

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

All Glorious Within



♥ *A Kept Heart* ♥



MAY-AUGUST 2012

IN THIS ISSUE:

A Testimony of Keeping My Heart
by Nicole Bergen

In Love With God
by Jayme Metzgar

Desire: Frustration or Fulfillment?
by Lisa Bode

A Heart Wholly His:
Practical Help for Dealing with Infatuation
by Ruth Roebke

Satisfied Only in Jesus
by Rachel Eldredge

A Gift or a Void?
by Lisa Bode

Enjoy Being Single!
by Lara Bode

Themed Devotionals
- And More -

"The King's daughter is all glorious within . . ." Psalm 45:13



About All Glorious Within

All Glorious Within is a publication for Christian young ladies that began in January 2006. It is compiled, edited, and published three times per year by Karissa Hiebert. Co-editors are Abe and Bernice Hiebert, who approve and improve each issue, giving many suggestions and much valued advice.

We welcome new subscribers! If you have friends or relatives that might be interested in receiving All Glorious Within, you may request brochures or sample issues for them.

All Glorious Within is non-profit; subscription rates are minimal just to help cover costs of postage and copying. Free brochures available upon request. Gift certificates also available.



Our Mission

Our goal is to provide conservative, wholesome reading material to inspire girls in their Christian walk, with an endeavor to maintain the centrality of Jesus Christ. If you have questions or concerns, please let us know personally about them. Suggestions are appreciated!

If you come across anything in All Glorious Within that is unBiblical, opinionated, or does not pass the tests of Philippians 4:8 and Colossians 2:8, please let us know about it. (Note that we do not necessarily endorse every word of each article.)

This issue of this publication has been approved by the co-editors, my parents (Abe and Bernice Hiebert).



Contact Information

Box 2
Lowe Farm, MB
R0G 1E0
1 (204) 746-6377
editor@allgloriouswithin.org

~ Website ~

www.allgloriouswithin.org



Submissions

We gladly welcome submissions . . . please send articles, poetry, testimonies, reviews, and other such contributions! We do not publish advertisements.

All submissions must be approved by the co-editors (editor's parents), and we ask that everything submitted be honoring to the Lord, based on the Word of God, and corresponding to Philippians 4:8. Please include information such as titles, authors, and publishers' information, where applicable. Thank you.



Back Issues Available

To help cover costs of printing and postage, please include a small donation with your order if possible. Thank you! Note – some issues may not be available.

Christian Chronicle (previous publication, 3 column format):

Volume 2, Issue 3: Infatuation vs. Integrity

Volume 2, Issue 4: Home Life

Volume 2, Issue 5: Humility

All Glorious Within

Volume 1, Issue 1: Speech

MAGAZINE FORMAT:

All Glorious Within

Volume 1, Issue 2: Hospitality, Thriftiness, Creativity

Volume 1, Issue 3: Boldness, Enthusiasm, Initiative

Volume 1, Issue 4: Sensitivity, Sincerity

Volume 2, Issue 1: Discretion, Discernment

Volume 2, Issue 2: Reverence, Deference, Tolerance

Volume 2, Issue 3: Virtue

Volume 2, Issue 4: Neatness, Orderliness, Punctuality

Volume 3, Issue 1: Faithful Time Stewardship

Volume 3, Issue 2: Honesty, Integrity, Trustworthiness

Volume 3, Issue 3: Perseverance, Endurance, Diligence

Volume 3, Issue 4: Responsibility, Dependability, Consistency

Volume 4 Issue 1: Missions (*Special Issue*)

Volume 4, Issue 2: Determination, Purpose, Courage

Volume 5, Issue 1: Gratefulness, Appreciation

Volume 5, Issue 2: His Strength

Volume 5, Issue 3: Trials, Afflictions (*Special Issue*)

Volume 6, Issue 1: Compassion, Care, Mercy

Volume 6, Issue 2: Submission, Honor, Respect

Volume 6, Issue 3: Security, Confidence, Stability

Volume 7, Issue 1: Contentment



For a limited time, we are offering a sample issue & brochure FREE to anyone you know who might be interested in a sample issue.



Submission Deadline for Next Issue:

November 19, 2012

Keeping My Heart



*A Testimony by
Nicole Bergen*

I bent my head to my music folder, overwhelmed with an incredible sense of respect. I had just gotten a glimpse into the heart of our music director, and what I saw made me feel like I was on holy ground. It was a few days later, when reflecting on the incident, that the clear thought flashed through my mind, "If he would ever ask for me, it would be the highest honour of my life, but I would never be worthy enough." I was 24 years old.

In my early teens, I was somewhat "boy crazy," daydreaming about romance and marriage. In my mid to late teens, my mindset shifted to that of a career woman. Guys and marriage and babies had no place in my ambitions for my future, which included lots of money and a tidy portion of fame, too.

I turned to the Lord in faith when I was seventeen, and my entire perspective on life underwent a 180° turn. My ambitions vanished like vapour and I sold out for Christ! Looking back, I see now that a lot of my zeal was not tempered with wisdom or experience, but I wanted what *God* wanted. The growing pains came as I learned that sometimes what God *really* wanted wasn't always what I *thought* He wanted. After all, wasn't it far more spiritual to go to a heathen land and pour years of labour into preaching the Gospel *rather* than change my baby sister's diaper *again* or to bake cookies with the younger children? ☺

The Lord very patiently began teaching me valuable lessons about the importance of my attitude and about serving faithfully *exactly where He had placed me today*. As a result, my

heart became more and more open to the Lord. I was willing to be used however He wanted. If He desired for me to be a wife and mother, then I wanted to be the best one I could be for His sake. If He wanted me to be single, then I wanted to make the most of each day of singlehood and live them for Him.

That is where I should be able to sign off and say that I lived happily ever after. But it's one thing to determine to make the most of each day of singlehood and live them for Christ. It's quite another thing to faithfully do just that . . . day in and day out . . . on the sick days . . . the tired days . . . the dry days . . . the lazy days . . . the boring days . . . the hectic days . . . the days when you feel just as cranky as everyone else . . . the days when you wonder if you'll be single *forever* . . . the days when the dishes pile up and there are mountains of dirty laundry and your eyes don't want to stay open and the sun hasn't shone for weeks and you have no time for any *fun* personal projects.

As the years passed, I came to embrace and enjoy my role as a "housedaughter." Being the oldest child in my family, I carried a lot of responsibility in household duties and homeschooling. Although I was kept busy almost full-time in the home, I also taught piano and guitar on the side. As I embraced my season in life more and more, I found great fulfilment and productivity. I was not pining away with longings for marriage. I was rejoicing in exactly the place God had put me. I couldn't really relate to other girls who struggled with infatuations and longings for

marriage. I figured that the reason they were having those struggles was because they weren't finding their joy and fulfilment from Jesus Christ and from being surrendered to His will for them.

Then a select group of young people were asked to form a special choir for a wedding in the spring of 2009. The day before the wedding, with the young people from various localities in Alberta gathered together for the first time, we had our first (and final!) rehearsal. It was then that I was given a glimpse of a young man's heart and found myself standing in reverent awe.

I told the Lord that it would be the highest honour of my *life* if this young man would ever ask for me. But I knew I wasn't worthy of such a heart as I had seen. Interestingly enough, it was during that wedding weekend that I was gripped with the conviction that God had given me the *gift* of singleness. That didn't mean that I would never get married. But I was a single who had recognized that my current season was a *gift* from God. I wasn't chafing about it or dreaming it away. I was *enjoying* it! From that point on, I embraced my singleness with new passion and fresh vision.

