

Yes, Actually, Marriage Did Solve My Loneliness

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. [1 Samuel 1:17-18]

Since I was a week away from my 36th birthday when I got married, I frequently read and received advice about singleness and how to deal with it. People told me not to expect marriage to solve issues I had, about everything from lust to loneliness. It is fair to say that marriage has not solved many of my problems but instead has, as you may expect, taught me how selfish and proud I can be.

Yet I cannot deny that as badly as I struggled emotionally with loneliness the last few years before marriage, that this particular struggle was completely eradicated.

The issues I had didn't happen in a vacuum. It wasn't like I began to consciously think that because I was in my mid-30s that I should be married already. Or that this led me to feel discouraged. Until I was 32, in fact, I was quite content being single and felt no pressure within or from without from people that loved me to get married. Yet I eventually began to experience trials in this area that were beyond my control and at times I did not respond well. And slowly but surely I began to suffer significantly enough with depression and anxiety that for a short time I was actually on a medication called Lexapro. These experiences were the foundation for a theology I've developed on waiting on God, [and how brutally truthful I am willing to be about it.](#)

But marriage changed all of this. My feelings were revolutionized. I have no longer struggled with depression or anxiety even a little bit. To me, it was like the moment in *Return of the King* when Gollum and the One Ring fall into fires of the volcano in Mount Doom. The first time I read those books, it felt like nearly the whole story was consumed in darkness until that moment and then light flooded the pages. The long dark night was finally over. That is what marriage has been like to me. Loneliness was a villain that has been destroyed forever.

There is much about marriage that I love and much that brings joy. And I cannot deny that because I was older when I got married and because I fell so deeply into an abyss before Kayla, that I value the companionship the most. I love it that I have someone to come home to at night. I love it that my wife knows all of my inside jokes and quotes and says them before I can when she knows I'm about to. I love that someone is there to take care of me when I'm sick, and honestly I love even more that I get to take care of someone when they are sick. I love it that when I preach, there is someone I can find in the audience that I can make eye contact with that understands and loves me like no other and makes me feel calm.

For those who have been victims in marriage—be it abuse or abandonment or something similar—or who are still waiting on it, it is not my aim to discourage. We at REO have written to those circumstances many times. I also do not want to disingenuously paint a picture of what marriage is like. It can be frustrating at times. It can expose the deepest flaws of your soul that you do not want to know about or confront. But if the two people are quick to forgive, as we both have been so far, then the conflict can produce deeper intimacy. And it can be completely overwhelmed most of the time by the joys of companionship.

But the main reason I am writing this is that when people write things like “Don't expect marriage to solve [fill in the

blank with whatever],” that often they are correct. But sometimes I do believe we make blanket statements in Christianity that can have exceptions. Yes, I believe my identity should be in Christ and not primarily in my marriage. Yes, I believe that Paul taught we can be content no matter the circumstances. But then I read the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel and how raw and passionate her grief was while childless, and how the news of having a child transformed her emotional state. And I wonder if sometimes God didn't give us the narrative in the Bible to remind us that the more doctrinal sections have exceptions at times. Real life is not always so black and white. I don't know if I could have been content the last few years of my life before marriage. But I know I'm content now that I am married.

Absolute truth is real. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means I do not have to stay dead after I die. Sex outside of marriage is immoral. Those are absolute. Yet in our social media world of articles that begin with things like “5 reasons you should...” and “Don't expect this to happen when you ...” I advocate for more nuanced advice. Oftentimes I have read articles and discovered they are based on preferences and experiences and some Bible verses that may or may not be absolute in their applications. I am not telling you that marriage solves loneliness. It may not for you. It did for me. And based on Hannah's story and God himself declaring it is not good for man to be alone (save the exceptions given by Jesus in places like Matthew 19:12) and other Scriptures, I have zero issue testifying to it.

But as always, REO opens the floor to our readers for discussion and comments. Please feel free to do so below.