

Great Expectations Ministries COGIC

Vacation Bible School 2025

CURRICULUM

Run **THE RACE**

HEBREWS 12:1-2

BREAK-OUT SESSION

**FOR
SINGLES**

*Endurance / Team Spirit /
Discipline*



Because God has control of our singleness, we are free to put our time and energy into whatever opportunities come our way, even if they aren't what we expected. Singleness is circumstantial. It happens to people for all kinds of reasons: not being able to find a mate, death of a spouse, difficult family situations, medical or financial difficulties. The list goes on and on.

The Bible views singleness as a valuable and potentially blessed state, not a deficiency. While marriage is presented as a gift from God, so too is singleness, allowing individuals to focus on serving God with undivided devotion. Paul emphasizes that each person has a unique gift from God, whether it be singleness or marriage, and encourages individuals to embrace their circumstances. While we find romance and marriage celebrated in the Bible (e.g., Song of Solomon), we also find lifelong singleness described as a gift and calling from God for some Christians. What are we to make of the fact that both Jesus and Paul, themselves single, celebrated the decision to remain single for the sake of the kingdom? In our churches, how can we take their teachings on singleness to heart?

Our special breakout sessions will focus on the following areas:

1. What are Your Intentions? (Dating with a Purpose)
2. Trust God In Your Singleness (Matters of the Heart)
3. Love or Lust (The Battle Within)
4. Single Chronicle 901 (Temptations)

LESSON NUMBER 1 What are Your Intentions?

FOCUS Dating with a Purpose

LESSON TEXT 2 Peter 1:3

MEMORY VERSE "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness".

INTRODUCTION

Few decisions in our lives shoulder the weight of success or sabotage like matters of the heart. While our choice to follow Christ is the most significant choice that impacts all others, who we link with in dating or in marriage, polarizes our path. It either fuels us in fulfilling God's purpose for our lives or frustrates us in walking toward destiny.

Our hearts cannot always be trusted to make the wisest decisions, and they often become obsessed with external appearances or are tempted by sin. God has given us wisdom in His word to help us make healthy and wise decisions. The Bible equips us to live a godly life (2 Peter 1:3). The Lord created us and knew our beginning and our end. He has given us all we need in His Word. God has provided all the resources and knowledge necessary for believers to live a life that honors him, and this is made possible through their understanding of him and his character.

Knowing your purpose is important before dating with a purpose because it helps you to determine what you want in a relationship and what values are important to you. Having a purpose in mind can help you to find a partner who shares your values and goals and can help you to avoid wasting time on relationships that aren't going to work out in the long run. Knowing your purpose can also help you to stay focused on what is important to you and to make sure that your relationship is heading in the right direction.

DISCUSSION

Dating with a purpose means being intentional and focused when seeking a romantic partner, prioritizing a shared vision and long-term compatibility. This approach involves understanding your own needs and values, communicating openly, and making conscious decisions about who you choose to date.

It may be awkward to say out loud, but the general idea of dating as a young adult is that it leads to marriage—or at least we hope it does. Marriage between a man and a woman, in turn, leads us to becoming more like our heavenly parents—having a family of our own.

I've heard many young adults say that the idea of getting married is frightening because they know so many people whose marriages didn't work. I know this is a sad reality. But staying married can be less of a gamble we hope for and more of a plan that we implement. And the more we understand the plan of salvation, the more we will understand the role of marriage within that plan.

For nearly everyone, finding someone requires dating. That dating should be purposeful and meaningful. Ideally, it is the kind of dating that helps us test compatibility. Dating also gives us a chance to learn the skills—yes, the skills—of creating a meaningful relationship.

Defining one's purpose is a highly personal and individual process that varies from person to person. However, at the core of each person's purpose is a sense of meaning and direction that guides their actions and choices in life. For some people, their purpose may be closely tied to their career or vocation, while for others it may be more focused on their relationships, personal growth, or making a positive impact on the world.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

The bottom line is that even as we date one another with the purpose of finding a spouse, we should do our best to guard one another spiritually and to preserve the uniqueness of marriage by minimizing the extent to which we depart from the brother/sister relationship and begin to treat one another the way we will someday treat our husband or wife.

When you feel like you're lacking direction or purpose, it can be difficult to know where to start. However, there are some simple tips you can follow to help you get started.

