

“(un)-Stuck: Preparation”

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ILL> Ever go on a first date with someone and afterwards think it went really well only to find out later that your feelings weren't reciprocated?

Preparation, Pursuit, Passion, Protection, Partnership

Introduction: We're starting a brand new series tonight called “(un)-STUCK.” It will be all about dating relationships... BUT I have a few disclaimers right off the bat:

1. This is a series of what I believe to be “Godly Wisdom” –it may not be a classic bible preaching series, as the Bible is fairly silent on the ‘*best practices of dating*’
 - a. We will take the approach of applying general biblical principles/wisdom to the area of dating and spouse selection
2. No part of this series is intended to highlight your singleness in order to make you feel bad. Instead, I hope to empower it!!
3. Much of what I'll be sharing is what *I* believe as a pastor, who has seen many situations

TONIGHT: GETTING UN-STUCK IN PREPARATION

- **INTRO** with clichés and faulty mindsets that singles often hear (in church & world):
 - “You're not ready for your spouse b/c you aren't satisfied in your relationship with God.”
 - “You just have to wait for God to bring your future mate to you.”
 - OR... “God has somebody out there waiting for you, you just have to find them.”
 - “Singleness is the best time of your life!”
 - “Just let God be your spouse.”
 - “God hasn't brought you your spouse b/c you're not ready yet.”

NOTE: Some of these things may sometimes be true - not always. Nor do they generally help!

Four Things that May Help You Become UN-STUCK in Your Preparation

(or at least help you *FEEL* unstuck)

1. **Recognize that the Desire for a Spouse Comes From God.** (don't feel guilty!)

- **Gen. 2:18** “It is not good for the man to be alone”

- There is a misconception in some Christian circles that “God is all I need”
- We were created to be in community and in relationships

Eccl. 4:9-12 “⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:

¹⁰ If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

¹² Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

□ We were never intended to live in isolation from others!!

- Unless you are called to singleness, like Paul, who was content in his singleness (more on this later)

2. **Desire a Spouse for the Right Reasons**

- **Here are Some Wrong Reasons to desire a spouse**

- Validation as a person
- To be like everybody else
- To boost your Self-esteem & Self-worth
- To complete your identity
- Guilt-free sex (you shouldn't be having any kind of sex as a single!!)

C. S. LEWIS "We are born helpless. As soon as we are fully conscious we discover loneliness. We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually. We need them if we are to know anything, even ourselves."

ALDOUS HUXLEY "To his dog, every man is Napoleon; hence the constant popularity of dogs."

- Some people, instead of finding friends, date in order to fill this kind of void

- **Some Right Reasons to desire a spouse**

- To get a better return on your work
- To cure Loneliness (what?!?!)
- To grow a Godly family (be fruitful and multiply!)
- B/c you're ready to commit your entire life to one person!!

What else can a person do to become un-STUCK in Preparation???

3. Find your Whole Identity in/through Christ (Become a 'Complete' Single Adult)

- Too many unmarried people are walking around feeling incomplete
 - If you're not married yet, maybe that's God's design for your life? (part you don't like)
- Do you really know who you are in Christ?
 - You can't know who is right for you before you first know yourself.

OSWALD CHAMBERS "The man or woman who does not know God demands an infinite satisfaction from other human beings which they cannot give."

- This suggests that even if you do get married, you will discover that even your spouse is not able to give enough to keep you satisfied

Phil. 4:12-13 ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty (to have in abundance) or in want. ¹³I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

"Suffer Want" (these definitions are really quite amazing!!)

- a) to come late or too tardily (amen!!)
 - 1) to be left behind in the race and so fail to reach the goal, to fall short of the end
 - 2) metaphorically - fail to become a partaker, fall back from
- b) to be inferior in power, influence and rank
- c) to fail, be wanting
- d) to be in want of, lack
 - 2) to suffer want, to be devoid of, to lack (be inferior) in excellence or worth

Anyone ever feel any of these in your search/desire for a spouse???

