

BIBLICAL GUY-GAL RELATIONSHIPS / CLAY & BEV MILLER

Rev (1/11/15)



7 Lesson Course:

- I. Being Single is OK
- II. Biblical Definition of Marriage & Divorce
- III. Wrong Relationships & Forgiveness
- IV. Dating or Courting?
- V. When am I ready to Propose or Say Yes?
- VI. Guys Only & Gals Only (Conduct)
- VII. Marriage as a Ministry Platform

January							February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31							

Note: there is a good chance these lessons may be taught in a different order than shown.

Before we get started:

1. The content of this course is made up of three things:
 - a. **C** - God's Commands - are to be obeyed
 - b. **P** - God's Principles - are to be applied when making decisions
 - c. **S** - Our Suggestions - plenty of room for debate; please take these to Scripture yourself
 2. Our goal is for you to come to the place where:
 - a. You are willing to follow the Lord's leading in being content with being single, or
 - b. If His will for you is to be married, you marry His choice at His time, so you may have a successful marriage
 - c. You let Him use your life & relationships for His glory
 - d. You have a lifetime position of credibility when you teach others to know & follow Christ
 3. Who we are: Bev and I have been married for 27+ years and have raised 5 sons, two of whom have married. Bev was 28 and I was 27 years old when we married. We are not perfect. We do not have a perfect marriage and far from perfect parents. What we have are a lot of God's grace and a lot of experiences. This course flows out of our life.
 4. There is no judgment for your situation, whatever it may be.
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I. Being Single is OK

- a. How many categories of singles are there? Four major groups.
 - i. *some are single because they have never married (largest group)*
 1. *some choose to be single for the Lord, some at least for a time*
 2. *some are single parents who have never married*
 3. *some cannot physically marry (e.g. eunuchs)*
 - a. *They were born this way*
 - b. *They were made this way by another*
 - ii. *others become single through their spouse's death;*
 - iii. *others are made single by divorce;*
 - iv. *others are single by marital separation; and*

- b. What percentage of American adults are single? The following is from August 2014: *"Single Americans make up more than half of the adult population for the first time since the government began compiling such statistics in 1976. Some 124.6 million Americans were single in August, 2014; [this represents] 50.2 percent of those who were 16 years or older, according to data used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in its monthly job-market report...The percentage of adult Americans who have never married has risen to 30.4 percent from 22.1 percent in 1976, while the proportion that are divorced, separated or widowed increased to 19.8 percent from 15.3 percent, according to the economist."* **Source:** <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-09-09/single-americans-now-comprise-more-than-half-the-u-s-population.html>
- c. How many kids live with just one parent? *"At a given time in 2013, 28% of children were living with a single parent. Half or more of today's children will likely spend at least part of their childhood in a single parent family...Most single parents are single mothers. In 2013, 77% of single parents were single mothers, and 85% of the children living with a single parent were living with their mother...The majority of single parents have been married or are married. In 2013, 55% of the children in single parent families were living with a parent who was separated, divorced, or widowed, 45% with a never-married parent."* **Source:** "Single Parenthood in the United States – A Snapshot (2014 edition)" www.legalmomentum.org
- d. What are some of the lies you hear when you are "single" and how do they make you feel?
- i. "You are lonely"
 - ii. "You are not complete"
 - iii. "Something must be wrong with you"
 - iv. "You'll have no legacy"
 - v. "God can't use you until you get married"
- e. Is it God's will for *every* single person to get married/remarried? No.
- i. God commands *some* to remain single: Jeremiah (Jer 16:1-4)
 - ii. *Some* are better off for the Lord by remaining single and Paul considers this is a "gift" from God – see 1 Cor 7:7-9, 26-27, 32-33
- f. Can God use singles? Yes!
- i. Famous singles in the Old Testament
 1. Daniel – probably a eunuch (see Dan 1:7...see promise in Isa 56:3-5)
 - a. See Matt 19:10-12 – Three types of eunuchs
 2. Naomi, Ruth – widows (Ruth remarries)
 - ii. Famous singles in the New Testament
 1. Jesus! Although He will marry the Church someday! Rev 19:7-9
 2. John the Baptist
 3. Many of the people in the NT were single
 - iii. Famous Christian singles from history:
 1. Susan B. Anthony – women's rights champion & pro-life
 2. Sir Isaac Newton (physicist)
 3. George Frederic Handel (composer)
 4. Thomas Jefferson was a widower when he was elected as President
 5. Amy Carmichael - (16 December 1867 – 18 January 1951) was a Christian missionary in India, who opened an orphanage and founded a mission in

Dohnavur. She served in India for 55 years without furlough and wrote as many as 35 books about the missionary work there.