1. Reflect on your values

Start by reflecting on what's most important to you. Your values are the guiding principles that shape your life, so it's important to identify them before you can determine your purpose.

2. Identify your passions

What are the things that make you feel alive and excited? What activities do you look forward to doing? Knowing our passions can give you direction and purpose and use them to fulfill your purpose.

3. Consider your strengths

What are you good at? What skills do you possess? Your purpose is often connected to your strengths, so it's important to identify what you excel at.

4. Connect your purpose to your values

Once you have a better understanding of your values, passions, and strengths, start thinking about how they can connect to your purpose. Your purpose should be aligned with your values and should give you a sense of fulfillment.

5. Get feedback

Sometimes it can be difficult to see our purpose clearly. Don't be afraid to seek guidance from mentors or professionals who can help guide you towards your purpose.

Remember that dating is a journey, not a destination and that it's okay to make mistakes and learn from them. Ultimately, the most important thing is to be honest with yourself and others and to approach dating with an open heart and a willingness to grow. With these five key things in mind, you'll be well-equipped to approach dating with purpose and intention and to find the love and happiness you deserve. So go out there, enjoy the journey, and keep these tips in mind as you navigate the exciting world of dating with a purpose.

REFLECTIONS:

1. Is it a sin to date without marriage?
2. What does a godly courtship look like?
3. Is kissing your boyfriend before marriage a sin?
4. What does God say about unmarried couples?
5. What does dating with a purpose mean?
6. How do you date with purpose?
7. What are the 3 purposes of dating?

LESSON NUMBER 2 TRUST GOD IN YOUR SINGLENES

FOCUS Matters of the Heart

LESSON TEXT Proverbs 4:23.

MEMORY VERSE *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever said to yourself, “I need to trust in God’s timing right now, which I’ve tried to do, but sometimes it’s just hard”. Currently, you are in a season of singleness, and it might feel difficult to trust God. Maybe someone has encouraged you to “trust God in your singleness,” but you are unsure what that means. Though singleness can be hard, you can trust God in your singleness by remembering your true calling, surrendering control to God, and considering God’s character. Though singleness can be hard, you can trust God in your singleness by remembering your true calling, surrendering control to God, and considering God's character.

I don’t claim to have all the answers, but here’s what I do know. *Truly trusting God will transform our single years.* Singleness doesn’t have to feel like the worst thing on earth. And if we get serious about trusting God, we can have hope for the future, marriage or not.

Your identity, value, and purpose are not found in your relationship status; your identity, value, and purpose are found in Christ alone. He has a plan and purpose for your life today, and you don’t have to wait for “someday.”

Whether you are single, dating, engaged, or married, God loves you and has a plan for your life right now. Your life doesn’t begin when you get married. You have a beautiful, valuable life today (and that is true even in the most difficult of seasons). The Lord has plans, ministry opportunities, friendships, and family experiences for you too. He hasn’t forgotten you or skipped over giving you good gifts just because you’re single. He doesn’t withhold His kindness and grace-filled moments from those of us who are unmarried. You aren’t less than because your relationship status is “single.”

Just as your salvation is based in God’s grace and not in anything you can or will do (Ephesians 2:8-9), His plan for your life doesn’t start or stop based on anything you do or because of your circumstances. He created you with gifts and abilities, and He put passions and dreams in your heart for a reason.

DISCUSSION

GOD’S WILL VS. OUR WILL

Let’s make no mistakes here. *God’s* will is that we would know Him personally and intimately; that we would love Him above all else. Everything He’s done for us—most prominently His choice to send Jesus when He did—was to redirect our futures back to His divine presence for all eternity. That was God’s will. *Our* will, when it’s apart from God’s grace, is to choose ourselves; to deny His Lordship, His atonement for our sins, and choose rebellion which leads to a second spiritual and physical death in the lake of fire. That *isn’t* God’s will.

While relationships and marriage are gifts, marriage is not the end-all and be-all. Our truest calling as humans is not found in our relationship with man but in our relationship with God. When God

created humans, He created them for Him. He created us to worship Him and be in a personal relationship with Him. Although God established the first marriage in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve's primary role was to worship the Lord. The entrance of sin tainted our worship of the Lord, causing us to naturally rebel against God and glorify other things. But our call remains the same.