"Content" - content with one's lot or means, *independent of external circumstances*

- Paul found that Christ can help us in any and every “Want” of life!!

There exists a partial Dichotomy of truth here – as Mark Batterson has said: “**Truth is often found in the tension of opposites.**” - like two sides of the same coin...

- **The Big Question:** How do I live with this God-given desire for a spouse, while at the same time learning to be ‘content’ with my singleness?
 - **Decide** to make the most of your single years!!!
 - **Decide** to serve God – get involved in ministry, go on a missions trip!!
 - **Decide** to grow as a person *and* as a disciple – work on your weaknesses

Preparation is also that season where you think about what type of person you want to marry!! (don’t just wait until you meet someone to figure out if they would be right)

1 Cor. 15:33 “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good character.”

ILL> Poll audience & Write responses on board: Ask women for Qualities they would like in a husband; ask men what Qualities they would like in a wife.

In an Online Survey: What is the most important quality you look for in a spouse:

Men said:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A <u>Intelligent</u> -8% | D <u>Sexy</u> -9% | G <u>Responsible</u> -9% |
| B <u>Faithful</u> -44% | E <u>Funny</u> -16% | H <u>Dominant</u> -1% |
| C <u>Wealthy</u> -12% | F <u>Family-oriented</u> -6% | I <u>Kind</u> -8% |

Women said:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| A <u>Intelligent</u> -5% | D <u>Funny</u> -16% | G <u>Dominant</u> -2% |
| B <u>Faithful</u> -47% | E <u>Family-oriented</u> -7% | H <u>Kind</u> -7% |
| C <u>Sexy</u> -5% | F <u>Responsible</u> -11% | |

This leads to the final encouragement to help you become un-STUCK in Preparation...

4. Become your Future Mate’s Perfect Mate (become the Right Person in Christ)

ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH “When one is a stranger to oneself, then one is estranged from others.”

Consider Jacob – God was working in him to become the right person by removing his deceitful spirit from within

- **Jacob:** ‘supplanter,’ ‘heal-grabber’
- Jacob takes his brother Esau’s birthright
- Jacob tricks his father Isaac into giving him the firstborn’s blessings

Gen. 27:42-44 ⁴² When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself with the thought of killing you. ⁴³ Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. ⁴⁴ Stay with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides.

- Jacob flees for his life
- Jacob encounters God on the way to Uncle Laban’s
- Jacob arrives and lays eyes on Rachel – love at first sight!!

- Jacob agrees that 7 years labor is a fair price for Rachel
 - Laban (however this happened!!!) swaps daughters and gives Jacob Leah instead
 - Jacob must work 7 more years to get Rachel
- We see God's disapproval in these circumstances of Jacob's supplanting ways to steal the blessing from his brother Esau
 - This is appropriate compensation which was necessary for Jacob's character development, otherwise he may have continued in his deceptive ways
 - Laban would not allow the younger to 'supplant' the older in being given in marriage first, much like Jacob 'supplanted' his older brother Esau
 - **Pradis:** "the biblical reader is certainly expected to interpret such irony as the work of the divine plan."
- **Are you like Jacob in some way?**
 - **Is there some character flaw God needs to work out during your unmarried years?**
 - This does not mean that must attain 'sinless perfection' before marriage. Otherwise, nobody would ever be getting married!!

Conclusion:

You *may* not find the right person until you become the right person

- If you *find* the right person before you *are* the right person, then when you become the right person, that other person could then be the wrong person
- Develop the Right Character Qualities in yourself and then the right person will more easily recognize you ...

Discussion Questions:

- What work must God do in you before you are ready to be a wife/husband?
- Will your future spouse desire someone of purity? Holiness? God-fearing?
- Will you be the kind of father/mother that your future spouse will want for their children?
- How comfortable will you be sharing your past with your future spouse? Easy? Difficult?
- In what condition will you present yourself to your spouse on your wedding day?
 - God can redeem any and every situation!!! If you don't feel very presentable, God wants to help you with that!!!