



Being Single and Making a Difference
by Kris Swiatocho

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"Doe, a deer, a female deer, Ray, a drop of golden sun" . . . I could just see myself singing it while dancing around the Residenz Fountain in Austria.

"Bong, bong" . . . I could hear Big Ben ringing while sailing on the River Thames.

I could get lost in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City while admiring the work of Michelangelo.

I could sit at one of Paris' outdoor restaurants and order a café au lait. I can just smell it now.

Toward the end of my college days (many years ago), I started to plan a trip to Europe. I had my work visa, passport, and other documents to make the trek. I had even purchased my airline ticket. The world was my oyster, and I was ready to partake with a little hot sauce. I felt invincible, powerful and independent. I was single, and I could do anything and go anywhere. I was free, free, freeeeee!

Well, I hate to say it but the day after I graduated from college I met a man. This man quickly distracted me and led me down a dark road. A road that chose us over God. A road that got me in a lot of trouble. A road that led to pain. I spent the next couple of years away from not only my family but from the path God had set out for me. God had designed my singleness to be used by him for his glory, but instead, I was using it to serve me and my boyfriend. We ended up living together which had gone against all that I knew that was right. We partied and spent money like it grew on trees. Yes, we were having fun but there was no joy. For joy only came from God. Every day God reminded me that I was his and that my life was worth more than where I was.

As the "happy" part of the relationship started to become sad due to fear, conviction of my sin, bill collectors and the disappointment of my friends and family, God was there with his hands held out. Due to my sin, my shame, I felt so unworthy to God. I left my boyfriend but instead of going back to the Lord, I wandered another year, looking for truth, looking for love, and looking for peace, again leading only to disaster. Finally, the day came where I was at my lowest point in my life. I had nothing. My money was gone, and I was in deep debt. I was barely eating. I looked and felt horrible. Then God, yet again, reminded me of the path he had chosen for me. This time, I chose him. This choice was the start of realizing my life as a single had the power, the peace, and the joy that I was seeking. I was learning that only God could fill me, not a man, not money, not drugs, not stuff and not even my family or friends. Only God could give me my value. Only God could define me. The question then was: how would I use this knowledge, this power?

Over the next twenty years God continued to mold and shape me as a single adult. I have so many stories of how my path, my choices were significant life markers due to being single—from starting my own business to leaving it all to go into full-time ministry, from taking care of one grandmother to another to my own father, all because being single allowed me the flexibility to do so. I am blessed in my singleness.

So, I was wondering if others might feel the same way and how their singleness has impacted their lives. I was curious if they felt that their singleness was valuable. Did they see God using them as a single? Let me introduce you to Jean, Jonathan, Rachel, Lyle and Trina . . .



Jean

I have been single my entire adult life. I have always known my singleness was used by God to advance his kingdom. Even though there were times I wanted to be married, I also had grown to be content with where God had me. Until recently, I had been working in full-time ministry. My denomination had some cutbacks, and I was reduced to part-time work. I prayed and asked God what was I to do. At 59, who in the world would hire me? Also, how would I live on a part-time salary.

God showed up with a marvelous solution. My niece's husband had just deployed overseas. She desperately needed help taking care of her three kids and asked if I was interested in being a nanny. Wow, what a change it would be in my life. But then, I realized, as a married person, I would have not been able to do this. I prayed and was able to give her a quick answer. It would require a move several states away. I was able to rent my house and move within a week. Since I have been there it's been a blessing on both sides. My grandnieces and nephews may not be my own kids, but God is using them to fill a part of my heart (that was empty due to not having my own). Isn't God good?

All my longings lie open before you, O Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you (Psa. 38:9).

Jonathan

Being single has always helped me maintain my independence and challenged me to support myself. I grew up in a broken home and mostly raised myself as a young man. This has taught me both strength and leadership skills—both of which I have been blessed with to carry on into ministry, work and life in general. With that being said, I am confident as a natural born leader, but humble enough to realize I can't move a step without God leading me first!

In his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers (2 Chron. 33:12).

Rachel

I was diagnosed with cancer a week before my daughter was born prematurely. I was a single mom facing the long journey of cancer treatment. The weeks, months and now years were difficult, tiring and lonely. As a single, I didn't have a husband that could take care of me during the hard times or help with my newborn.

It was during this time that I knew I had to rely on God with all my strength. It was only through that reliance that I was able to make it through treatment. God blessed me with an abundant amount of help from my church. People rallied around me and helped when I had no strength left to do anything. Had I been married at the time, I do not think I would have experienced community in such a beautiful manner. I drew closer to God and to friends. I would not change my experience for anything.

The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him (Ex. 15:2).

Trina

As a single, I was able to care for my mother and be with her a lot more during her illness. I coordinated her care and made sure she was never alone and always felt safe and secure and loved as much as I could. I was actually holding her hand in the hospital as she died—she had suffered a stroke in the end and was lying trapped inside her dying body with no communication skills for a few weeks. It was a miracle and a blessing that I was able to be there, help her communicate



and care for her. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others (1 Cor. 10:24).

Lyle

A few years ago my parents decided to move closer to me and my sister. They are getting on in age and felt it would be better. Now my sister is married as well as my brothers who live out of town. I have noticed over the years just how much I am needed and valued by my parents. It's not that my siblings don't want to help; it's just they do have other responsibilities of their own families, making it harder to help at the last minute. Besides being single, I also work for myself, leaving even more flexibility to be there for them. Now don't get me wrong, I pray to be married every day. But I also pray to be used by God where I am. And for now, it's being a single.

But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life (1 Tim. 1:16).

So you might be asking, "Kris, did you ever get to Europe?" Well, I did make it England with my boyfriend for a couple of weeks during that time we were living together. We did all the touristy things, ate all the amazing food and met some great people. Then I spent the next ten years paying off the debt. But today, I am so happy to tell you that God is taking me back to the U.K.—his way. I was recently asked to come to London on tour with my new book, *Jesus, Single Like Me*. I will also be working with a lady in London on setting up a similar singles ministry that I lead here in the States—one in which we teach singles how to fish versus just giving them fish. I am praying England will only be the start of reaching all of Europe for Christ, single by single.

Join me in prayer for all singles, here in the U.S. and in the world—to realize their singleness is loved, valued and embraced by God to do wonderful and marvelous things for him. Pray that they will not only know this but believe it by living their lives in contentment with where God has them until he moves them somewhere else. Singleness has power. Just ask Jesus.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me (2 Cor. 12:9).

Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is the author of three books: *Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment*, co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources; *From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life*; and the most recent, *Jesus, Single Like Me with Study Questions* (includes a leader's guide and conference/retreat of the same name). Kris is currently working on her fourth book: *FAQ's of Singles Ministry* coming this fall 2012.

The Singles Network Ministries TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

From His Hands Ministries FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris' speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people



to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!