In fact, when we come to faith in Christ, we are enabled to pursue our calling as worshippers more joyfully and willingly. We are given the desire and help we need to put God first and obey Him in all things. So, in your singleness, remember that your ultimate purpose is to love God and make His name known. Serving the Lord and being a faithful disciple of Christ is not contingent on your relationship status. While God's plans for your life may include marriage, do not wait until you are married to put God first and faithfully worship Him.

Proverbs 19:21 reminds us that, "Many plans are in a person's heart, but the Lord's decree will prevail." You can do everything in your power to change your relationship status, but God's plans for you will come to fruition no matter what. Surrendering control to God is hard, especially because you do not know if His plans for you include marriage. But when you open up your hands and surrender control to God, your heart is more able to trust God. Instead of scrambling around, always consumed with your relationship status, you are able to be still and allow God to work in your life. So, in your singleness, seek to surrender control to God. This act of surrender will probably look like an everyday, moment-by-moment act, but the more you seek to place control in God's hands, the more you will trust His plans for you.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever (Ps. 136:1–4).

In your singleness, you might struggle to trust that God is good. You might see other people getting into relationships or becoming married and think, God is being cruel because He isn't giving me what I want. You may even be led to believe that God favors others more than you because He is giving them relationships and not you. This is why daily remembering and rooting ourselves in God's character is so important.

When we open Scripture, we are reminded that God is a God who is perfectly holy, good, and just. There is no partiality with God (Romans 2:11), which means that God will not grant marriage to someone and not another because He loves or favors one more. God's character remains the same no matter our marital status. He is good, kind, merciful, and just to all of His own. So, if it feels as if God has set you aside in your singleness, open up God's Word and consider God's character. Remember who God is and who He promises to always be no matter your season of life.

What do you want next year, two years, or five years of your life to look like? If God continues to have singleness as part of your future, what do you want those single years to be filled with? It doesn't matter if you're fourteen, eighteen, twenty-seven, or forty-nine, you can make a change today! We can choose to truly trust in God. Let's open our Bibles to [Proverbs 3](#). Read the passage

and specifically focus on verses 5–6. We can cry out to God and ask Him to help us. Memorize those verses, write them down, and place them in your room or car as reminders. Those verses have been a guiding focus for many of us during our single years. They’ve provided hope and have truly helped us to become the content and thriving woman/man we are today. What about you?

QUESTIONS

1. How to trust God when single?
2. Is it a sin to fantasize if you are single?
3. Can single Christians kiss?
4. Is your singleness dreadful or enjoyable?
5. What needs to change for you to thrive during this season?

LESSON NUMBER 3: LOVE OR LUST

FOCUS: The Battle Within

LESSON TEXT: Galatians 6:7-8).

MEMORY VERSE: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life”

INTRODUCTION

C.S. Lewis wrote, “If you look upon ham and eggs and lust, you have already committed breakfast in your heart.” This is a very good, biblical definition of lust in the heart. If you covet something or someone, that is lusting in the heart. Exodus 20:17 lists the tenth commandment as “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor” so lust is not just about looking at someone of the opposite sex, or for some, looking at someone with lust of the same sex, it is coveting what you don’t have. It is a passionate desire to have what someone else has.

Discovering the distinction between lust vs. love isn’t always a straightforward task. During the first few months of a relationship, figuring out these two powerful emotions can be challenging, especially since both sensations often feel overwhelming.

Lust is when we intensely desire or crave something, especially in the sexual sense. Lust appeals to our self-centeredness and treats others as objects instead of people. Love, on the other hand, is an intentional devotion toward another no matter what the circumstances. Love puts another’s needs before yours to ensure his or her well-being.

The Bible portrays love as a selfless, sacrificial, and enduring quality, while lust is depicted as a selfish, destructive, and fleeting desire. Lust is often associated with sin and is discouraged, while love is presented as a reflection of God's character and a key component of a fulfilling life.

David let his lust carry him away as “One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful” (2nd Sam 11:2) and so he lusted after her in his heart. This led to adultery and later, to the murder of Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah. This is why James wrote that “after desire (or lust) has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (1:15). The proverbs say, “Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes” (6:25). Jesus said that it was “out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander” (Matt 15:19). Solomon understood this connection, writing that as a man “thinks within himself, so he is” (23:7a). You can commit adultery without ever committing the physical act. Jesus said that “that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:28) and of course the same thing applies to women.

