

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY QUESTION 19

What is the most negative remark you have heard about “being single”?

Single Moms

"What about your daughter? How is she going to handle this?" (Asking like I have a choice)

You need to find a man to help take care of you and your girls.

How do you do it all on your own?

You can't make it on your own without help

I won't be capable of caring for my children as a single mom

I chose to have kids with the wrong person and I have to deal with the consequences.

Single-again (divorced)

If I was a Godly woman, my husband would not have left me. I've heard this by many people. I have not wanted to talk poorly about my husband, so I did not state that he was an adulterer. Even to the few that I tried to tell what was happening, I was called a liar.

After my divorce...from a female church member that I should not be teaching a ladies' class

Was your divorce scriptural?

Don't come and ask for help because you are single, it was your choice. (I had just gotten out of abusive relationship!!!)

I have come out of an abusive marriage. My husband is a covert narcissist. When I started asking for help from the minister, elder, two women of a church I had actively attended for almost 10 yrs. I was either ignored or told I just needed to work harder on the marriage. When I decided to leave that church & visit another. I only have heard from 1 other woman there. The whole thing was so hurtful.

My brother described someone who was single again as being “crippled” for the rest of her life if she wasn’t allowed to remarry.

You lost your soul when you were divorced

What’s Wrong with You?

"You're single, so what's wrong with you? Are you like secretly crazy?"

Inferiority/God Not Pleased with You/Untrustworthy

"Nobody wanted you" or "what's wrong with you" mentality-specifically for me: that I shouldn't be a mother by choice (I fostered 11 & adopted 1)

Remarks have been indirect but make me feel inferior because I am single.

There is very little I could be entrusted to do in leading or in teaching the Body of Christ. Single women are not to teach the body or to be entrusted with the cares of the community. There was the thought that perhaps I am single because God is not yet pleased somehow with where I am spiritually, or by implication I am not trustworthy, meaning not up to par...yet? I am not quite sure what the person was trying to say - but, I think this was the gist of the message. (copied)

It wasn't a remark. He was just staring me down **like I didn't belong** for the 2nd time in a row.

What's wrong with her that nobody wants her

That I am single because God knows there is something I have to learn first/am not mature enough yet to be married.

Spiritually, anything to do with a lack of recognition of my gifting because I am single. This fosters the idea that singleness is equated with maturity—both spiritual and emotional—which I find highly demeaning. (copied)

Not a specific remark, but implying that my life is less meaningful and easier or that I am not a part of "the club"

God’s Supposed Plan for Women

That I am not fulfilling the role God has given women and that perhaps I am too picky indicating that's why I am not married. (copied)

Unable to fulfill God's purpose for me.

The implication that I am a selfish person and I don't know what love is because I am not loved by a man and I don't have someone else to take care of-be it a husband or a child.

Incomplete

It's like you're incomplete or insignificant without a spouse.

1) That you can't reach your full potential without your own family. (copied)

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Things along the line of I'm missing out or wasting time and not living up to my potential

Unable To Serve In Certain Ministry Contexts

1) That you can't reach your full potential without your own family. 2) If you want to be in ministry you better marry a man who wants that too.

"We had doubts about sending a single woman to the mission field"

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Usually it's some remark about women serving in ministry and the erroneous theology that we should serve our children and husbands in the home rather than in public ministry. It clearly doesn't take into account the many of us who aren't married and whose children are grown!

Alone

The most negative remark I have heard about "being single" is that God must want you to be alone and I should accept being single.

Don't you wish you had someone? Aren't you afraid to be alone forever?

That I will be lonely

You must be so lonely without someone.

Maybe be forever alone.

Lonely

Some people equate being single to being lonely.

You must be lonely.

You need to stop being so picky, just get married so you don't have to be lonely. (copied)

Why Aren't You Married?

You've never been married? Why not?

"Why aren't you married?" I have never even been asked on a date. How do I even respond to that question? It makes me feel like I am somehow not enough.

It Is Your Choice

You chose it, live with it.

Some people are meant to be single.

Why are you not dating someone? Don't you want to date?

Only Way To Be Happy...

Not really a particular comment, but usually something about how I better hurry up and get married because of my age or comments suggesting the only way in life to be happy is to be married. (copied)

Ignorance

I was part of a group discussion about ways in which we would like to see our church grow. I said that I would like to see the church become more fully inclusive of people on the margins of the congregation, such as single adults and African Americans. A married, white man replied "I've never seen anyone on the margins here, and if they are, it's their own fault for not taking advantage of opportunities to get involved." This man somehow managed to simultaneously deny the reality of my struggle and blame me for it.