It was wonderful to embrace my singleness as a gift from God. But then I started dreaming up everything I'd like to do with my great freedom. That wasn't all bad. I was keeping myself very busy with homemaking responsibilities, music teaching, furthering my own music studies, language study, and writing. But less than *six months* after that encounter with the music director, I was so deeply engrossed in my pursuits and ambitions that when that same music director was asked to come to our home every day for a month to do some electrical work, I couldn't have cared less. Come to think of it, it was slightly embarrassing having a young man come to our home to do such a big electrical job. Wouldn't

people start speculating and thinking that maybe "something" should come of it? Worst of all, what if the young man himself started thinking that "something" should come of it? Perish the thought! I was an aspiring musician, author, teacher, and Francophone. No room to become anybody's Mrs. anytime soon!

That was my very determined state of mind for the first two weeks of the electrical job. The last two weeks were a shaky, roller-coasting, diametrical *opposite*.

I had been feeling vaguely discontent for some time. It was the vague discontent that always hounded me when I would forget to keep my focus on the Lord's will and would start zealously pursuing *my* will. Things came to a head one day and I found myself kneeling on my bedroom floor with my heart and hands outstretched to the Lord.

"Lord, help me give up everything that You don't want for me right now. All of my ambitions . . . help me to keep my hands open. I don't want *anything* that isn't Your will for me."

It was a moment of brokenness. Of surrender. At that *most* inopportune moment, a name and a face were suddenly and deeply impressed on my heart. It happened to be the name and face of the music director/electrician, who at that moment was industriously pulling wires at the other end of the house. It was as if the Lord was asking me, "Well, then, Nicole, are you willing for even *that* change of plans?"

He was only asking me if I was *willing*. But once the thought had come, it *wouldn't go away!* O woe was me! Here I was, *THE* content, rejoicing, fulfilled Queen of Singlehood who was suddenly and unexplainably finding herself *more than willing* for *that* change of plans! Horrors! Was I actually— oh perish the thought!— was I actually experiencing that mysterious thing that I had heard girls call an *attraction*?

The thought was humiliating. But it was the real thing. I think I got a double or triple dose. Would you believe that I almost stopped eating because of the stress of it all? I cried. I prayed. I confided in my mother. And I went into battle mode. Every time my thoughts would go spinning helplessly in circles of "What if . . ." I would immediately begin reciting verses like Proverbs 3:5-7a. I also memorized the song *Simply Trusting* (also known as *Trusting Jesus*) and would sing it every time *somebody's* name and face and thoughts about my future would go floating through my mind.

When the electrical work was finished and our new friend was no longer in the house every day, I was able to heave a long sigh of relief. Without him in such close proximity, it was much easier to keep my thoughts from dwelling on him.

Less than two weeks after he had left, I was crying out to the Lord on a different issue. I had a burden for the young teenaged girls in our church fellowship, seeing a need for discipleship and Godly encouragement for them, but I didn't know what to do about it. It was then that He placed a girls' ministry in my lap for them. We met once a month for a Bible study geared especially to their needs and walk of life. I was able to share truths that God had taught me about serving at home, submitting to authority, and developing a sweet relationship with Christ.

As the months passed, I became more deeply impressed with the potential that a rejoicing single woman had to serve and minister in the kingdom of God. I saw what an incredible testimony her life could be. Unfortunately, I saw that even in the church there seemed to be a stigma surrounding singlehood. Few young women were willing to be used by God long-term in singlehood.

I was willing and I told God so. I wrote an article called *Single Service* for a women's magazine. I began to seriously consider the practical implications of being single for the rest of my life. (What an awful lot of housecleaning would be left on my hands after my six siblings had married and moved out! ☺)

Looking ahead to the future, I began to very foolishly sketch out my life for the next ten or fifteen years. Obviously, I would need to support myself at some point as I would likely outlive my parents. I had tutoring skills and music teaching credentials, but I would need more if I could expect to support myself comfortably. There was also potential in my writing skills to bring in some income, so I began devoting myself to music study and writing.

I had two encounters with the music director/electrician that summer. At the first encounter, in June of 2010, I could sense a difference in his mannerism towards me.¹ I felt ignored. Not a cold shoulder, exactly, but a measure of coolness. It hurt, but at the same time I was thankful. It was so much easier to keep my focus straight without being distracted by him!

There was one last hurdle that season to face. Our church was hosting a youth Bible school for one week, and the choir director was *can-you-guess-who?* Oh no! To my relief, we were not assigned to the same study group. That had been my greatest dread, for I was worried that I would lose my heart again if I spent too much time around him.

With the youth meetings behind me, I felt ready to plunge into my life's direction. I was 25 and not interested in attending any more "youth" events. I was determined to break the unwritten and unspoken (but clearly implied) rule that the word "youth" was synonymous with "eligible single." I was fully a woman and my life had purpose and direction.

(Why wasn't it more clear to me that my life was full of *my* purpose and direction, not consumed with desiring *God's* purpose and direction? Oh, it would become clear in time, but how it would *hurt!*)

On a side note, I think that our single young women would be greatly helped if they would be accepted as being complete women even though they don't have a husband or children. Too often unmarried women are not considered for ministry, and are usually pitied. Dear unmarried sisters, God views you as being every *inch* a soldier for Him. He has kept you single for a purpose that only *you* can fulfill. 1 Corinthians 7 leaves no room for pitying a single woman, but rather says that *she* is the one who is able to focus wholly on the Lord. Rejoice in your gift and calling of singlehood. Your season of singleness might be shorter than you think, so *don't waste it!*

Summer and fall of 2010 . . . I was teaching writing classes and music lessons, working on selling my first short book, and occupied with all the regular household and homeschooling duties. I was busy and I loved it.

But at the same time, there was a vague sense of discontent under the surface. I even told the Lord one day, "God, am I just following *my* plans again?" But acknowledging that there might be a problem is not the same thing as doing anything about it. My heart was wrapped up in my dreams for my future, and I was very unwilling to give the Lord too much say in things, for fear that He would decide to rearrange the furniture or even throw all of my dreams away.

For months I had been evading Him, but in His love and perfect wisdom for my future, He needed to get my attention, and He needed it *now*.

On November 6th, 2010, in a tragic vehicle collision, two people from our church lost their lives. One was a dear older mentor and friend of mine, "Auntie" Helen Fieldhouse. The other was her 25-year-old nephew. The young man was a little bit younger than me. He, too, had been born in 1985. When I saw his dates on the sample obituary, I was shaken to my core.

There was no fooling myself anymore. If that had been *me*, oh the shame and utter waste! With the glaring spotlight of two caskets penetrating my very soul, I saw my ambitions for the rubbish heap they were.

The cold, dreary morning of the double funeral, I went on my face before the Lord and emptied my heart and hands once and for all. "God," I cried out to Him, "don't *ever* let me have my own way. Just give me *Your* will, *no matter what it may cost*, because at the end of my life, *nothing else* will matter."

In the days that followed, I lacked motivation and purpose. I had lost my desire for writing and music. I was too bruised, too scared of picking up anything that might grip me again. I didn't know where to turn my focus. But now that the Lord had my attention, He didn't waste any time. Twelve days after

I had cast myself upon Him in surrender, I was bombshelled.

My parents called me aside into their room. There was no warning. No inner sensation that something was "just around the corner." That was why I turned red and started arguing with them when they told me that they had been in contact with a young man who was interested in me ("No, you haven't! Daddy, you're pulling my leg!"). Then I went pale and sat before them absolutely dumbfounded when I realized that it was all true.

Dear unmarried sisters, God has kept you single for a purpose that only you can fulfill. Rejoice in your gift and calling of singlehood . . . don't waste this season!

But *who* could have asked for me? Although I knew and respected a number of young men, there was hardly *anyone* that I could have even considered entering a serious relationship with. To my utter shock and disbelief, I learned that Benjamin Bergen had been in contact with my parents for the last five months and my parents now had in their possession a letter that he had written to me.

Benjamin Bergen. The music director who had first caught my eye over a year and half previously. The electrician who had turned my heart topsy-turvy less than a year previously. The only one I would even have considered.