Understanding Love vs. Lust

There are a few distinct differences that set love and lust apart from one another. Namely, true love can only be established over time, while lust is more related to instant gratification than anything else. Lust is predominately a physical infatuation that overlooks any emotional connection at all,

while love is a deliberate effort to form a selfless bond built on compassion and trust. This allows for a deeper level of intimacy that's not exclusively focused on instinctual passion.

At the beginning of a relationship, your motivations and actions are clear indicators of your intentions, and for Christians, men who are considerate and methodical in their approach when courting a woman are more likely to showcase their desire for a serious, devoted relationship. Over time, while learning to navigate life's ups and downs, you'll develop a bond based on mutual respect that will eventually transform into an everlasting connection, which is the ultimate goal. When you agree to invest that same love into your faith in God as a couple, that's when your relationship reaches the next level.

Signs of Lust

- Focus on Appearance – Rather than focusing on getting to know someone personally, you're increasingly drawn to them based mostly on their physical features.
- Desire for Physical Intimacy – You're more prone to being and feeling close to someone rather than actually getting to know them for who they are first.
- Rushing to Date Without Building an Emotional Connection – You're more interested in the idea of flaunting your partner for everyone to see instead of learning about them on a deeper level beforehand.
- Prioritizing Romantic Rush Over Bonding – You're largely caught up in the emotions of becoming infatuated with someone, leading you to prioritize your public image for trivial reasons rather than establishing whether or not you have a viable connection that could potentially lead to a long-term relationship in the first place.

Signs of Love

- Interest in Developing a Deeper Bond – While some concern themselves with superficial qualities, those hoping for genuine love are looking to build a formidable relationship with a prospective partner, focusing on interests and ambitions over appearance.
- Empathy and Emotional Intimacy are On Display – Beyond just getting to know what someone is about, understanding their upbringing, lifestyle, struggles, and successes are all vulnerable topics that help you analyze if your beliefs and expectations actually align.
- Deep Conversations Based On Dreams and Interests – When you show you're willing to have serious conversations about heavy topics and big goals, it proves you're looking ahead to what a relationship with your partner might look like in the future, allowing them to realize you're not just treating it as a fling.
- Long-Term Outlook – Having the mentality that you're only pursuing a long-term relationship on the road to finding the right life partner demonstrates to your significant other that you're committed to learning and growing as a couple and not rushing things or holding ultimatums against one another.
- Feeling of Belonging and Security – At the core of every healthy relationship is a balance of honesty, trust, and support, which, when combined, allow for two lovers to feel they can work as a pairing rather than having to compromise or feel hostility in stressful situations.

JUST as God tells us not to fear, we are told that God protects us. However, far too many people deny God's efforts to keep us safe in every aspect of lives. Our love lives are no exception. In fact, it can be an especially dangerous place to ignore God, which is why it's important to recognize the ways in which God is trying to get our attention in an effort to keep us safe.

DISCUSSION

Be honest about your sexuality. Face the truth about the addiction to lust. If David sinned, so can you! Don't deny, rationalize, or minimize your sin. This will only protect and perpetuate it. The more the demon of lust is fed, the stronger it becomes. With David's lust came the ambition to cover up. A lying spirit travels with lust. But the man who will admit his situation and take responsibility for it will find God's strength. Don't make excuses and blame others.

David acknowledged his sins as transgressions. They were willful. He confessed that he was wrong, and God was right for the purpose that God might be "justified when you speak, and blameless when you judge." True repentance says, "You are right and I am wrong. Whatever You choose to do, You are right, God. You are just." False repentance justifies me and I rationalize. When I justify myself, I am not asking God to forgive my sin; I am asking Him to excuse it. Nowhere in Scripture does God excuse sin. He only forgives confessed sin. Confess means "to say along with," to agree with God that you did it.

The basic problem of sin is that you can't forget it. You can still have remorse, guilt, and shame even with repentance. Guilt is not a feeling to unlearn, but is a God-given response to moral failure. God's remedy is forgiveness through Christ's atonement. "Have mercy on me, O God." David here reminds himself of the compassionate attributes of God or he might not have come for pardon and cleansing. Why can't you forget the sin? Because of shame. But when God cleanses you, He gives you the power to forgive yourself. You are cleansed and accepted.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

The differences between love and lust are that we don't covet what we don't have. We shouldn't covet (lust after) our neighbor's spouse or their goods (Ex 20:17). Love, on the other hand, "does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10) and this means "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 19:19) but above all "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). The difference for believers is that we are told "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5:44). The greatest display of love was not what Jesus felt or what God feels but it was revealed at Calvary. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13) and that's just what He did. Lust harms, love sacrifices. There is hope. It is not too late for you. No stigma is too strong; no stain is too dark for Christ to wash away. Hold on to who He says you are and remember who He is.