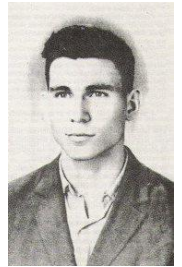
6. Corrie Ten Boom - helped hide Jews in her closet during WW-II and was caught sent to the same death camps. She survived to write books about suffering for Jesus and to speak at many churches.
7. Ron Frost, a pastoral care consultant with Barnabas International
- g. Do our spiritual gifts blossom or change when we get married? No. If we haven't learned to use them as a single, we will have the same trouble when we get married.
- h. What does God expect of singles?
 - i. The same thing He expects of marrieds: faithfulness & obedience
 - ii. To be content:
 1. What is the definition of "content?" (in a state of peaceful happiness. *"he seemed more content, less bitter"* synonyms: contented, satisfied, pleased, gratified, fulfilled, happy, cheerful, glad.)
 2. Phil 4:11-13 (NASB) **"Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be *content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."**
 - a. ** autarkēs = sufficient for one's self, strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support; independent of external circumstances; contented with one's lot, with one's means, though the slenderest. Root word "to be satisfied, to be contented"*
 3. 1 Tim 6:6 (NASB) **"But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment."**
 4. "Tramp for the Lord" ~~~~**SECURE IN JESUS** ~~~~written by Corrie Ten Boom with Jamie Buckingham—"It is Satan who tries, in every way, to spoil the peace and joy that God's servants have in their work. Ellen, my new traveling companion, had gone with me to a lonely mission field in Mexico. Our hostess was a lady missionary, unmarried, in her forties. One evening while we were alone in her little adobe, she confessed her bitterness and resentment over being unmarried. "Why have I been denied the love of a husband, children, and a home? Why is it that the only men who ever paid any attention to me were married to someone else?" Long into the night she poured out the poison of her frustration. At last she asked me, "Why did you never marry?" "Because," I said, "the Lord had other plans for me than married life." "Did you ever fall in love and lose someone, as I have?" she asked bitterly. "Yes," I said sadly. "I know the pain of a broken heart." "But you were strong, weren't you," she said in biting tones. "You were willing to let God have His way in your life?" "Oh, no, not at first," I said. "I had to fight a battle over it. I was twenty-three. I loved a boy and believed he



loved me. But I had no money and he married a rich girl. After they were married he brought her to me and putting her hand in mine said, 'I hope you two will be friends.' I wanted to scream. She looked so sweet, so secure and content in his love. "But I did have Jesus, and eventually I went to Him and prayed, 'Lord Jesus, You know that I belong to You 100 percent. My sex life is your also. I don't know what plans You have for my life, but Lord, whatever it may be, use me to realize Your victory in every detail. I believe You can take away all my frustrations and feelings of unhappiness. I surrender anew my whole life to You.'" I looked across the little table at the bitter woman in front of me. Her face was furrowed, her eyes hard with resentment. I sensed she had been trying to run away from her frustrations. Perhaps that was even the reason she was on the mission field. Sadly, there are some of God's children who go to the mission field to escape the pain of not having a husband. I know others, back home, who spend every evening away from their families, attending Christian meetings, because they are unhappy and frustrated in their marriages. Work-even mission work- can become a wrong hiding place. "Those called by God to live single lives are always happy in that state," I said. "This happiness, this contentment, is the evidence of God's plan." "But you loved and lost," she exclaimed. "Do you believe that God took away your lover to make you follow Him?" "Oh, no, I smiled. "God does not take away from us. He might ask us to turn our backs on something, or someone, we should not have. God never takes away; however, God gives. If I reach out and take someone for myself and the Lord steps in between, that does not mean God takes. Rather it means He is protecting us from someone we should not have because He has a far greater purpose for our lives." We sat for long minutes in the semidark room. Only a small kerosene lamp gave its flickering light, casting faint shadows on the walls and across our faces. I thought back-remembering. I had always been content in the Lord. Back when I was in my thirties God gave me children-the children of missionaries-whom I raised. Betsie, my sister, fed and clothed them while I was responsible for their sports and music. We kept them in our home in Holland, and I found deep satisfaction in seeing them grow to maturity. I also spent a great deal of time speaking and sharing in various clubs for girls. But it was not the work that brought balance to my life, for work cannot balance our feelings. It was because my life was centered in the Lord Jesus that I had balance. Many people try to lose their feelings in work, or sports, or music, or the arts. But the feelings are always there and will eventually, as they had done tonight in this missionary, come boiling to the surface and express their resentment and discontent. I turned to Ellen, my companion. Ellen is a tall, blond, beautiful Dutch girl then in her early thirties. She is single, yet she has learned the secret of living a balanced life. While I believe God set me apart before I was born, to live a single life, Ellen was different. She did not feel that God had called her to a single life; rather she felt that one day, in God's time, she would marry. However, until that time arrived-one year or thirty years from then-I knew she was secure in Jesus

