

What I learned from being single all these years

This message was delivered by Scott Grant, Peninsula Bible Church pastor, to the Young Adults Fellowship of the church a week before his wedding in August 2000.

I learned ...

- √ To pray for a wife.
- √ To pray in a very specific way for a wife based on my understanding of my strengths and weaknesses.
- √ To pray for a wife with ministry in mind. I wanted someone who would help me serve the Lord.
- √ That having a wife, from a purely practical standpoint, is a good thing. I sensed that I needed to be rooted, to have a home and to be completed.
- √ To in the end trust God to know what was right for me, be it the right woman or lifelong singleness.
- √ That the more passionate I became about Christ, the more I wanted a wife. Earlier, I thought that if I became more passionate about Christ, I would feel less need for a wife. But I found that as I became more passionate about Christ, I was opened up emotionally, I found other good passions being kindled, and I wanted someone with whom to share that which I was most passionate about — Jesus.
- √ That as a member of the church, the bride of Christ, I had the best relationship anyone could ever want, even if it hasn't always felt that way.
- √ That one day (when Jesus returns), it will always feel that way.
- √ That marriage is another step in the journey, not the answer to any problem.
- √ That life can break your heart but that a broken heart can show you God's heart.
- √ That the longings and the disappointments are beautiful parts of the journey that can open one's heart to God, creating a climate for intimacy with him as one wrestles with him.
- √ That the longings and disappointments, as I felt them and worked them through with the Lord, made me a better servant of the Lord and, particularly, a more compassionate one.
- √ That the longings and disappointments caused me to look at the scriptures in a deeper way and to teach them from a deeper place.
- √ That the deep desire for companionship is a good gift from God and that I should not try to kill it in order to overcome disappointment or potential disappointment.
- √ That being single came with a pretty nifty gift — time. I had lots of time to pursue intimacy with the Lord, ministry and “sabbath” rest.
- √ That God was good long before he ever gave me a wife.
- √ To not even think about a serious relationship with a woman who was not a follower of Jesus Christ.
- √ That God really can lead you away from the wrong person and to the right person.
- √ That what I thought I needed in a wife was not altogether what I needed.
- √ That the most important thing to look for in a woman is her character.
- √ To look for a woman I could trust with my heart.
- √ That I could have appropriately close female friends, both single and married.
- √ That risking rejection was better than paralysis.

- √ That for some people, it's the other way around — paralysis is better than constant forward movement.
- √ That my status as a single man put me in a unique position to minister to single men.
- √ That I could minister to women as a single man and as a single pastor.
- √ That sexually, it's a disaster area out there, but that it is possible to walk through it righteously.
- √ That as long as I kept moving toward Jesus, I wasn't missing out on anything.
- √ That God's grace is bigger than any mistakes I made, either in pursuit or withdrawal.
- √ That being single (like anything else) is a grand opportunity to know God.
- √ To really like the Genesis 2 story.
- √ That it is possible to be concerned primarily with putting oneself in places of ministry, not places of relational opportunities, and still find a wife.
- √ That I could trust God to bring the woman to me, but I had to be willing to respond.
- √ That what I learned could be passed on.
- √ That one can knock on a locked door for a long time before figuring out that it's locked.
- √ That it really doesn't matter what technique you use (knocking harder, softer, varying the tempo, etc.); if a door is locked, it's locked.
- √ That one's hand can get really sore from knocking for a long time on a locked door.
- √ That eventually I could figure out that a door was locked.
- √ That one can think that knocking on doors, not walking through doors, is what life is all about.
- √ That when I walked through the right door, God provided repeated confirmation that I was on the right path and repeated encouragement to keep moving forward.
- √ That God had a wonderful woman for me all along, but that that is not what makes him wonderful.
- √ That it really didn't matter whether God had a wonderful woman for me all along, because if he didn't, he would have expressed his goodness to me in some other way that was perfect for me.
- √ That the mystery of the future is a great opportunity to believe in God's goodness.
- √ That I did not know whether or not I would ever get married but that it was better that I didn't know, because it created opportunities for intimacy with the Lord that wouldn't have happened otherwise.
- √ That if I never had children, I could still be fruitful and multiply by having spiritual children.
- √ That I didn't need a woman to help create a family (i.e., the Young Adults Fellowship).
- √ That the Lord had me get married at an age a little older than most people for no reason I need to understand.
- √ That I could be fairly certain that I knew what God was doing and still be completely wrong.
- √ That the suggestion that you have to be married to maximize spiritual maturity is a bunch of hoey.
- √ That loving someone is more important than being loved.
- √ That receiving love was more difficult than I thought.
- √ That there was no sense in waiting around to get married to get on with life.
- √ That the church of Jesus Christ is the best place in the world to learn about relating to the opposite sex.
- √ That my sisters in Christ are very precious and need to be treated as such.

- √ That I could be too picky and too fearful but that God could still get me where I needed to be.
- √ That I could be too picky and too fearful but that I could learn that I was too picky and fearful.
- √ That my fears were a useful way of protecting me from relational pain.
- √ That God could lead me in some ways that were very distinctively according to who I was.
- √ That fishing and golfing help a lot.
- √ That C.S. Lewis, Dostoyevsky, Henri Nouwen, Larry Crabb and N.T. Wright help a lot.
- √ That writing helps a lot.
- √ That “The Shawshank Redemption” helps a lot.
- √ That an annual personal retreat helps a lot.
- √ That studying the scriptures helps a lot.
- √ That finding some biblical characters to connect with helps a lot.
- √ That being alone is better than being in a bad relationship.
- √ That though I had to proactively seek God’s will, only God can create a relationship.
- √ That though I was not married, I could help others get married and share in their joy without being jealous.
- √ That I could really enjoy married couples, just the three of us.
- √ That I could help married couples in their relationship just by sharing my heart with them and asking them to share their hearts.
- √ That I could enjoy children, particularly those of my married friends.
- √ That it’s a jungle out there but that Jesus is king of the jungle.
- √ That having one good friend to pour out one’s heart to really helps.
- √ That having an old guy around to talk to really helps.
- √ That having a ministry to pour one’s heart into really helps.
- √ That listening to Bob Dylan, David Wilcox and the music of “Les Miserables” really helps.
- √ That believing God loves me helps more than anything else.
- √ That if you teach a series on male-female relationships, you might end up finding yourself in one.
- √ That God’s timing is impeccable.
- √ That God really does know what he’s doing after all.
- √ That 42 years is not too long to wait for the right woman.
- √ That it would be worth waiting a lifetime for the right woman and never meet her if in God’s plan there really was no right woman for me.
- √ That God allows dreams to die in order to give bigger dreams.
- √ That when God gives a gift, he goes overboard.
- √ That the Young Adults Fellowship has been a great place of support and encouragement for Karen and me.