QUESTIONS

The following are relevant questions one can ask themselves when contemplating whether their feelings are better categorized as feelings of lust or love.

1. How long have you known your partner?
2. What feelings overcome you when looking at your prospective match?
3. How did you meet the other person?
4. Which characteristic of your love interest first caught your attention?
5. How do you feel when it comes to physical intimacy, like hugging?
6. Are you allowed to be emotionally vulnerable with one another?

7. What's your favorite quality about your partner?
8. How does your significant other respond if you're upset?
9. Does your partner introduce you to their extended connections?
10. How does each person respond to compliments/small gestures?
11. What are your preferred ideas for joint activities?
12. Are you willing to trust your partner unconditionally?

Prayer: Lord, You have said in Your Word that You have forgiven me, You love me, You delight in me, and You long for intimacy. Like David, I desire to be a man after Your own heart. I do not want to despise Your Word. Take my sex life and help me to "Watch and pray that I may not enter into temptation." I desire to obey You. Strengthen me with Yourself to know You and experience You daily. I desire to be filled and satisfied with You, Lord. I trust Your faithfulness and Your love to keep me pure day by day. Amen.

LESSON NUMBER 4 SINGLE CHRONICLE 901

FOCUS: TEMPTATION

LESSON TEXT 1 Corinthians 10:13 The Message

MEMORY VERSE *No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.*

INTRODUCTION

In James chapter 1, verse 13, James talks about the fact that God is not involved in tempting anyone. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I'm being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn't tempt anyone." Now that's very important. God does not bring about an inward solicitation to do evil in anyone's life. God sends tests, but not temptations. God will bring the outward extremity to produce patience and endurance and spiritual maturity. First Peter 5 says that after you have suffered for a while the Lord will make you perfect. So, God allows the tests of life to make us strong, but God never brings them to inward solicitation to do evil.

We can all agree that temptation is everywhere, and society thrives on it, whether financially or not, the media also has a big part to play in it. People see the half-naked men and women revealing what should be hidden, scandalous behavior being embraced and degrading actions of fellow men and women around us. Thinking it is okay to be part of this 'movement.'

I have noticed a lot of these things over some time now and in such society for the majority, when single it will be used as an excuse to have fun, party, have countless 'sex buddies' 'friends with benefits' you name it. Whether you meet them at the club, or on social media, it is all the wrong way. Most people value sex more than relationships, when you are spiritually connected with someone it goes beyond things of the world hobbies, interests etc.

A temporary pleasure to please the flesh is all worldly and sinful, true love is eternal and feeds the spirit daily. Fleshly desires cause one to sin against God, and with sex in such relationships doesn't always guarantee marriage. Because relationships based on sex doesn't lead to a lifetime of happiness- God is absent from such and it's a life of darkness. Singles overcoming temptations, particularly sexual temptation, often find strength in faith, prayer, and accountability.

Each Christian faces temptation. Even Jesus was tempted! So how can you resist the urge to give in and stay strong? We need God's help to fight this battle. If you have never done so, turn to Christ and ask Him to come into your life. Then ask Him to fill your heart with His love and power, and to crowd out whatever is wrong in your life. God has promised that "when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Ask Him to show you the way out—and then take it.

Even though we may desire to do good, we are all tempted. No one is above it, even someone like the apostle Paul. He shared his own struggle of flesh against spirit when he wrote in Romans 7:22-23, "For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me."

The main focus on temptation is understanding it as a natural part of the human experience and finding strategies to resist its power. Temptation can be seen as a test of our character and faith, and while it's unavoidable, we can actively choose to resist it by focusing on God's word, seeking his help, and avoiding environments that trigger temptation.

DISCUSSION

How Can I Overcome Sexual Sin?

Living as both single and sexually faithful might feel impossible. For someone who is single, committing to live within God's boundaries seems foolish in our current culture's celebration of sexual "freedom." But for Christians, we find comfort in knowing our loving and holy Lord has a design for every aspect of life. Jesus is present always to help us stay the course in the race of faith, and he constantly holds out forgiveness and mercy when we fail. Jesus and the Bible are also wise and practical when it comes to our street-level fight to overcome sexual sin and temptation. Jesus stands ready to help when we turn to him as we face struggles and temptations.

