

# Two Questions Women Shouldn't Ask

BY DONNA PYLE

During a leisurely lunch with three dear friends\* some time ago, horror stories and scars surfaced around two familiar topics.

Among the four of us, two are married with children, one has never been married or had children, and one is divorced with no children. We range in age from 35 to 51 and are committed Christ followers.

First, I need you to know something. This article took significant time to write and pray through because it's rather blunt about sensitive topics.

This post isn't a vent — it's a plea borne out of loving others. That being said ... Throughout our adult lives, my three friends and I have been asked two questions so many times that we've lost count. To this day, we remain flabbergasted that some women haven't caught on. There are two questions that plainly shouldn't be posed to another woman — unless she's your very best friend or a close second.

## Question #1: Why aren't you married?

Stated like that, this question isn't really a question. It's a judgment.

I didn't get married until I was 29, so I fielded that question a LOT of times. We met when I was 23, dated for two years and were engaged for four years while he finished post-graduate college. During those six years, if we would have collected \$1 from each woman who asked me why I wasn't married yet, we could've easily paid for the wedding and honeymoon four times over.

As our conversation continued, my three friends and I realized that, more often than not, this question was posed by married women. That's tantamount to a millionaire asking an unemployed person why they aren't buying a mansion.

Even if asked in a caring or flattering way (perhaps she thinks highly of you), it still stings. Believe it or not, some women ask it to intentionally inflict emotional or social harm. And trust me, those on the receiving end can tell the difference.



I've also been asked innumerable times since my divorce nearly 10 years ago why I have not remarried, along with who, when, and whether or not I am dating. Frankly, the answer is entirely too personal to discuss nonchalantly with casual acquaintances. So I never bother.

Recently, a Christian friend whom I hadn't communicated with in a while asked about my dating status. When I responded that I was not seeking to be in a relationship, she typed a stunning one-word response: "Disobedient" — immediately followed by, "You're not a nun."

Wow. Currently, I am more content in Christ, peaceful and purpose-filled than at any other time in my adult life. But she didn't ask about those things. She simply judged one aspect as the whole story and moved on.

If you are single, divorced or widowed, perhaps you need to hear this today: God gave marriage as a blessing, not an entitlement or commandment. He

did not create us as half a person seeking another half to “complete” us. We are whole and complete in Christ alone. The rest is all grace.

I loved serving God as a married woman. I love serving God as a single woman. Simply put, God calls some women to serve through their marriage and others through undistracted singleness. The key is a passion to love and serve God no matter your marital status. And the second question...

## **Question #2: Don't you want children?**

Again, stated like that, this isn't a question. It's a judgment.

This question has caused more scars in my life (and my three friends) than any other. It presupposes so many things that it's hard to know where to begin addressing it.

Asking a single woman that question is cruel — whether intentional or not. Perhaps having children has been a lifelong, unfulfilled dream that has cost her many sleepless nights and a river of tears. What if she believes marriage should come first? Should she rush out to the nearest bar and hook up with the first man she sees? Should she rush to the sperm donor bank and sign up?

Asking a married woman that question presupposes that she is physically able to bear children. Perhaps she and her husband have tried to conceive children for years only to face financial hardships due to unsuccessful fertility treatments. No woman should ever be expected to share her private struggles or physical condition to justify why her home isn't overflowing with children.

My ex-husband and I were married for thirteen years but didn't have children. We trusted God's plan that if He wanted us to have children, He would provide. I believe we would have been wonderful parents. But now looking back on our divorce, I believe God knew best.

Some people have pulled the Christianity card. “God designed women to have children, so you're disobeying if you don't have them.” Yes, people have actually had the audacity to say such an unkind thing to me and my three friends in the past. And when such a statement comes from someone we hold dear, the wound plunges deep.

Some people have played the adoption card. “So many children need good homes, why aren't you willing to adopt?” Stated like this, that question is also a judgment. Perhaps she is, in fact, willing to adopt, but is still thinking and praying through the many considerations of such a monumental commitment.

Simply put, no woman owes another an explanation to these two extremely personal questions. Over time, I've learned to smile and deflect the tension. However, the pain inflicted still takes significant prayer, extending relentless forgiveness, and time for God to heal.

The bottom line? Those two questions negate God's sovereignty. They infer that we need to follow cultural norms or our own plans instead of submitting to His. If no one has ever asked you either question, you are among the blessed minority.

If you are unmarried or do not have children, please hear this truth loud and clear:

***Despite your marital or parenting status,  
God loves you right now.***

***Just as you are.***

***Precisely where you are.***

***You can joyfully, successfully serve Him today.***

Following God isn't about conforming to some cultural mold of how others believe our lives should look. Remember the Apostle Paul? The Apostle Peter? One was married, one was not; one had children, one did not — but they made a powerful difference for God's kingdom from their individual, God-designed circumstances.

God can use any person at any time in any place for His holy purposes.

No tangible thing on this earth makes us more or less of a Christian. Following Christ never hinges on whether or not we're married or have children. It's about being in relationship with Him. It's about our desire to know Him and be fully known by Him. To rely on Him for our every need. To receive His immeasurable love and amazing grace into the deepest recesses of our soul with overwhelming gratitude.

So to my fellow women who have been on the receiving end of these two questions: I love you. I know what it feels like, and I'm so sorry for your pain.

And to those women who believe it's okay to keep asking another woman either of those questions, STOP. PLEASE STOP.

They damage — and even kill — friendships. *Q*

\*These wonderful friends gave permission to share the generalities of our discussion in the hope of shedding much needed light on this sensitive topic. They are not members of my home church.

Donna is a speaker and multi-published author for LWML and Concordia Publishing House. She is an active LWML member at Salem Lutheran Church in Tomball, Texas, and can be reached through [www.artesianministries.org](http://www.artesianministries.org).