and was not looking to a husband or children for her security. I spoke to the missionary. "There are some, like me, who are called to live a single life," I said softly. "For them it is always easy for they are, by their nature, content. Others, like Ellen, are called to prepare for marriage which may come later in life. They, too, are blessed, for God is using the in-between years to teach them that marriage is not the answer to unhappiness. Happiness is found only in a balanced relationship with the Lord Jesus." "But it is so hard," she said, tears welling up in her eyes. "That is so," I said. "The cross is always difficult. 'But you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God' (Colossians 3:3). Dear girl, it cannot be safer. That part of you which would cling to a husband is dead. Now you can move into a life where you can be happy with or without a husband-secure in Jesus alone." I do not know if she really understood me, for often we set our minds on some one thing we think will make us happy-a husband, children, a particular job, or even a "ministry"-and refuse to open our eyes to God's better way. In fact, some believe so strongly that only this thing can bring happiness, that they reject the Lord Jesus Himself. Happiness is not found in marriage; or work; or ministry; or children. Happiness is found by being secure in Jesus.

5. *"What a happiness, what wonderful joy there is far away from the earth. Brothers, I urge you always to go forward; don't be frightened even if you have to go through fire on your way to the heavenly goal. If your heart loves other things more than Jesus then you can't follow Him."* - Single Soviet soldier, Ivan Vasilyevich Moiseyev (killed for his faith July 16, 1972)



- i. Does God promise a single will marry if they are faithful & obey Him? No. But He does promise to do the following:
 - i. Strengthen us - Phil 4:13
 - ii. Give us an escape from sexual temptation - 1 Cor 10:13
 1. Is it worth waiting to enjoy sex? Yes, of course - not waiting is both a sin (fornication) and will ruin your testimony (Heb 13:4)
 - iii. Supply all our needs - Phil 4:19
 - iv. Sympathize with our struggles - Heb 4:15
 - v. Replace what we give up - Luke 18:28-30
 - vi. Be our family - Mark 3:33-35
 - vii. Guide us - Isa 41:10
 - viii. Forgive us - 1 John 1:9
 - ix. Never leave us - Heb 13:5
 - x. Love us - Jer 31:3 (see also Hag 2:23; Isa 43:4; 49:16; 62:12)
 - xi. Make our spiritual fruit last - John 15:16
- j. But doesn't God promise to give us the desires of our heart - Psa 37:4; yes - if we delight ourselves in Him, He will...but...if we really do delight ourselves in Him, then our desires will be HIS DESIRES and that may or may not include a spouse.
 - i. Psa 34:10 - those who seek the Lord lack no **good thing**
 - ii. Psa 16:2 - You are my Lord; I have no **good** apart from you.
 - iii. Psa 73:25 - beside the Lord we **desire** nothing on earth
 - iv. Matt 6:33 - we are commanded to seek HIS Kingdom first

- v. Luk 22:42 - our will needs to be subjected/conformed to His will
- k. What was the "single" Adam's condition before God brought him a wife? He was busy obeying God's call on his life when God put him to sleep.
- l. Can a single person have spiritual children? Yes. 2 Tim 2:1-2
- m. Will there be false teaching in the future concerning the issue of being single? Yes. See 1 Tim 4:1-3
- n. Is being married the end-all for the son or daughter of God? No - see Matt 22:29-30
- o. What relationship is more important than that of a wife or a husband? Jesus! John 21:15-23
- p. 1 Cor 13:4-7 *"If we are pursuing marriage we are pursuing the wrong thing because love then becomes subservient to marriage," wrote John Fischer on Purposeful Singleness. Instead of trying to find their soul mate, single Christians should focus on loving others, and then prayerfully consider tying the knot later. "Marriage is not an end in itself...it is the servant of love."*
- q. Homework:
 - i. Study 1 Cor 7
 - ii. Discover what your spiritual gift is and ask the Lord to show you how to deploy it in the Body, now
 - iii. Yield your will to the Lord in this area if you are still claiming being married as a "right." Ask the Lord to help you make Jesus your first love.

II. Biblical Definition of Marriage & Divorce

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