be with Him there.

1 Corinthians 13:12: Here on earth, there are many things we do not fully understand. When we reach heaven, we will know everything that God wants us to know.

2 Corinthians 5:1: No matter what happens to us here on earth, we have eternal life and an eternal home in heaven with Jesus.

Reread Jeremiah 29:11 from the beginning of this study. How can this verse be a comfort to a person who is single? God promises that He has good plans for us.

As you recall God's promises of His presence, His love, and His grace for us, what are some ways that you can share these promises with those you know who are single? Lead participants to come up with some actual ways they can share God's promises with those who are single including inviting them to lunch or dinner, make time to listen to their needs and concerns, encourage them to identify and share their talents within your church family and community, sit with them at worship services. For widows and widowers, make plans to visit them on the anniversary of the birthday of their spouse who has been called to heaven. If singles have no other family in your area, include them in your meals at holidays. Send birthday cards to those who are single. Take a true interest in the lives of those in your congregation who are single.

**Closing Prayer:** Heavenly Father, teach us each to be content in the situations and vocations in which You have placed us. Lord God, open our eyes to those around us who are single. Lead us to befriend them and to include them. Help us to share the comfort and peace found in Jesus with them. Lead us to encourage them with the fact that all Your plans for us are good. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to be lights that point them to the love, grace, and contentment found only in You. In the name of Your Son, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

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Leader's Guide  
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