Most girls would have told me that my answer was obvious. After all . . . look at the *facts*. My first “feelings” towards him had been a deep respect for his relationship with Christ and a sense of unworthiness of ever receiving his attention. Later, after I had surrendered my plans and ambitions to God the first time, Benjamin had been immediately impressed upon my heart. I had laid him aside (put him on the shelf, as some say) and pursued ministry. Now, after my second and greatest surrender to God, here it was, now from Benjamin’s side. He was desiring to enter a courtship with me.

But the answer *wasn't* so obvious. I had learned my lesson too deeply to stir an inch in any direction. In my heart, did I want marriage? No. In my heart, did I want an independent singleness? Not any more. What I *did* want was the will of God in this situation *no matter what it was*. Yes *or* no. I set aside the next two weeks to earnestly— almost desperately— seek the face of God. By the end of those weeks, I was counting on receiving an answer of peace in one direction or the other.

I prayed. I spent many early hours on my knees before Him, crying out for direction. In the past I had prayerfully made a list of things

that I wanted to see in a husband. Now I kept that list near my Bible, studying what I knew of Benjamin’s character and checking back with my requirements. I did some study on a particular Bible topic that I wanted to be totally settled on before I moved ahead.

In his letter to me, Benjamin had encouraged me to ask any questions that I needed to before coming to an answer. My parents had done such a thorough job, that only one relatively small item needed to be cleared before my two weeks were up. He had also shared his heart and vision with me, and I did some serious evaluation to ascertain if I shared his same goals. It was a critical time in my life, and I knew it.

Halfway through that two week period, I knew I was being clearly directed to enter a courtship with him. I was overwhelmed with a sense of peace that was only strengthened as the two weeks drew to a close. God had led me to my answer.

We began our courtship on December 11th, 2010. Almost a month later, when we could sense that a friendship was successfully being established and we were really “clicking,” we let friends and family know. Our courtship was a time to get to know each other and become very good friends. As the months went by, our relationship deepened and Benjamin proposed to me on May 7th of 2011.

The unbelievable became reality, when, on September 3rd, 2011, I became the wife of that music director and electrician. He had completely and irrevocably won my heart for himself. It was a beautiful day, but totally surreal! ☺

I was 26½ when we were married. It had been almost 2 ½ years since I had first noticed him. It had been over a year and a half since I had struggled with being attracted to him and had finally managed to “put him on the

shelf." In my heart, I had completely given him up, but— as completely undeserving as I was, and in spite of all of my failures in those years— God had perfectly prepared us for each other and, when the time was ripe, He gave us the gift of love.

By sharing my testimony, I am *by no means* implying that just because you struggle with a strong attraction to someone (and even if you are able to place that young man "on the shelf"), it is somehow a guarantee that God will eventually lead you to marriage with him. The fact that I am Mrs. Benjamin Bergen today is a completely undeserved surprise ending to my testimony.

My heart for *you* is that you will seek only *God's* heart for you, *no matter what it may be*, because *nothing* else will ever count when you stand in eternity before Him. Don't go galloping off on your own grand ideas like I have done so shamefully often. Learn to *keep* an attitude of surrender. Keep the Lord Jesus Christ as your first love— as your heavenly Bridegroom— and pour out your life in adoration and service to *Him*, and He will take care of all the rest. Be faithful in the small things— the dishes, diapers, spending daily time with Him, etc. Faithfulness in that which is "least" today *will* lead to faithfulness in much someday. God has a plan for your life, and He *will* see it through. So let Him lead you, day by day, and watch your life's journey unfold. ♥

Keep the Lord Jesus Christ as your first love — as your heavenly Bridegroom— and pour out your life in adoration and service to Him, and He will take care of all the rest.

¹I later learned the reason for the coolness I had noticed in his interaction with me earlier in the summer. He had just started dialoguing with my parents, and deliberately pulled back from me in order to protect my heart and give me no indication of his interest.



Editor's note:

Nicole is my cousin and has been a blessing and encouragement to me over the years, as well as to many others who know her.

Our family attended Benjamin ♥ Nicole's wedding this past September. We were blessed to witness the uniting of two godly people with the blessing of God on their lives.

Nicole (27) lives near the city of Grande Prairie, Alberta, where she keeps busy with music, writing, sewing, reading, keeping house, and spending time with her best friend— her husband. Although now married, she has a passion to see single women rise up and embrace their season of life as a gift from God.



To be a single person
Is a special ministry.
If that is what the Lord doth will
Then naught I'd rather be.

So whether God is calling me
To singlehood or not,
I want to follow where He leads,
Whatever is my lot.

Yes, marriage is a glorious thing,
But so is singlehood.
I look ahead to either one
To do as Jesus would.

The Father's will brings greater joy
Than doing as I please.
So as I seek to do His will,
I'll find it on my knees. ♥

- Wanda Wagler -

From p. 112 of *Daughters of Eve, Daughters of God* by Brenda Weaver. ©2007 Christian Light Publications, Inc., Harrisonburg, VA, USA. Used by permission. www.clp.org.



Satisfied Only in Jesus



by
Rachel Eldredge

Even though I have been happily married for over a year now, I was blessed by your feature on singleness (Vol. 8#1). I believe it is *so important* for young ladies to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit (1 Corinthians 7:34), and to be willing to give to Him our natural desire for marriage.

Laura Rempel's article on contentment was an excellent reminder – in whatsoever state we are, to be content! If our *relationship with Christ* is the treasure we seek, contentment in any circumstance will result. I have a wonderful husband ☺, but Tom is not the source of my contentment. He can't meet all my needs; only my loving Heavenly Father can.

Before one is married, it's so easy to assume everything will be rosy and all one's longings answered. Marriage *is* a beautiful gift, but you will be greatly disappointed if you are basing your contentment on that alone. Jesus says, "Seek Me first!" I think Amy Carmichael, single missionary to India, learned during her life the depth of contentment found in Christ alone. She shared this thought:

*"Thou hast not that,
But thou hast Me.
And am I not
Enough for thee?"*

Are our longings satisfied only in Him?

I married younger than most, but that was God's perfect timing for me. He has a unique plan for each of our lives! When I speak of the importance of dedicating our single years to the Lord, I hear phrases like, "That's easy for you to say! You were married young; you don't know what it's like."

I do. And it's not always easy! The two years preceding my marriage were full of growth for

me as I struggled with issues such as contentment, the uncertain future, and so on. I knew the Lord was calling me to a deeper level of commitment and trust than I had previously known.

In the fall of 1998 I wrote in my journal: "I really believe that He wants my heart, wants my eyes focused on Him, my desire surrendered to Him, my heart content. He wants me to 'give up' marriage to Him and trust that He will lead me in the paths I should go. May I have an 'undivided heart' – Psalm 86:11."

One of my favorite verses at that time was Hosea 2:19-20: "*And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.*" (Emphasis added.) My heart's desire was to know the Lord.

In June of 1999 the Lord brought to my attention a quote by Elisabeth Elliot: "Don't strain your eyes to see the future – for you will not be able to see clearly what God wants you to see *now*." Over and over again He was reminding me to trust Him completely and rest content where He had placed me, serving my family. I couldn't see the future, but He held tomorrow in His hands!

Dearest sisters, the Lord loves you so much and desires to be the keeper of your heart and your most intimate friend. Your days of singleness may hold many uncertainties, but you can rest content knowing that He knows what is best. "...[H]e who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." – Philippians 1:6. May our response be as Mary's: "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord." ♥



Reprinted by permission from www.thekingdaughtermag.com

In Love with God



by
Jayme Metzgar

*H*ave you ever received a gift that you just wanted to take back to the store? Well, that's exactly how I felt when God gave me the gift of singleness. "Um, I don't exactly know how to say this, but – I don't like Your gift, Lord. Can't I exchange it for something else?"

