

September 27, 2023

The Image of God and the Gift of Singleness

Goal for This Week

To articulate how the gift of singleness helps transform the church to be more like Christ, from one degree of glory to another (Romans 8:29 & 2 Cor. 3:18).

Review from Past Weeks

Theological Reflection – _____

Because theological reflection should always begin, remain, and end with God, and because God has revealed Himself to us through His Word to transform us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:28), theology should not only be intellectual but also *transformational*, which includes our _____ and _____.

Doing Theological Anthropology is to _____ on what God says about _____. It seeks to understand how God made humanity, how God judges' humanity, and how God restores humanity. Remember, theological reflection begins, remains, and ends with God, which is why we must consider God primarily even when we think about humanity.

We are designed and created in the image of God so that we may have _____ and produce _____.

Marriage as a Covenant roots marriage in _____ law.

The end goal is to better see the beauty of the revealed Christ so we may *love* Him more and *worship* Him more by the way we act ethically and the way we act within our families.

Biblical Observations on Singleness

Matthew 19:10-12 – “The disciples said to him, ‘If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.’ (11) But he said to them, ‘Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. (12) For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

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1 Corinthians 7:7-9 – “I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. (8) To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. (9) But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

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1 Corinthians 7:32-35 – “I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. (33) But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, (34) and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. (35) I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.”

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Theological Reflection: How does the gift of singleness begin with God, remain with God, and end with God?

Biblical Theology of Singleness

How will the Abrahamic Covenant and its blessing be fulfilled?

Read Genesis 12:1-3

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The Barren Woman

Isaiah 54:1, 3, 5 – “Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married,’ says the Lord... (3) For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities... (5) For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called...”

The Eunuch

Isaiah 56:3-5 – “Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, ‘The Lord will surely separate me from his people’; and let not the eunuch say, ‘Behold, I am a dry tree.’ (4) For thus says the Lord: ‘To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, (5) I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.”

“This passage [Isaiah 56:3-5] is a reminder for single people and those without children that the legacy they have as a member of God’s eternal house is something far superior to any physical legacy that children and offspring can provide. God himself is their portion and inheritance (Lam. 3:24; Ezek. 44:28).”¹

Galatians 3:7-9, 15-16 – “Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. (8) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’ (9) So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith... (15) To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. (16) Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ.”

Romans 9:6-8 – “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, (7) and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’ (8) This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.”

How will the Abrahamic Covenant and its blessing be fulfilled? How does singleness point to the reality of this blessing for the church today?

¹ Danylak, *Biblical Theology of Singleness*, 16.

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Singleness serves as “a reminder that the entrance to the people of God is through spiritual rebirth rather than physical family membership. Likewise, the presence of both single and married people in the church together signifies the fact that the church lives between the ages. Married people are necessary because the church is still part of the current age, but single people remind it that the spiritual age has already been inaugurated in Christ and awaits imminent consummation.”²

Revelation 19:6-8

“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God and Almighty reigns. (7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his Bride has made herself ready; (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure’ – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.”

Practical Implications³

1. Singles need to keep in mind the fact that the married state is not the _____ destiny of anyone.
2. It is imperative that singles remain _____, for Paul wrote, “There is a great gain in godliness with contentment” (1 Timothy 6:6).
3. Singles ought to keep in mind the fact that all who forsake marriage and family in the present world for the sake of God are in this life rewarded with a new _____ in the body of Christ, as well as with an _____ family in the kingdom of heaven.

How does the gift of singleness help transform the church to be more like Christ, from one degree of glory to another?

² Danylak, *Biblical Theology of Singleness*, 27.

³ All three of these implications are taken from Köstenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 196-97.

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Preparation for Next Week:

Read – <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-biblical-evidence-for-original-sin>
(Attached to this document.)

Further Resources:

Akin, Daniel L. *A Theology For The Church: Revised Edition*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014.

Chapman, Gary. *Covenant Marriage: Building Communication and Intimacy*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2003.

Danylak, Barry. *A Biblical Theology of Singleness*. Cambridge, UK: Grove, 2007.

Keller, Timothy and Kathy Keller. *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*. New York: Penguin Books, 2016.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. and David W. Jones. *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. 2nd Ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.