

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect. The central area is a plain white space where the text is located.

Don't Rush
The Process

Introduction

- ▶ Society pressures people to be in relationships
- ▶ Singleness is often viewed as incomplete
- ▶ The Bible presents singleness as purposeful
- ▶ Key Thought: Singleness is not a problem—it is a season of purpose

Singleness Is a Gift

- ▶ 1 Corinthians 7:7
- ▶ Singleness is a gift
- ▶ Marriage is also a gift
- ▶ Every season of life has purpose
- ▶ Application: Do not despise the season God has given you

Singleness Allows Undivided Devotion

- ▶ 1 Corinthians 7:32
- ▶ The unmarried can focus on pleasing the Lord
- ▶ Freedom to serve without divided responsibilities
- ▶ Greater flexibility for ministry and purpose
- ▶ Jesus lived His earthly mission single

Singleness Is Preparation

- ▶ Time to develop spiritually
- ▶ Time to heal emotionally
- ▶ Time to grow personally
- ▶ Key Principle: Preparation in singleness prevents problems in marriage

Stages of relationships

1. Preparation
2. Infatuation
3. Illumination
4. Evaluation
5. Maturation

Your Identity Is in Christ

- ▶ Identity is not relationship status
- ▶ Identity is found in God
- ▶ You are: Chosen, Loved, Called, Redeemed
- ▶ Before you belong to someone else, you belong to God

Do Not Rush the Process

- ▶ God often works through seasons of waiting
- ▶ Abraham waited for promise
- ▶ Joseph waited for promotion
- ▶ David waited for the throne
- ▶ Lesson: Waiting seasons are preparation seasons

Use Your Season Wisely

- ▶ While single:
- ▶ Grow your faith
- ▶ Discover your purpose
- ▶ Serve in ministry
- ▶ Build strong character
- ▶ Develop your relationship with God

Words of Encouragement

- ▶ Singleness is not a curse, delay, or failure
- ▶ Singleness is a gift, a calling, and an opportunity
- ▶ You are single, secure, and set apart

Reflection Questions

- ▶ How can I use this season to grow in God?
- ▶ What is God developing in me right now?
- ▶ Trust God with every season of your life

Why?

HOW RELATIONSHIPS DETERIORATE

Cooperation

There is a common goal to serve each other's needs.

Retaliation

We attempt to get the other person to serve our needs, while forgetting theirs.

Domination

We control the other person and force our will on them.

Isolation

We stop communicating with the other person to avoid further hurt caused by the domination of the other person.

Marriage Pictures the Gospel

Ephesians 5:31 reiterates that, from the beginning, God made husbands and wives to be one. Paul quotes from Genesis 2:24, the time of the first marriage, to illustrate God's good design across the ages:

“A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

Then he lets us know what our marriages are really all about: reflecting Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32). God wants our unions to be a living, breathing reflection of the gospel. To the degree that we are spiritually intimate, we will experience and testify about God's love for us in Christ to a watching world.

“If your marriage is going to make God look glorious, you must find more satisfaction in God than in your marriage.”

We bring our own pathology too. After the first husband and wife fell for Satan’s lies, they experienced a lethal disruption in their intimacy. They hid their bodies from each other (Genesis 3:7), and Adam abdicated his responsibility – both to God and to Eve. “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12).

1. Keep an open heart.

When we don't experience the spiritual closeness we hope for, it's all too easy to close off our hearts and shut down. **Instead, acknowledge the hurt, and cry out to God with your disappointment:**

With my voice I cry out to the Lord;
with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord.
**I pour out my complaint before him;
I tell my trouble before him.**

(Psalm 142:1-2).

Even if your spouse doesn't change, you will remain soft and open to Christ.

2. Pursue Jesus more than your marriage.

When we treasure Jesus above our spouse, we become the sort of person our spouse will want to draw close to. As John Piper has said,

If your marriage is going to make God look glorious, then you must find more satisfaction in God than in your marriage.

3. Replace things that kill spiritual intimacy.

We all have attitudes and habits that get in the way of intimacy. **Paul calls us to put off destructive patterns like this and put on new ones that reflect who we are in Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24).** So, I'm learning to ask God for help to stay open to what he's doing. As I consciously depend on God, it helps my wife and me avoid conflict and draw closer.

4. Intentionally share your weaknesses.

Pride tempts us to hide our struggles. But when we really believe that God “saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy” (Titus 3:5), **letting our spouse in on a failure becomes natural and fosters spiritual closeness.**

5. Choose something to do together.

Spiritual intimacy is far more than a list of to-dos like reading the Bible or praying together, but our marriages will only thrive when we hear God's voice and have his heart together.

6. Be patient and persistent.

“Without true spiritual intimacy, our marriages will flounder.”

We should expect some failures and setbacks. But there’s always hope for a new beginning because God’s mercies and faithfulness for your marriage truly “never come to an end” (Lamentations 3:22-23).