Fortunately for me, God doesn't do gift exchanges. As I look back on my single years, even though I now know the joy of married life, I'm still thankful for that period of time when God kept me unmarried. During that time I gained invaluable experiences and learned invaluable lessons that are still enriching my life – and even my marriage – today.

I first began struggling with the issue of singleness when I was seventeen. At that point in my life, I was very insecure and looked to other people to make me feel good about myself. The opinion of others was so important to me that I felt worthless apart from human approval.

This was especially true with my male friends. I craved the attention and approval of a man to make me feel special, beautiful, or valuable. It seemed to me that a girl's real life would begin when she got married – and so I set my dreams on a youthful crush that I hoped would end in marriage. When things didn't turn out that way, I felt like my world had fallen apart. What was going to happen to me now? What if I *never* got married?

In desperation, I finally turned to the Lord. I began keeping a prayer journal, pouring out my heart in long letters to God. Amazingly, the more I talked to God, the more I could hear His voice answering me through Scripture. The Bible became alive to me for the first time in my life – I couldn't get enough of it!

I fell in love with God that year. After having seen the disappointment that comes from relying on others, I was thrilled to know that God's love was unconditional and unshakable. Others might let me down, but God was always there. Others might misunderstand me, but God knew my heart better than I did. Others might not show me love, but God demonstrated His love through the sacrifice of His own Son. The Lord was my closest Friend, my Father, and even my Bridegroom.

When I began to grasp the completeness of God's love for me, a remarkable thing happened. I began developing a heart for ministry. The Lord had already satisfied me with His love, so I no longer needed to look to people to meet my needs. Instead, I was free to look at people with a focus on *their* needs. Ministering to others gave my life a renewed sense of purpose.

In the next two years, my new focus on serving the Lord opened incredible doors of opportunity. Renewing a childhood interest in missions, I traveled to Romania for five weeks in the spring of 1996. During that time, I volunteered at a small orphanage housed in a little apartment, known as Hope House Family Center. The needs of those abandoned children dwarfed my own difficulties and pierced my heart. I felt that I belonged there.

In 1997, I quit my job as a graphic designer for Home School Legal Defense Association and moved to Romania. I spent a year there, working for a Christian college and continuing to volunteer at Hope House. It would be impossible to summarize the lessons I learned, friendships I made, and experiences I had during my year in Romania. Suffice it to say that it changed my life and matured me like no other single year has done.

Upon returning to the States, I didn't find it difficult to remain single-minded! I was just too busy to think about guys! Besides living at home and helping my mother with home schooling and running the household, I also became extremely active at church. In addition, God laid it upon my heart to remain involved in the work in Romania. In July 1998, I founded a small non-profit organization, Regeneration Ministries, to support the work of Hope House Family Center. I was thrilled with the work God had given me and was thoroughly enjoying the adventure of my life with Him. Even though I sometimes still struggled with contentment – especially when my older sister and my younger sister were married in the same year – I clung to my love relationship with the Lord.

It was then that God decided to give me another gift. Since my return from Romania, I had been developing a friendship with Todd Metzgar, a young man who worked as a graphic designer for HSLDA. In fact, Todd had been hired to fill the very job that I vacated when I left for Romania. I enjoyed Todd as a friend – he had a great sense of humor, and he shared my love for poetry, history, and the outdoors. But he was *just* a friend – not my type. A little too quiet, maybe. Not the dynamic, in-your-face, leader type of guy I was expecting. No. Definitely not.

The more I got to know Todd, however, the more I was impressed by his genuine love for the Lord. He walked with the Lord in a humility that I had rarely seen. He wasn't the kind of guy I had expected – but one day I woke up and realized that he was exactly what I needed in a husband. And to top it all off, we were in love with each other. Imagine that!

Todd and I began courting in April 1999 and were engaged that December. I joyfully became his wife on June 17, 2000.

It's easy to look back and see why God gave me those years of singleness. He taught me to make Him my foundation and my first love. He gave me tremendous opportunities for service that have permanently enriched and impacted my life, as well as – I pray – the lives of others.

Even in sending me to Romania, He brought Todd here to Virginia. How would I have known that through leaving the country I would meet my future husband?

Looking *back* and seeing God's hand is easy. What's difficult is looking *forward* to an uncertain future and trusting your Lord. Let me encourage you to put your life in His hands – He knows what He's doing so much better than you do. He has tremendous things in store. They might not be what you expect, but they will be beautiful. ♥

Reprinted by permission from www.thekingsdaughtermag.com



"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." To look up the key words in a concordance brings great riches of thought: the idea of guarding, protecting, etc. our feelings and affections with the highest guarding/watching/care: for through this (not just out of the heart, but also by guarding the heart) are the outflowings of our lives. Let us so diligently guard those feelings and affections which young ladies often find so easy to allow to wander. Proverbs 4:23 is a special verse for young ladies to consider – to commit/determine that our fullest feelings and affections are God's, and we are not going to allow any young man into our hearts to take that place (until its proper time and way). The next verses also have some challenges in keeping our hearts: *"Let thine eyes look right on . . . straight before thee."* Don't allow the eyes to wander toward young men, or a specific one; don't catch his eye, or look his way often, etc. *"Ponder the path of thy feet . . . turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."* Consider, Is it necessary for me to be going here right now, to be walking in this direction, etc.; or are my motives to be where he is, or to catch his attention? Be honest and ponder the path of your feet. – The result of this diligent keeping (vs. 26): *"All thy ways shall be established"* (ordered aright). Now isn't that worth it all?! ♥



A Heart Wholly His

by Ruth Roebke



Practical Help for Dealing with Infatuation

Ohhh! (sigh) There he is. Is he looking this way? Oh, he is! Stay calm...smile... So far, so good. Here he comes! I can hardly believe this is happening to me. The nicest guy I know is walking straight towards me! ...and walking, right past me. Why can't he stop and just say – hello? Doesn't he know I exist?

Does this sound familiar? Have you ever had a similar conversation with yourself? Your knees were knocking, your brain was spinning, and your heart was doing those funny little flip-flops. You may have added a spark of personal flair. Did you faint perhaps? Or maybe there was less drama, but the focus was still the same: him.

Through the years I have noticed that there are varying degrees of the intensity of such emotions, but it is the rare exception that never develops a crush on some member of the male species. The reasons vary as do the circumstances, but the result remains the same: choosing the trinket of infatuation over the treasure of God's best.

It would be naïve of me to attempt to exhort you to never have such feelings. It would almost be like telling you not to scream on the two-hundred-foot drop of a roller coaster. So, the issue is not so much whether you experience bouts of infatuation. Holiness in this area does not stem from the absence of these emotions. If we are going to experience the type of holiness God speaks of for the unmarried woman, we must dig deeper.

In 1 Corinthians 7, God speaks of the differences between those who are married and those who are not. "...*The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit...*" – 1 Corinthians 7:34.

There is a purity that is all-encompassing – a purity of spirit. I still remember asking myself, "Am I pure in my spirit?" At the time the answer

was an obvious no. But in the years since, the Lord has brought purity to my spirit. This is freedom!

Yet such a freedom does not happen instantly and it requires constant diligence. "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*" – Proverbs 4:23. You are waiting for a treasure. You can settle for the trinkets. They will bring pleasure and enjoyment, but you will miss the sweet satisfaction of God's best.

This choice is certainly not the easy road. There will be times when you will seemingly miss out on all the fun. In other words, your heart simply is too vulnerable. You could go to that dinner or Bible study – it would not be a horrible, dark, lascivious sin to sit across the table from the cute dark-haired boy – but your heart would be at risk.

This type of constant diligence requires honesty with ourselves. I can think of numerous times when I have made decisions, choosing what appeared to be an unnecessary standard, to protect my heart or someone else's heart. I have no regrets. The treasure is worth it.

