

The Single Christian and the Single Saviour - 1

discussion guide

based on **Isaiah 54.1-9** & **Gal 3.26-29** (Linked to sermon of 5/11/23)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks

Intro: Can you think of any films which portray a single person in their 20s-50s who is content with being single?

Read Isaiah 54.1-9

What different states or causes of singleness are mentioned here?

Eleanor explained that in the Old Testament, to be single or childless was often considered shameful (as it still is in some parts of the world today). God's blessing was often portrayed in terms of descendants. In Isaiah 54, as the prophet looks forward to the new covenant under Jesus, he offers great hope to those who have never married, those who are widowed, those who have been abandoned, those who don't have children.

How do you feel about the Lord being pictured as our 'husband' (v5; see also Revelation 19.6-9)?

X§

Read Galatians 3.26-29

Eleanor encouraged us to find our identity as children of God, rather than in our marital status or job etc.

What struggles do you have with thinking of your identity primarily as being a child of God?

What could help you, as a Christian, to think of being a child of God as your primary identity?

Eleanor pointed out that (Genesis 2.18) "it is not good for man to be alone" – we are all created for companionship. How might we develop deeper 'sibling' relationships within the body of Christ, in ways which fulfil our need for companionship – but without equating intimacy with sex?

Ask the single people in your group to be honest about their experience of church as a single person. (If you haven't got any single people in your group, why is that?)

Skim through either the chapter on singleness from Jason Roach's book "Swipe up" or the article "How gospel community can overcome loneliness" by Rebecca McLaughlin. (If you're short on time, there's some selected quotes overleaf.)

What stands out to you from this chapter or article?

Whether you're single or married, how might God be calling you to think or act differently as we think about relationships?

What would help us as a church to become more welcoming to single people? (Try to be specific – and feel free to feed your ideas in to Dan.)

Pray for those you know in church who are single, for whatever reason.

Some quotes from "How gospel community can overcome loneliness" by Rebecca McLaughlin - <https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/how-gospel-community-can-overcome-loneliness/>

"One way in which my husband Bryan and I try to live this out is by not sitting next to one another when we go to church. This cuts against the grain of Christian culture. I'm deeply thankful that I'm married to a man who loves the Lord and comes to church with me each week. But I feel close to Bryan at church because we don't sit next to one another. Instead, we both seek out the newcomers, or those who haven't come to church with spouses at their side."

"Before the service, he sat down by himself. But then a couple asked if they could join him. Sam said, "Yes, of course!" To his surprise, instead of sitting to one side of him, they each sat next to him on either side. Sam noticed quite how different this felt. He wasn't being tacked on to their family. He was being enfolded in it. Small things like this can make a massive difference."

"So often, when we Christians talk about marriage and singleness, we seem to forget that we're running a race. The things of this world are not our goal. We're running toward an eternity with Christ and grabbing as many people as we can along the way to join us. For some of us, getting married to a fellow runner will help speed us up. For others, it would slow us down. Much will depend on the specific person we might marry, not just whether we marry or not. Marriage should not be the goal of life for any of us. Running after Jesus is the goal. And married or single, none of us should run alone."