



BEING SINGLE VS. BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP

Celebrate Either Way

By West Loveland and Lori Franz

SINGLE

Are you single and tired of it? Why? Did you know that being single is not a bad thing? It can actually be beneficial for you as you prepare for the relationship stage. Most singles don't realize what they are missing. Being single is a time to grow in one's personal life as well as discover the interests they have in others. Many relationships end because one person doesn't know what they truly want. This is why it is important that you know what you want! So take the time to find what your heart truly desires and needs. Discover where you struggle and what areas you thrive in so that when the time comes for a relationship (if looking), you will be ready. We challenge you to go one month of noting the things that others do that make you happy. For instance, maybe someone spent the entire day with you or sat down and listened as you talked about the amazing day you had. Note the connections and apply them to your life. These connections are what you need to look for when it comes to a relationship. Would you rather find a heart that meets this connection or one that doesn't? That simple but powerful connection can be the difference in having the most intimate relationship or the most frustrating one. Love might not be as hard as you think when you are better prepared for it. Also, embrace the stage of life you are in! Be content with it. Take the time that you have now to deepen the friendships you have with your peers and your family members. Those are also relationships can last a lifetime. So celebrate being single, take the challenge, and discover how your view of yourself and others has changed; you might be surprised. When in doubt, always know that God has a plan for everyone. He wants you to be content with being single because soon enough He will bring along the right person for you at the right time; who knows you may have already met that special person.

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IN A RELATIONSHIP

Being in a relationship is also something to celebrate. No relationship is perfect but with teamwork, anything is possible. Take the same one month challenge but make it about the connections related to your significant other. By addressing the needs of each other, you may both reach a level of intimacy that will bring you closer than ever. It will require sacrifice and work, but it will be well worth the challenge. Treasure the moments you have together: love, affirm, support, guide, and strengthen each other. Recognize and embrace each other's differences, they are a beautiful thing. Think about how they can sharpen and strengthen your individual aspects and those of your relationship. This month is the time to celebrate Valentine's Day, why should it stand out from any other day of the year? Men, you need to treat your partner with love and respect EVERY DAY. That does not mean go out and buy fancy things all the time; true love and respect cannot be bought. Rather (looking back at that challenge) find what connections they need. Make your partner feel wanted every day as if it was Valentine's Day.

A great suggestion is to take the time to hear about each other's day. Sit down and turn off the television and hear what your partner has to say. Another idea is going for a walk together. Enjoy nature and each other's presence. Try to find something that satisfies your needs as well as your partners. Both of you need to continue dating each other even after marriage. Continue to feel that spark and most importantly, appreciate each other. Appreciate the little things such as cleaning the house, making dinner, or mowing the lawn. Simple words of affirmation can go a long way in bringing your relationship closer. Women, your partner needs the same from you. It may not always seem like it, but men need more affirmation and acceptance than you may realize. Respect is very important when it comes to men and that is missed by many. Men will stand taller than ever if their partner will respect them. Yes men tend to have huge egos but try to understand them. They feel important to you and any disrespectful comment will deflate his heart. Your responses and reactions make a huge difference and have the potential to make your break your man's day. Think about the ways you can respect, affirm, and build him. Each of you needs to treat each other as God intended. Love, respect, and serve each other. This is simple to understand but difficult to do alone. Be there for each other, always and forever. 6