I think often of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31. She does her husband good all the days of her life – all of them. (See Proverbs 31:12.) For this reason he is able to trust her. If you are married, are you doing your husband good today?

If you're single, you can develop a trustworthy heart right now. This perspective will increase your capacity for the greatest gift you can give – genuine love. The focus of genuine love is to give.

But we have a problem. Have you noticed? Most of us won't be getting married in the next couple of weeks. So what do we do? We wait.

I can hear the cries now. "*Wait?! I can't wait!*"

This time of waiting is not a curse – it is a gift. You are covered with the covering of the Lord. You have the opportunity to enter into

intimate fellowship with Him. This is the treasure of today, while you wait for the treasure of tomorrow. The Beloved longs for you to seek Him with all your heart. (See Jeremiah 29:13.)

As young men with good looks, charm, personality, character, and love for the Lord come into your life, you can develop a crush or you can develop your relationship with the Lord. He knows your thoughts, so talk with Him about what you see and feel. Then turn your focus to Him.

Worship Him! Some of my sweetest times with the Lord have been in just such times.

Within the gift of waiting is the gift of time. You have the time to develop friendships, time to love your family, time to disciple other young ladies, time to learn skills and seek ministry opportunities. Most importantly, though, you have time to love the Lord.

If you learn to direct your desires to the Lord, you will lead a life of delight. Write love letters to Him; take walks with Him; share your secret thoughts with Him.

Bind your heart with His heart. Ask Him to spread His covering over you; become His. Choose to delight in Him, and He will become your desire. (See Psalm 37:4.)

Then the young men you meet will begin to be just that – young men, not the objects of your daydreams. And one day the Lord will whisper in your heart, “This is the one I have for you.” And your joy will be first and foremost in the Giver. *“I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine....”* – Song of Solomon 6:3.

The more time I spend with the Lord talking over the issue of romance, the more I am assured of His having a perfect will. He can be trusted to bring romance to your life in His time and His way.

And so it is my prayer that someday you will find yourself saying, *Ohh, He is here. I can hardly believe it. Be still... delight in Him. So far, so good. Lord, it is true: You are my Beloved. My heart wholly belongs to You. I love You with all of my heart!* ♥

Reprinted by permission from www.thekingdaughtermag.com

Doomed to Be Single?

by Rachel Graybill Musser



READ: Philippians 4:11-13

As a young teen, I listened in astonishment when a friend stated that she thought twenty-one was a good age to start dating. “Twenty-one!” I groaned inwardly. “It’s bad enough to wait until I’m eighteen. Twenty-one is old!”

Now as I remember that time in my life, I smile. At that age, having a boyfriend was very important to me. Then, as the years slipped by, I discovered that having a boyfriend wasn’t the only important thing in life and that twenty-one wasn’t old. I discovered that *single* isn’t a bad word or a doomed lifestyle.

At times I still longed for a boyfriend, someone to love me. But I was free to go to Bible School, to become involved in mission work, and to make a difference in other people’s lives. When I was content where God had placed me and involved in His work, I was happy and fulfilled. I still prayed that God would direct in my life and provide someone for me according to His will, but the desire for a companion didn’t torment me day after day.

I look back over the past several years of service with satisfaction. I realize how much I would have missed had I married at a young age and how much joy I would have lost had I spent those years bemoaning my singleness.

If God has called you to be single longer than your friends (or even for life), don’t fight God’s will. Don’t be a grouchy old maid. Serve God where He has placed you, and He will reward you with contentment. ♥

Note: The writer is now happily married!



From *Harmony for the Heart*, compiled by Elaine Berry, p. 123.



Purity in Young Ladies (*Helen Leibee*)

This is a practical teaching on purity directed to young ladies and their mothers. It especially deals with the need for purity in relationships with young men and their attitudes towards them. ♥

http://charitychristianfellowship.org/sites/default/files/sermons/293_2.mp3 or <http://charitychristianfellowship.org/sermons/title/purity-in-young-ladies>



Scriptures



A Kept Heart

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” *Deuteronomy 6:5*

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” *Proverbs 4:23*

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.” *Isaiah 26:3*

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi [husband]; and shalt call me no more Baalim [lord/master]. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.” *Hosea 2:14-20*

(See www.allgloriouswithin.org/Hosea2.pdf for thoughts on this passage.)

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” *Matthew 5:8*

“But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.” *I Corinthians 7:27-35*

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” *Philippians 4:8*

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” *Colossians 3:1-2*

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” *II Timothy 2:22* ♥



A Gift or a Void?



by
Lisa Bode

*S*ingleness – what a gift! What an opportunity! What a fearful-looking void.

For years I'd been led from step to step in life, from grade to grade, from textbook to textbook. Now suddenly I was near the end of high school, and my parents and I did not feel that God was leading me to college at that time. I looked ahead and saw no clear direction. I felt as if in a few months I would step off the edge of a cliff.

I am probably like most girls in that when I was little, I loved to think about getting married! I picked names for my children and I think even wedding colors. What most of my choices were, I've since forgotten, but I do remember one definite thought I had when I was nine, "Yes! I'm halfway there!" Eighteen seemed like the perfect age to get married. Now I'm inclined to think it's a little young ☺.

My dreams changed as I got a bit older and imagined all kinds of exciting things I might do as a *single* person. I could become a famous novelist, or travel the world as a missionary. Either way I imagined myself with plenty of money, lots of friends, sudden beauty, a widespread and influential ministry, and constant excitement.

As high school ended, I realized my former plans were seriously lacking in realism. Exciting travels or worldwide fame didn't seem to be on the horizon! All I saw was this void, this sense of nothing but empty years before me.

I almost panicked. I did not want to spend this supposedly-exciting time of my life twiddling my thumbs and daydreaming about some "Prince Charming". So what in the world would I do?

I've since realized that my problem was in that question. It showed my natural emphasis on *doing things*, on trying to find value and meaning in a busy schedule, rather than in *being* the person God wants me to be.

When I surrendered to *God's* plan for this stage of my life, and when I began to focus on *becoming* the person He wants me to be instead of worrying about what I could be *doing*, God filled my life not with empty boredom, but with excitement and meaning – and definite busyness, too!

I'm learning to become...

A Disciple

"*One thing have I desired of the Lord...*" And that one thing is not a beautiful romance, a happily-ever-after marriage, and adorable children in a sprawling colonial home that's clean as a whistle! If you look at Psalm 27:4, you'll find that the *one thing* we should desire of the Lord is *a close relationship with Him*. These single years present an ideal opportunity for me to become best friends with God.

Now how does this translate into real-life projects? *Ideas: daily surrender in prayer your whole heart and life to God, develop a system for daily Bible reading and study, memorize and meditate on a passage of Scripture each week, spend at least three hours in prayer each week, study the Names of God.*

A Friend

I used to dream of finding a friend who was exactly like me, except perfect ☺! God is teaching me to instead *become* a friend to the imperfect yet wonderful people He has put in my life. True friendship takes time and effort, because a true friend seeks to *give* and not to *get*. The goal in every friendship should be to draw my friend closer to the Lord Jesus. (This goal can also serve as a safeguard against wrong friendships.)

My friends should definitely include my parents, my brother, my sisters, older women who can be an example to me, younger girls to whom

*Desire:
Frustration or
Fulfillment?*



*by
Lisa Bode*

She is fourteen years old.
She is at the airport.

She came here with the rest of her family to pick up her dad from his business trip. As she waits, she notices a young woman across the hallway. Stylish. Smiling. Confident. Just a few years older than she is.

Her brothers and sisters start to yell that they "see Dad", and she looks up. But she doesn't see her dad. She sees the guy walking behind him.

Wow. He is attractive. Young. Tall. Wearing khaki.

He walks over to the stylish young woman, as if drawn by a magnet. They beam at each other. They embrace. They walk away, still beaming, holding hands, both talking at once.