Celibacy/Purity

“Well, if you can remain celibate your entire life, I guess it’s ok to be single”

Three dates then sex is the norm.

On the Hunt

Always thinking you are after their husband

Do you have a boyfriend? Are you seeing anyone?

"We are selfish. We are always looking for a man" (copied)

Too Picky/Judgmental

You are single, because you are too judgmental.

That I am not fulfilling the role God has given women and that perhaps I am too picky indicating that’s why I am not married. (copied)

That I am too picky, that I’m not even trying to get married

You need to stop being so picky, just get married so you don't have to be lonely. (copied)

You are single because you have many prototypes of a man that do not exist.

Superficial/Physical Comments

You are too classy and beautiful

She's too ugly to get a man. She's nothing without a man.

If you lost weight you might get a boyfriend.

Ticking Clock

You’re still ok... it’s when you hit 30 that it’s getting too late.

Not really a particular comment, but usually something about how I better hurry up and get married because of my age or comments suggesting the only way in life to be happy is to be married. (copied)

"You are 30 and single, you are like my worst nightmare." A coworker in a parachurch context.

"If you don't hurry up you won't be able to have children.

All of your sisters are leaving you behind."

When are you going to start dating again?

You'll never get married if you're single past 26

Don't worry! You're still young!

You're gonna die alone, the older you get the less likely it is you will find a husband.

Assumptions

It is always assumed you are waiting around for a man to want you.

You are not trying hard enough to find someone

There must have been a lot you've been able to do since you don't have to consider a husband and kids.

There seems to be an expectation that I am waiting to be married— that I am less fulfilled as a single woman and that my life is on hold until I am married.

Remarks are not made; assumptions are. Silent non-invitations to participate in women's activities, scheduling everything on weekday mornings, and looks of discomfort when they realize I have no husband are all examples. It's not ugliness; it's ignorance. And those of us who are mature and also comfortable in our singleness handle it just fine, don't take offense or get hurt, and don't judge them. But thank you for this work because there is a huge issue of neglect and ostracism that healthy churches will want to correct, but will need help with because they are ill-equipped.

"Oh! You must have done something to deserve this."

Can't Relate

Your single, so you probably couldn't relate.

Years ago other singles felt I didn't understand their single issues because of the support I had from family.

False Promises

I find it discouraging to be told that God has a spouse out there somewhere for me. What if being single is God's plan for me? Why is that seen as less than being married?

“But you’re awesome!” “The right guy will come along before you know it” “how are you still single?!”
 “God will send you someone!”

I mean, I don't think its necessarily negative, but I always hate when people say, "Your time will come!" because I don't think that's promised...

Church Context

Couple activities or mentioning family functions (father, mother, kids)

What do we do with them?

Single women are ignored in church.

That being independent (i.e., not directly under a man’s authority and supervision) is living in sin.

Marriage/Kids Should Be Top Priority

That I can only truly demonstrate God’s love through marriage and child-raising. Everything else in my ministry among the poor pales in comparison.

That women's most important gift was having sons.

That I should give up my career to move back home and get married.

From a Singapore man when I walked into a church in Shanghai- “hey it’s been so long since I’ve seen you. It’s time you need to get married now!”

You need to date around in order to be prepared for a relationship. This is not that bad, though. What affects me most is seeing people in relationships and hearing talk about how great relationships are all the time with much less talk about singleness.

"Why are you getting your Ph.D.? Honey, no man will ever marry you now!"

Just people asking when I'll marry again.

I've put up a wall

At my age and not having kids, I have been told you can spend your money on yourself. Just think no kids or grandchildren enjoy your life.

That I am just waiting for the right person to come along and am in a holding pattern until I get married.

I need to have my plumbing checked.

You will adapt to being single in time

Singleness is a blessing equal to marriage. It's great! Why are you grieving? - From married people

It is a gift from God

No one likes a third wheel.

Not so much a remark as an attitude. My boss is critical of my clothing choices and behavior in ways she never would have thought about when I was married. She even went so far as to tell a male coworker that if he needed my help at his computer, he needed to make sure I didn't have to bend over.

Well just go get you another one! Just go get your dog!

You got nothing going on