So, let's consider one important tool in this battle to help us as single men and women: identifying and fleeing triggers.

In the world of addictions, the concept of a trigger is significant. It refers to people, places, experiences, and things which stir up thoughts, feelings, memories, and desires connected to certain behaviors.¹ A food addict may be triggered to overeat by the sight of pastries, or by criticism from a parent. A TV addict may binge watch while important work is left undone, triggered by feeling lonely or by work-related stress. A trigger prompts a person to move towards a harmful behavior which soothes or numbs troubling and painful life experiences. In other words, it's a temporary pain killer. But then the pain returns, stronger than ever. And a cycle is established. Remember, identifying triggers isn't meant to make us live as suspicious, joyless Christians who avoid people or good gifts!

For a single person battling sexual temptation, it's crucial to identify the triggers which prompt us to move towards various pain-reducing behaviors like viewing or reading pornography, crossing physical boundaries with a person, or engaging in sexual fantasy and masturbation. Let's be clear: married people also must battle sexual sin! However, singles committed to walking in sexual integrity do not have this context for sexual expression, so fleeing sexual temptation will never involve having God-blessed sex such as married persons enjoy.

Why We Give in to Temptation

This question often arises in the context of counseling for repetitive struggles such as pornography use, masturbation, substance abuse, and overeating. There are many biblical ways to answer this question, but I want to focus on just one: we give in to temptation because we get tired of fighting the battle. It feels too hard spiritually, emotionally, and physically to keep waging war against our flesh. Perseverance is uncomfortable, especially when you've given in to that temptation so many times before. It seems to have more power over you than you do to fight it. So it's easier to give in and move on rather than continue to resist. The thought of another day, even another hour, of wrestling with that insistent and persistent desire is too much to handle. There is a paradoxical relief in succumbing (albeit often with guilt, shame, and other consequences). The spiritual slate

is wiped clean. The clock can be reset with a fresh start and fresh resolve. At least this is often our experience, namely that the way out of temptation is to give in to temptation in a particular moment. But what encouragement does God give to us in the throes of battle? When we stand at the cusp of capitulating to the satanic lie, “Resistance is futile,” what help does our gracious Father offer?

No doubt there will be times, even with gospel-mediated resolve to endure temptation, that you and I will fail. But when that happens, Jesus bids us come and find forgiveness for sins and renewed strength for the hours and days ahead. His perseverance on our behalf will see us safely home (1 Cor 1:8–9).

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Christians who are single and tempted have a real battle to face. Amid sexual temptation, they can easily wonder where God is in this ongoing struggle. Jesus made many things abundantly clear to his followers, and they particularly apply to those who are single. He was clear about his love, forgiveness, and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to live a holy life.

His disciples understood that following him had to be synced up with a willingness to let go of sin, die to self, and to embrace obedience as we “stay in our lane” in the race of faith.

“...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...” (Hebrews 12:1–2, NIV) This race of faith, however, isn’t easy. For those of us who are single, staying within God’s boundaries for sexuality can seem impossible. Life without sex feels tragic to some, foolish to others. Sexual integrity is an experience of both sanctification and suffering. *Sanctification*, because as we battle to slay sin and to live fully for Christ, we learn to entrust him with every area of our lives, growing in Christlikeness.

The most important tool in battling sexual temptation or emotional pain is knowing Jesus. And knowing that he wants you to run to him when you are even at your worst. As a single man or woman, you need more than behavioral strategies to succeed. You need a growing understanding and trust in Jesus. He gives us his presence and his power to run the race of faith that bears out in sexual faithfulness! Even now, Jesus is praying to the Father for you, (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25 ESV). He is more than able to defeat this temptation through His Spirit that is at work in you, (1 John 4:4 ESV). “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen,” (Jude 24-25 ESV).

QUESTIONS

1. What is temptation? How does it manifest? Is it a test, a trial, or a sin?
2. Is temptation primarily caused by external forces (Satan, circumstances) or internal desires?
3. What are the potential outcomes of yielding to temptation? What are the benefits of resisting temptation?

PRAYER

Father in heaven, Thank you for your daily word. I cannot live without it. Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil. Help me not to fall. I pray that my actions speak love to my children and Your grace covers my life. In the name of Jesus, I pray.