She comes to. Her dad just said hello, and would she hold her little brother's hand so he doesn't get lost? Her family clamors around her, and they move toward the exit.

All she feels is – *ouch*. Overwhelming desire consumes her. This couple, so happy, so young... So many others like them, flitting through the airports and shopping malls of the world... So many songs and stories and pictures, all forming a tantalizing symbol of what she longs to have, but can't. Like a chocolate bar dangling just out of reach.

Craving desire fills her, and she doesn't know what to do with it. She is only fourteen; this is ridiculous; she is far too young – no, that doesn't help. The scolding thoughts don't take away the sudden ache of *want*.

Only a few years ago, "no boys allowed" was the rule when she played with her friends. Just a few months ago, in the excitement of high school beginning and ambition blossoming, she wanted to stay single forever. Or at least for a long time.

And that still seems sensible – but what to do with these feelings? How to handle this desire, this growing, gnawing want?

Are you this girl? Maybe you are a little younger, but you still know these feelings. Maybe you are far past fourteen, but realizing that since its awakening, your desire has only grown.

Maybe you are infatuated – the guy across the aisle at church or in class, who fills your dreams, whose only fault is that he doesn't appreciate your existence. Or maybe there isn't anyone, yet you're fingering the idea, fantasizing, wishing, wanting.

Either way, you have a problem. It can be kind of an embarrassing problem to share with other people, yet it can consume your life.

You have a desire. And it's not being fulfilled. And that can hurt.

Your feelings are crying out for love, romance, attention, and your mind is telling you that right now – and maybe for the next several years – it's impossible. Maybe you're too young. Maybe you haven't met the right one. Maybe you're called to single ministry right now.

But maybe you are fighting those facts. Has your desire grown so strong, seemed so unbearable, that you want to jump out of God's will and seek fulfillment on your own? Are you considering throwing away your standards and recklessly pursuing romance, in the hope that then you will be perfectly happy?

Girls, it would be very wrong, and you know that in your heart. It would also be incredibly dangerous. And you wouldn't be happy for long. Your pursuit would end not in ultimate fulfillment, but in destruction and desolation. The chocolate may be dangling just out of reach, but when you jump across the boundaries of right and wrong in order to get it, you find out that it's poisoned. Sin does not satisfy. It leaves you badly hurt. Very badly hurt. Don't do it.

Okay, you won't do that. You'll wait for God's plan; you'll stay in His will. You'll follow your family out of the airport and go home and do the dishes and complete another lesson of algebra. But you still have this desire, unfulfilled. Back to square one. Problem identified, solution needed.

Why does God do this to us? It seems so unfair. He created romance; this was His idea; and here we are dealing with feelings that cannot currently

be gratified. You would think it would be easier if we never wanted friendship until the day we met someone, if we never wanted romance until the day it blossomed, if we never wanted marriage until the day we wed. Before that day we could be so focused, so happy.

But we know that's not how life is. We desire before, sometimes long before, the fulfillment. Usually we do not live 24/7 continually crushed by secret longing. But all of us would probably acknowledge that those moments do come, when desire rushes in like a runaway train and our only coherent response is – *ouch*.

Why does God do this to us?

Why does He give desire without fulfillment?

Because of His great love.

Listen very closely. Are you infatuated? Are you dreaming? Are you wanting?

Your natural desire for love and romance is not wrong. It can lead to great wrong, and the devil would steer you in that direction, but your desire in itself is not wrong.

Your infatuation is your opportunity. Your desire can become your journey to a deep and beautiful friendship with the Lord of the universe.

What the devil would turn to impure rebellion, or discontent frustration, God would transform into sweet satisfaction.

That is why He allows the desire before the fulfillment. Because ultimately, we can only be fulfilled in God and God alone. Our desire should propel us to seek Him.

Maybe you met someone who turned your world upside down, yet never noticed you. Or maybe you woke up this morning with that ache again of longing unfulfilled. What do you do?

This is the message God has built in my life. In reading and applying it, I pray that we would find together the fulfillment of desire.

Pour out your heart to God. Jesus became a human being – fully God and fully man. He understands how you feel! He is longing for you to stop keeping your feelings to yourself and to pour them out to Him. *"...Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us."* – Psalm 62:8.

This means that if you're busy, you must make the time in your schedule to push everything else aside and talk to God and listen to Him. This means if you've been staring out the window blinking dreamily and humming romantic music, you need

to get down on your knees and open your Bible! Communicate with God! He will not force His solution on you, but He's right there waiting for you to reach up to Him.

You know that need you have sometimes to just spill to someone? Spill to God! *"Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee."* – Psalm 38:9. Rest in the knowledge that He knows, that He cares, that He loves you. He doesn't think you're silly or ridiculous. He won't reject you. So tell Him all about it.

Desire reveals to us our weakness, our need, our distraction. We can't hide that from God; we can't pretend we're strong and awesome and doing okay when in reality we feel like our lives are giving way. We must come to God in our weakness and honestly share with Him our need, and He will meet us there in a very special way.

Give God all your heart. You must make the conscious choice to give God all your heart, not to give pieces of it away to different guys you know, not to imagine falling in love with your mental image of Prince Charming, but to willingly kneel down and to say with all that is in you, "God, here is my heart."

With your heart you are giving to God your affections, your feelings, your future, your every relationship, your entire life. You are taking what is most precious, most important to you, and laying it on the altar.

"My [daughter], give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." – Proverbs 23:26.

Have you heard of the concept of guarding your heart? *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."* – Proverbs 4:23. Where is your heart more protected, more guarded, than in God's safekeeping? If you give Him your heart, He will take care of it, and satisfy it, and protect it from others' misguided designs and from your own fumbling plans.

Giving your heart to God is a continual process. It means that you daily choose to love God with your affections first and foremost. *"...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart..."* – Luke 10:27a.

It means that you accept whatever He says "yes" to, and leave behind those things to which He says "no". It means that you make sure everything coming in or going out of your heart, every influence and decision and relationship, is okay with Him.

What is keeping you from giving your heart to God? Are you afraid He will smash it to bits? Are you afraid He'll burn to ashes what you lay on the altar? Are you afraid to take your hands off the most precious things of life, afraid that if you ask God to handle the details, He'll handle them the wrong way? Are you afraid to trust Him?

We fear desolation, and we long for our own happiness. So carefully contrast these two verses:

"Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God...." – Hosea 13:16.

"...none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." – Psalm 34:22.

Rebellion will lead to desolation; trust will not! Giving your heart to God is the best way to guarantee its joy.

Choose to be satisfied in God. God is the only One who can satisfy you. No one else can even come close. *"For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."* – Psalm 107:9.

If your dream Prince Charming would appear today and fall madly in love with you, you would find that he couldn't satisfy your deepest desires. Your heart would still cry out for more, for God, for a deep, abiding friendship with *Him*.

Romance was never meant to be our ultimate fulfillment. If God brings it into your life, it will be simply one more aspect of your life calling, and you will have one more sinner to love.

Girls, this means that you've already met the greatest Love of your life, and you already have all you need to be completely fulfilled!

Do you believe that? It is true.

The way to find out that it is true is to try it. Choose to seek God. Read His Word. Ask for the grace to desire Him first. Decide that you will be satisfied in Him.

Give yourself this test. You pick – which would you like? Circle the letter of your choice.

A) God

B) Your Prince Charming, real or imaginary

Choose God! Let your dream guy go! Choosing God does not necessarily mean that you will never experience romance. But it does mean that you will experience God's best for you, and that may very well include romance in God's time, God's way, with God's choice.

When you feel hungry with desire, when your longing becomes a gnawing ache, find satisfaction in God! He fashioned you for a purpose and created you with an idea. He is writing a beautiful story for your life. Only He can make you who you should be.

