

My Story

By Joan

“How to Live the Single Life While Waiting for the Right Single Christian Man”

Since the “Waiting for the Right Single Christian Man” video was aired, Joan has written a follow-up letter in response to an inquiry about living the single Christian life while waiting. Here is her story.

“I don’t claim to be an expert or have any superior wisdom. In fact, I think I am the most inadequate person to comment on relationship advice! But that is the grace of God, that He can use the weak and foolish things. Please cross check everything I say with the Bible, I am only a fallible sinner,” said Joan. With that said, I will give you a little more of my story, and a little of my developing perspective. What I didn’t have time to share in the video was that for most of the



time of our courtship I was going through periods of doubt and confusion. I’ll spare you all the details, but basically my husband and I met at church and a few months later he lost his job and had to move out of the country (back home to Singapore). So, we had a long distance relationship for a year and a half before we got married. I tell you that for a little perspective. But anyway, I think one challenge that we face as women in the church is that we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to do everything perfectly. And even when I started dating my husband, I was still worried if this was God’s will. I struggled with fear and doubt, and I really wanted some writing on the wall to know I was doing the right thing, and that he was the right guy for me. Even when I felt God’s confirmation in little and big ways, I still had bouts of doubting. I’m sure having a long distance relationship also added to the challenge. But I found myself reading lots of Christian relationship books and then ending up more upset because my life didn’t look like what they were describing. In spite of myself and all my fears and worries, God is so good and He lent me to a man whose love was steady and constant in the face of my doubting. We’ve been married two years now and just celebrated the first birthday of our little daughter. And on a side note, I moved to Singapore after we got married. Actually, thinking back to what my life was like just a few years ago feels like a lifetime ago! If you asked me five years ago what my life would be like, I would never had said I would be married, moved to a foreign country, and be a mom! Not saying things will move as quickly for you, but if my story is any example, following God can certainly be exciting! So now I am busy being a mom, wife, and full-time school teacher. In many ways, married life is more wonderful and more challenging than I imagined. Just finding the “right guy” doesn’t guarantee a smooth and easy marriage. My life is wonderful, exhausting, challenging, intimidating, and ultimately in God’s hands.

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A couple of things I would like to share with you and I'd love for you to give me any feedback as well. As for where you are right now, I remember what it was like when I wanted to be in a relationship and I had to pray for God to be my sufficiency. It is a difficult prayer, and even now I need to pray, "God you are my sufficiency." Being married doesn't change that fact. I know it might sound a little hollow because I was "only" 25 at the time and I know many women wait much longer, but I can assure you there were several months when I went through some intense emotional struggles and battles. Then one night I was really wrestling with God on this issue and being really honest with him-and myself. Of course, God already knows our hearts, but I think He wants us to acknowledge it for ourselves. So in this case I had to tell him how much I really wanted a boyfriend, I was yearning for that sense of security, companionship, romance, that comes with being in a relationship and having a little emotional breakdown-but then He told me-He provides me with all those things I long for. At the end of prayer, I felt that I could really surrender my heart to God, not just in my head, but that I had given him my heart; all of it, including the strange romantic side that I thought only a boyfriend or husband could fill. So the first point is be honest about your struggle and keep asking God to give you peace about where you are in life, married or not. And not that this is an ultimatum with God, but I had a feeling that, until I really learned that lesson of surrender, He was not going to lead me to marriage. After that, I was really at peace and I wasn't troubled as I was before about being single. Again, it's not a formula and the moment you give your life up to God, He's supposed to give you what you want. But I think my own selfish desires were getting in the way of growing my relationship with God and He wanted all of my heart.

So this next observation depends on the fact that you are already in this "healthy place" where God has your heart, for me at least, I know God had to break me so that He could grow me. Once I was growing in my relationship with him and seeking his will, I could trust that my actions were in line with his will. When you are seeking God's will, you can make decisions and be reassured that He will guide you-if it is not right, He'll make that clear too. I love the devotional "My Utmost for His Highest" and it speaks a lot about this and walking in God's will. I think that is the struggle for most single Christians is that we want to do what is right and we want it to be God's will. Now I'm going to say something that you might challenge and I would love to hear your ideas. But basically, I'm saying that the idea of "waiting for the right man" implies a lot of passivity. I don't know about you, especially when you say you are waiting, but I had taken a very passive stance when it came to finding someone. God is good and He took care of me. But thinking about it, and even seeing other good friends of mine, I think that waiting doesn't have to mean you don't DO anything. God may bring people into our lives out of "no where" like how He brought my husband to my church. But it still required a lot of effort on our parts to get the relationship started and to keep it going. I'm not sure what "waiting" looks like to you, but I think, once Christian singles can to put themselves into places with opportunities for relationships I'm not saying you go to church to look for a husband (my church at the time probably had an average age of 50 and many of my friends there were older women mostly 60+ and they were amazing women!) But I think there is nothing wrong with seeking fellowship and ever widening circles of friendship. Now this presupposes that you are in a strong relationship with God-so you're not looking at every single man as

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husband-potential. But you can meet new people and let friendships grow in a natural and healthy way. And if it blossoms into something more romantic, thank God. What I'm thinking on a practical level is getting involved with church ministries or joining certain interests groups. In other words, if you are not meeting people, it's not a bad idea to go make more friends.

And finally, if you do meet someone, it's very important that you have your "ideas." So maybe this should have been the first point-but I think it is important to already have your "ideal husband" planned in your mind (or even write it down). It probably isn't a good idea if it is an exhaustive list because chances are no one in the world would meet all of them. But being a Christian is probably number one on the list. The point is, there are a few things on which we do not want to compromise and many of those ideals are personal preference, but as a Christian I do firmly believe it is important to marry someone that shares your faith. With that said, of course God can work all things out to his glory so I'm not trying to condemn others who are in this position, but if you can help it because you're not already committed to a non-believer, I think life would be a lot easier not going down that path. And with that said, there may be things on our list that we realize we could compromise on (maybe his eye color or height! Ha-ha). I found that at first maybe my ideals were just unreasonable. And this is a very personal thing and it was also a maturing process for me, but as we were dating I was really forced to analyze what I wanted in a husband and why.

And even now being married I still have to be reminded of those lessons I was learning before and during my courtship. To be perfectly honest, marriage is really challenging. It requires a whole new level of compromise and self-sacrifice like I had never imagined. And again, when I forget that God, and not my husband, is my sufficiency, my marriage suffers. Being married doesn't necessarily make me happier than when I was single. I still find myself in that same place of discontentment when I am not allowing God to completely fill me. I still have to pray for God to give me the desires of His heart and not mine. God satisfies all of our needs at each stage in our lives, if we will only let him.

I hope you are encouraged in your walk with Christ and I will pray that He will give you joy in whatever stage of life you are in.

Be Blessed!

Joan