

Singleness

Silvia Chaves

The opening chapters of the Bible, which deal with creation, indicate that God created man and woman to become one flesh, to share and create life. The sacred text seems to elevate this union as a privileged work of God. However, the wider context of the Scriptures makes it clear that the Bible neither condemns nor rejects singleness; it makes no requirements whatsoever that people either get married or not, as exemplified in the range of options for kingdom service that Jesus lists in Matthew 19:12: eunuchs and “those who choose to live like eunuchs” (the unmarried).

In Matthew 19:1–12, some Pharisees, experts in the law, approach Jesus to confront him about divorce and marriage. The disciples get drawn into the dialogue and reach a conclusion: “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry” (v. 10). Jesus replies that some remain single “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (v. 12). This passage seems to indicate that God’s call to marriage—if lived out with fidelity—is as difficult to accept as his call to singleness.

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Vol. 11, No. 1