He determines your personal value not by how many guys like you. He set your value at the life of His Son, and He loves you with an everlasting love and sees you as a precious jewel.

Psalms 62 and 63 give deep insight to the one who is desiring. *"My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation.... On God my salvation and my glory rest...."* – Psalm 62:5-7

"...My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.... My soul is satisfied...." – Psalm 63:1,5.

Rejoice in God's gift for today. Today are you married? Rejoice! Are you single? Rejoice! Are you about to go on a fun outing with friends? Rejoice! Do you face a long, lonely day of work? Rejoice!

Do you get the idea? Rejoice – not in denial of tough reality, but in faith that God loves you so much, that He knows what is best for you, that His way really is perfect, that as you walk uprightly He won't withhold from you any good thing (see Psalm 84:11). *Today*, if you are walking in His will, He will not withhold from you any good thing!

So stick with Him through thick and thin, and rejoice in whatever He gives. (Is there anyone else you would rather follow? Another way you would choose? Ever feel like the disciples? *"...Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life."* – John 6:68.)

Every day God gives you a perfect gift of *this day*. God's best for you may mean that you stay single your whole life – or maybe just for the next ten months, or the next ten years. (What's that you said? "Ten years! I'm dying!") God is not going to give you grace for the next ten years *today*. But today God *will* give you grace to rejoice in today. Tomorrow God will give grace for tomorrow. So claim God's grace and rejoice in His gift for today!

This is my application of Lamentations 3:21-25. (Look up the actual verses and study them as well.)

"Today I choose to think on this; therefore I do have hope. *Today* the Lord's lovingkindness will never cease. *Today* His compassions will never fail. They are new *this* morning. Great is Your

faithfulness. The Lord is my portion. [I choose God, remember?] Therefore I have hope in Him. He is good to me when I wait for Him, when I seek Him today."

Are you following your family out of the airport and leaving a beautiful happy couple behind? That can be tough. But remember the God you're following. And make the choice to rejoice.

Do not let feelings rule! We've already determined that we have romantic feelings, and that these feelings are not wrong. *However, we can – and we must – keep these feelings under control.*

Do not surrender to your feelings. Do not become their servant. Do not let your feelings run wild down any path. They can, and they probably will if you let them!

You are able by God's grace to control your feelings, and controlling your feelings is a good thing. *"...we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ".* – 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Never let your feelings go down the path of impure thinking. You know how impure thinking begins – so innocent, and the next thing you know, you're shocked at what's going through your mind. Don't get close to the line. Don't go there. Impure thinking is sin. If you find yourself there, stop, confess it, ask God's forgiveness, be cleansed by Him, and don't go there again.

Don't let your feelings go down the path of fantasy. Fantasy can be defined as imagining what your life could be like, but isn't – what could happen a week or a year from now, but isn't happening today. Fantasy can seem so sweet and fun, to stare out the window making up a scenario of your meeting Mr. Wonderful in some exotic place, and he said, and you said, and then, and then, and then...

And what you are thinking may not be *wrong*, as in evilly sinful. Maybe you're making up a really nice, pure, Christian love story. But is this fantasy God's best for you? Does it help you live *today* fully? Does it help you become who God wants you to be? Does it help you reach out in love to those God *has* put in your life today? Does it help you get a good grade on the algebra you're supposed to be doing while you're staring out the window?

Fantasy can be a snare of the devil to literally paralyze us today with daydreaming about tomorrow. Fantasy can consume your life. Don't go there. Leave it to God to write the story of your future.

"...And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them." – Psalm 139:16.

Don't let your feelings go down the path of premature romance. Remember, romance is not wrong. But for many of us, romance is not God's will for us *today*.

It's like each of us has a romantic person inside of us. Sometimes this person silently sleeps, patiently waits, while we focus on other aspects of life that *are* God's will for us today. But every so often – maybe very often in your case – the person wakes up and croons something like, "Oh, he is so adorable. He is so sweet. He is so..." Stop it! And say to your romantic person what you may say to a little child. "It is not time to wake up yet. Go back to bed, and I will tell you when you may wake up. And be completely quiet so you can sleep."

And this romantic person probably responds like a little child. In a few minutes you will hear, "Can I wake up now?" No. Keep it asleep until God's time. It is possible by God's grace.

Avoid those things that feed impurity, fantasy, or premature romance. It makes no sense to inundate your life with music, books, pictures, or relationships that draw you in the direction of impurity, fantasy, or premature romance, while at the same time you are determining to control your feelings in these areas. It just doesn't work!

In our culture we are surrounded by an emphasis on romance – maybe because the world is seeking fulfillment and has chosen romance as a disappointing substitute for God. Many things in our culture are obviously very wrong. These you should definitely avoid, always and forever!

But other things, like a pure and honorable love story, or a sweet wedding song, or even a Christian how-to-do-courtship book – these things do not strike us as sinful. In the right situation they could be helpful and good. (Remember, romance is not wrong!)

But the question is, will this help you live God's will for you today, or will this cause you to become distracted? You know your own weakness. If you are struggling with an infatuation, then quite frankly, listening to a wedding song or reading a romantic story may be the last thing you need! Switch the CD and find a new book! A biography of Amy Carmichael might be a nice place to start.

Enjoy Being Single!



by
Lara Bode

Over the past several years, I've seen so many sweet girls who unfortunately seem as if their entire goal in life is just to get married. Rather than using their single years as an extra-special time of focusing on the Lord and being involved in ministry, many girls instead focus on young men, daydream about courtship, and waste this powerful time in their lives.

Deep within every girl there is a basic desire to be loved. As she grows up, this need for love usually translates into a desire for marriage – for that “special someone” who will give her a home of her own, adore her, and take care of her for the rest of her life ☺. These innate desires, in their purest form, are created by God, and there is certainly nothing wrong with marriage or the desire for it. *“Marriage is honorable among all”* – Hebrews 13:4a.

However, God has not chosen to bring marriage into the life of every young lady. Instead, His plan for most of us includes at least a few years of singleness. What is this time to be used for? Singleness has to be more than just sitting around, killing time, and waiting for Mr. Right to show up on the doorstep ☺!

Are you single? Congratulations! Being single is a wonderful place to be. Right now you are faced with a decision: how will you use your single years? Once these years are over, you will probably never again be faced with the unique advantages and opportunities that are before you today.

Did you know that God has you single right now for a special purpose? Your singleness is not a mistake! Somehow many of us have adopted the mistaken mindset that marriage is the goal and that singleness is an undesirable position.

But the Bible makes it clear that singleness has some special advantages! *“There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world – how she*

may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.” – 1 Corinthians 7:34-35.

As we have said before, there is nothing wrong with marriage; if the Lord leads you to get married, wonderful! However, as we look at marriage and singleness, this section of Scripture helps us understand that each state has its own distinct advantages and limitations.

The advantages of marriage usually seem obvious to us. Three that immediately come to mind are having a husband who adores you, arranging your own home, and being a mother. However, many girls do not realize until they get married that marriage also comes with its own set of limitations! The vastly increased number of home responsibilities of a married woman often make it difficult for her to be involved in ministry outside her home. Though happily occupied with her responsibilities at home, a married woman simply is not as available for many ministry opportunities. (For example, I would not have been able to go to Russia last summer if I were married.)

From my own personal experience, the limitations of singleness are as follows: I do not have a husband to love me, and I am not a mother. I do not have a home of my own. But really, these things do not make singleness such a grim fate ☺. Besides, check out the advantages!

According to 1 Corinthians 7:34, we single ladies have the ability to “care about the things of the Lord” to a greater extent than we would be able to if we were married. I truly believe that God wants our single years to be a time during which we get to really know and love Him.

It is so important to ride singleness for all that it is worth! If you fail to understand its powerful potential, then you will have to live with the limitations of singleness without enjoying and making use of its many special advantages. By viewing our singleness as our special time to focus

on the Lord, we can experience true fulfillment in being dynamic instruments to further God's Kingdom through a variety of ministry opportunities – many of which can be accomplished right from home!

