

# February 2003: A Message to Singles

by Aaron Greenway

For this month I would ask two things from two different groups of people. For those of us who are single I hope to convey a message that has been in my heart for well over a year. To those who are married, I ask you to pray for the Christian singles in the manner in which I am about to write.

In fourteen days we will celebrate “Valentine's Day”, a day in which everyone shares tokens of affection toward their sweethearts and appreciation toward their friends. In the Body of Christ, singles are looking for someone with whom they can spend the rest of their lives. They are looking for someone to love and to be loved. They want a family. This is normal and it is to be expected. However, there has been a breach, a supposed dichotomy, in the church today, a gap between how we would treat an expected mate and how we treat others in the body of Christ. In I Corinthians 13, Paul does not, in any way, deal with them differently.

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (I Corinthians 13:4-7).*

Let me be a little more specific by giving you an example. Let us say there are three people out of a group: Joe, Mary and Carl. Mary likes Carl. Carl, a very humble and godly man, is not sure if he likes Mary or not. Joe is kind of outside of the

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group. One Sunday, they are all in church together. Joe greets Mary. Mary is mean to Carl. Carl observes this. Question: What gives Carl any desire to get to know Mary as a potential mate? If he is godly, none.

We do not realize what we do, singles, when we act this way toward others in the Body of Christ, when we treat others with partiality, when we compete with one another, when we cannot even raise our eyes to greet someone, because what we are really doing is conveying a message to someone with whom we may wish to have a relationship that we are not really the person they are looking for.

Inevitably, we will attract to ourselves who we are. Righteousness attracts righteousness. Godliness brings godliness. Kindness draws kindness. By the same token, liars know liars, thieves know thieves. A person who is a gossip, a cheater, an angry person, someone who ridicules others, or maybe just a “control freak”, though they say want a godly spouse, will inevitably bring to themselves the very person they are, because we know better who are rather than who we are not. One thing to remember, if we are going to act in the flesh while we are on the path to finding a mate, and we finally find them, then we have bought ourselves not a lot of heartache, because where there is a “big dog”, there’s a “bigger dog.” If someone is critical and unkind, chances are they will marry someone who is worse.

How we act to others in the Body is practice for how we will act toward a spouse. If I see a young lady that I admire being unkind toward another brother, what assurance do I have that she will not do the same thing with me when the heat is on? The same thing goes for the men. If a man is disrespectful toward his mother, his sisters, and other ladies in the church, what you have just seen, ladies, is a character flaw, something that will come to haunt you if you marry that man, UNLESS the man has recognized his flaw and has repented. How we treat others is a reflection of how we will treat the one that really matters. A Christian woman once told me that she was not looking for a man who aimed to be like Jesus, but rather someone who she could relate to more. At least she was honest.

So, what do we do, singles? My prayer is, God show me how to love my brothers and sisters,

that I would not be boastful, loud, manipulating, dishonest, or unkind, but rather showing a sacrificial love for the Body, a deep compassion for the lost, to be a man or woman of humility and service. These kinds of people make good husbands and wives because when the tough times come, **you have got to know** that man or woman is going to show compassion, humility and service in the home toward you and toward your children. If we have character flaws, perhaps we should pray that God not send us “the right one” but rather that God would refine and work in us to become the right person for the other that he is bringing.

Married people! Here comes your part. It is your duty to help us single people to achieve this. How? By praying for us. By instructing us and showing us what a godly marriage ought to be, how to be a godly man or woman so that when the right comes, that single man or woman will recognize God’s best for them because what God has done in one, He has also done in the other.

If this describes any one of us, how can we change? Perhaps we do not even realize that we have baggage that is hindering others in the Body, things that would hinder a marriage. If I have hurts or bitterness, let me leave them aside. My wife nor my children deserve that. If I have resentment, arrogance, unkindness in my heart, let me leave that at cross, because my future family is at stake. It becomes a very serious issue; and with all the divorce occurring in the United States, it is clear that the foundation we lay in our lives today will impact the next generation of singles, our own children.