* * *

The key to effective and purposeful singleness is to focus on the Lord. Where is your focus? What is your goal in life? Is your goal to have people think well of you? Is it to get a good job? Are your eyes set on the goal of getting married? One of the powerful things God has taught me recently is to make my number one goal be to know the Lord, to love Him, and to be like Him. Take a close look at these verses:

"As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness." – Psalm 17:15. *"One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the delightfulness of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple."* – Psalm 27:4 [emphasis added]. I challenge you to set the Lord before you, and make Him that "one thing" that you would seek. Truly, He is delightful!

Did you know that if you are a believer, then you have already met the greatest Love of your life? That's right! You can get to know *Jesus* as the Love of your life, and you'll soon love Him more than you ever thought possible. I like to sing a beautiful little song (actually it's more like a prayer), that ends with the line "All my life, all I need is You." That is so true! As a single person, you can be perfectly fulfilled and content just with Him! *"He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness."* – Psalm 107:9.

The Lord is even able to fill the need that most of us girls have to share our hearts with someone. In fact, Scripture even tells us to pour out our hearts before Him! (See Psalm 62:8.) I would encourage you to spend time just fellowshiping with the Lord in prayer and getting to know Him; it is such a joy! (Note that this should probably *not* be a prayer focused on asking God to bring marriage into your life!)

How does one go about getting to really know and love the Lord Jesus? You do it the same way you would get to know anyone else: by spending time with Him! For any relationship to progress,

spending time together is necessary. If you're going to get to know the Lord Jesus as the Love of your life, you'll need to make it a priority to spend time with Him every day! There is always a struggle in this race we call life to secure that daily time with the Lord, but it is an absolute necessity. Regular daily fellowship prayer with our Lord through Bible reading and prayer is essential for our own peace and joy in life.

If you haven't yet established a regular time with the Lord, I would strongly encourage you to do so. 2 Corinthians 8:5b is a beautiful picture of what our priorities should be: *"They [the believers] first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God."* Our priorities must be (1) our relationship with God *first*, and (2) then serving Him and serving others in ways which seem to be the will of God.

I have seen in my own life how keeping my focus firmly on the Lord frees me from the foolishness of focusing on guys. Many of us, I am sure, are acquainted with several Godly young men. It is so important that we view them truly and sincerely as *brothers* in Christ, and *not* as potential courtship candidates!

One threat to truly enjoying singleness is an over-focus on courtship. In recent years, there has been much discussion about the merits of courtship versus dating, and I would agree that this is certainly an important issue. However, I've seen single girls become so *focused* on the in's and out's of "the courtship process" that this subject consumes much time and energy, and ultimately detracts from a single-hearted focus on the Lord. Rather than focusing on what wonderful things might happen in the future, we should focus on loving our Lord Jesus and serving Him where He has us *today*.

* * *

One morning recently I was walking outside after my prayer time, and I was wondering why we girls are so often in such a craze for romance. As I was thinking about this, the Lord brought to my mind Isaiah 9:6: *"... and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

I've known this verse for a long time, but suddenly the Lord helped me to realize that the same dimensions of Himself given in this verse are

the very attributes I would wish for in a man of my own: somebody wonderful (for sure ☺); a good counselor (who would help me with difficulties I face); somebody strong; somebody faithful (who won't leave me, no matter what); and lastly, someone who would provide peace, security, and stability for me.

I was struck by what an incredible parallel this is! These titles of God from Isaiah 9:6 are the very same things that I think all of us would hope for in a husband. But all these needs are met in the Lord! We who know the Lord Jesus *already have* Someone wonderful. He's the best Counselor; He's strong and mighty; He's incredibly faithful – He always loves us and never leaves us; and He's our Prince of Peace.

True fulfillment and happiness are ours when we learn to be content in the Lord! Do you know that learning to be complete in Christ will even help you once you are married? If you have not learned to be complete in Christ before you get married, you will put extra pressure on your marriage because you will be looking to your husband to fill a need that really only God can meet. By finding fulfillment just with Jesus, you can experience tremendous joy as a single person, and you will also eliminate undue pressures on a future marriage.

* * *

What do you do when you find yourself attracted to someone, even though you're really trying to focus only on God? We are girls, and sometimes our emotions do strange things ☺! If a little crush comes up despite your best efforts, I think the best way to handle it is to just take it to the Lord and give your cares and concerns to Him. Focus on loving the Lord; He truly understands you like nobody else does! Remind yourself of how He fills you every need. I have found it comforting to remember that God is stronger than my heart! (See 1 John 3:20.) Don't be controlled by your emotions; instead, submit to the Holy Spirit's rule.

"Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.... Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" – Psalm 146:3, 5.

Have you ever considered just how much God loves you? John 3:16 says that God loves you so much that He considered you worth the life of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely we can trust Him to lead us in the way that is best for us! *"As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him."* – Psalm 18:30. *"But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand..."* – Psalm 31:14-15a.

If you have not learned to be complete in Christ before you get married, you will put extra pressure on your marriage because you will be looking to your husband to fill a need that really only God can meet. By finding fulfillment just with Jesus, you can experience tremendous joy as a single person, and you will also eliminate undue pressures on a future marriage.

I've been thinking lately about how God is always the same and always there for me. Regardless of what happens –

whether you move, change churches, change jobs, etc. – God is the One Constant that you can absolutely count on and place your security in. He is the only One around me that I'll have near me every day for the rest of my life! Looking at it from that perspective, it seems really natural to spend lots of time with Him!

As you're learning to delight in the Lord, I would encourage you to memorize some Psalms. These have really helped me truly delight in the Lord and love and trust Him more. If the thought of memorizing Scripture scares you, don't worry! You don't have to do a lot at a time; often I have just memorized one verse every two or three days, and eventually I've memorized several complete chapters.

The real benefit comes as you keep the memorized verses in your mind; then you can prayerfully meditate on them all throughout the day. You'll be amazed as God brings verses to mind at crucial moments, and helps you find rich meaning that applies directly to your own life. If you need some suggestions for which Psalm to begin memorizing first, look at Psalms 27, 146, 147, 103, or 73:23-28.

* * *

So here you are, focusing on the Lord, delighting in Him, memorizing Psalms, guarding against viewing guys as courtship candidates... and then along comes a matchmaker who wants to see you married, and begins suggesting possibilities! Be careful! Do not let your rest in the Lord and your focus on Him be shaken.



Gift Certificates



Subscription Rates

Gift subscriptions cost the same as the regular subscription rates; but with every gift subscription you give, one extra issue will be added to your own subscription.

If you would like to order a gift subscription for someone else, or a sample issue, there are two options:

(1) You may contact us with the name(s), address(es), age(s), and any other applicable information of the one(s) to whom you are giving the subscription or sample, and we will complete your request.

(2) You may order a gift certificate and present it yourself to the one you wish to give the subscription or sample to. That person must then redeem the certificate herself.

If you would like your gift to remain anonymous, please specify so. If not specified, we will include your name when we send the magazine issue(s).

Subscription rates help to cover the costs of printing and postage. If you cannot afford a subscription but would like to subscribe, please let us know and we will gladly work something out for you.

Sample issues are suggested donations to help cover costs – we can send a free sample upon request, to you or to someone you request it for.

If paying by cheque, please make payable to *Karissa Hiebert*. You can also subscribe online with PayPal.

CANADA

\$10.00/year (3 issues)

\$3.00 – Sample

U.S.

\$11.00/year (U.S. funds)

\$3.50 – Sample (U.S. funds)

INTERNATIONAL

\$15.00/year (U.S. funds)

\$5.00 – Sample (U.S. funds)

Next Issue's Theme:

(Lord-willing)



Wisdom